

Artocarpus hispidus



Taming the Wild Jack: Propagating Artocarpus hispidus

The world of exotic fruits is full of fascinating discoveries, and one such gem is the Artocarpus hispidus, commonly known as the cempedak's wilder cousin, the "wild jack" or "hog jack". Native to India and Southeast Asia, this tree boasts huge, spiky fruits with a pungent aroma and unique flavor. But what if you, a daring gardener, desire to cultivate this tropical marvel in your own backyard? Let's explore the fascinating journey of propagating Artocarpus hispidus.

Understanding the Beast: Seeds vs. Grafting

Just like taming a wild animal requires understanding its nature, successfully propagating Artocarpus hispidus demands knowledge of its quirks. You have two primary paths to choose from:

1. The Seed Route: Embracing the Unknown

The most common method, [seed propagation](#), involves a touch of patience and a dash of unpredictability.

- **Source your seeds:** Fresh seeds extracted from ripe

fruits offer the best chance of germination. Look for fruits with a strong aroma and slightly soft texture.

- **Prepare for takeoff:** Clean the seeds thoroughly, removing any pulp. Soak them in water for 24 hours to enhance germination.
- **Sow with care:** Plant the seeds about an inch deep in well-draining soil. Keep the soil consistently moist but not waterlogged.
- **Patience is key:** Germination can take anywhere from a few weeks to several months. Maintaining a warm, humid environment promotes faster sprouting.

Advantages of seed propagation:

- Relatively easy and accessible
- Allows for natural genetic variation, potentially leading to superior trees

Disadvantages of seed propagation:

- Longer time to fruiting (5-7 years)
- Inconsistent traits: Your new tree may not exhibit the desired fruit quality of the parent tree

2. The Grafting Gambit: Precision Propagation

Grafting, a slightly more advanced technique, allows you to clone existing trees with desirable characteristics, ensuring fruit quality and potentially faster fruit production.

- **Choose your weapons:** Select healthy, disease-free branches from a mature, fruiting *Artocarpus hispidus* tree as scions (the part you want to reproduce).
- **Find a worthy partner:** You'll need a compatible rootstock, ideally from a seedling of *Artocarpus hispidus* or a closely related species.
- **Master the art:** Grafting methods like wedge grafting or cleft grafting are commonly used. This involves carefully joining the scion and rootstock, ensuring

cambium layers (the growth tissue) touch.

- **Bandage and wait:** Secure the graft union with grafting tape or parafilm. Keep the grafted plant in a warm, humid environment.

Advantages of grafting:

- Preserves desired fruit qualities
- Potentially faster fruiting (3-5 years)

Disadvantages of grafting:

- Requires more skill and practice
- Finding suitable rootstock can be challenging

Nurturing Your Wild Jack Sapling

Whether you choose seeds or grafting, young *Artocarpus hispidus* trees crave consistent care:

- **Sunlight is life:** Provide at least 6 hours of direct sunlight daily.
- **Water wisely:** Maintain consistently moist soil, especially during dry periods.
- **Fertilize occasionally:** Feed with a balanced fertilizer every few months during the growing season.
- **Be vigilant against pests:** Monitor your tree for common pests and diseases and address them promptly.

The Reward of Patience

Propagating *Artocarpus hispidus*, while requiring some effort, is a rewarding endeavor for the adventurous gardener. The moment you harvest your first homegrown, pungent, and uniquely flavored fruit will make the journey worthwhile. So, embrace the challenge and experience the satisfaction of taming this wild and wonderful fruit tree.