

TUCUMÃZEIRO

Tucuma is a typical palm from the Amazonian region and belongs to the genus *Astrocaryum*. Although most species of this genus can be used by humans, only a few have promising economic potential and significant importance in regional trade. Among these, the Amazon-Tucuma (*Astrocaryum aculeatum* G. Mey) stands out with diverse traditional uses. Its fruit is highly appreciated in regional cuisine due to its pulp with its typical nutlike flavor, rich in calories, vitamins and minerals.

Tucuma, as a whole fruit or only the fresh manually processed pulp, can be easily found in local market fairs and is sold by street vendors in Manaus. Among the local products sold in these spaces, Tucuma traditionally has the highest value. One kilogram of pulp costs four times more than a kilogram of tambaqui, one of the most expensive fishes locally. The short shelf life and the low pulp yield per fruit are the main aspects that contribute to the high cost of pulp.

Considering the monthly amount marketed, this palm has an important economic contribution with an ever increasing trend in Manaus the capital of Amazonas State. Many fruits are still gathered from nature and do not come from commercial plantations. Frequently low-quality fruits are sold in the market mixed with those of superior quality. To overcome seasonal variation, several municipalities in the region, some up to 600 miles from Manaus, are supplying the market.

Thus Amazon-Tucuma can be considered as only semi-domesticated. This palm needs greater investment to increase the production of high-quality fruits, reduce the bottlenecks of long distance transport as well as the development of more efficient technologies for pulp extraction and pulp storage.

Isolde Dorothea Kossmann Ferraz

Dr^a. Pesquisadora do INPA/CBIO, Manaus-AM.

E- mail: iferraz@inpa.gov.br

Adriano Amir Didonet

MSc. em Ciências de Florestas Tropicais – INPA, Manaus- AM.

E-mail: adriano.didonet@inpa.gov.br