

Cashew

The Cashew tree, also known as *Anacardium occidentale*, is a tropical evergreen tree that is native to Brazil. It was introduced to India by Portuguese traders in the 16th century and has since become a popular cash crop in the country. The tree is known for its delicious nuts, which are used for a variety of culinary purposes.

Tree Characteristics	Description
Common Name	Cashew
Scientific name	<i>Anacardium occidentale</i>
Maximum height	12-14 meters
Diameter when mature	25-30 cm
Years it takes to grow	5-7 years
Economic benefit to the farmers	Cashew is a high-value crop that provides significant economic benefits to farmers. The tree produces both the cashew nut and cashew apple, which can be sold for food processing or for making beverages. The nut itself is used for making various food items and as a snack. Additionally, the cashew shell can be used in the production of paints, varnishes, and other industrial products. Cashew trees can also be grown in agroforestry systems, which can provide additional income through the sale of other crops grown in the same system. Overall, cashew is a valuable crop for farmers in India and other tropical regions.

Physical Characteristics



The Cashew tree can grow up to a maximum height of 12-14 meters and has a spreading canopy. The leaves are leathery, elliptical, and dark green in color, while the flowers are small and pink. The tree produces a fruit that is kidney-shaped and contains a single seed, which is the cashew nut. The nut is attached to a fleshy, apple-like structure called the cashew apple, which is edible but not as widely consumed as the nut.

Ecological Role



The Cashew tree plays an important ecological role in India. It is a hardy species that can grow in a wide range of soil types and is resistant to drought, making it an ideal species for afforestation in arid and semi-arid regions. The tree also helps to prevent soil erosion and promotes the growth of other plants by providing shade and shelter.

Importance to Birds, Animals, and Insects



The Cashew tree is an important source of food for birds, animals, and insects. The cashew apple is eaten by a variety of animals, including monkeys and squirrels, while the nuts are a favorite of birds such as parrots and crows. The tree also provides a habitat for insects such as bees, which are important for pollination.

States in India Where the Tree is Found Naturally

The Cashew tree is found naturally in many states in India, including Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh.



States Where it is Commercially Grown

The Cashew tree is commercially grown in many states in India, including Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh.



Commercial Growing of Tree

The Cashew tree is grown commercially for its nuts, which are used for a variety of purposes, including culinary and industrial uses. The tree is also used for its medicinal properties and is a popular choice for agroforestry due to its ability to improve soil fertility and prevent soil erosion.



Different Stages of Tree Growth in Details

The Cashew tree goes through several stages of growth, including seed germination, seedling growth, and maturation. The seedlings are transplanted into the field after they have developed two to three leaves. The tree starts producing nuts after three to four years, and the nut harvesting season typically occurs between February and May.



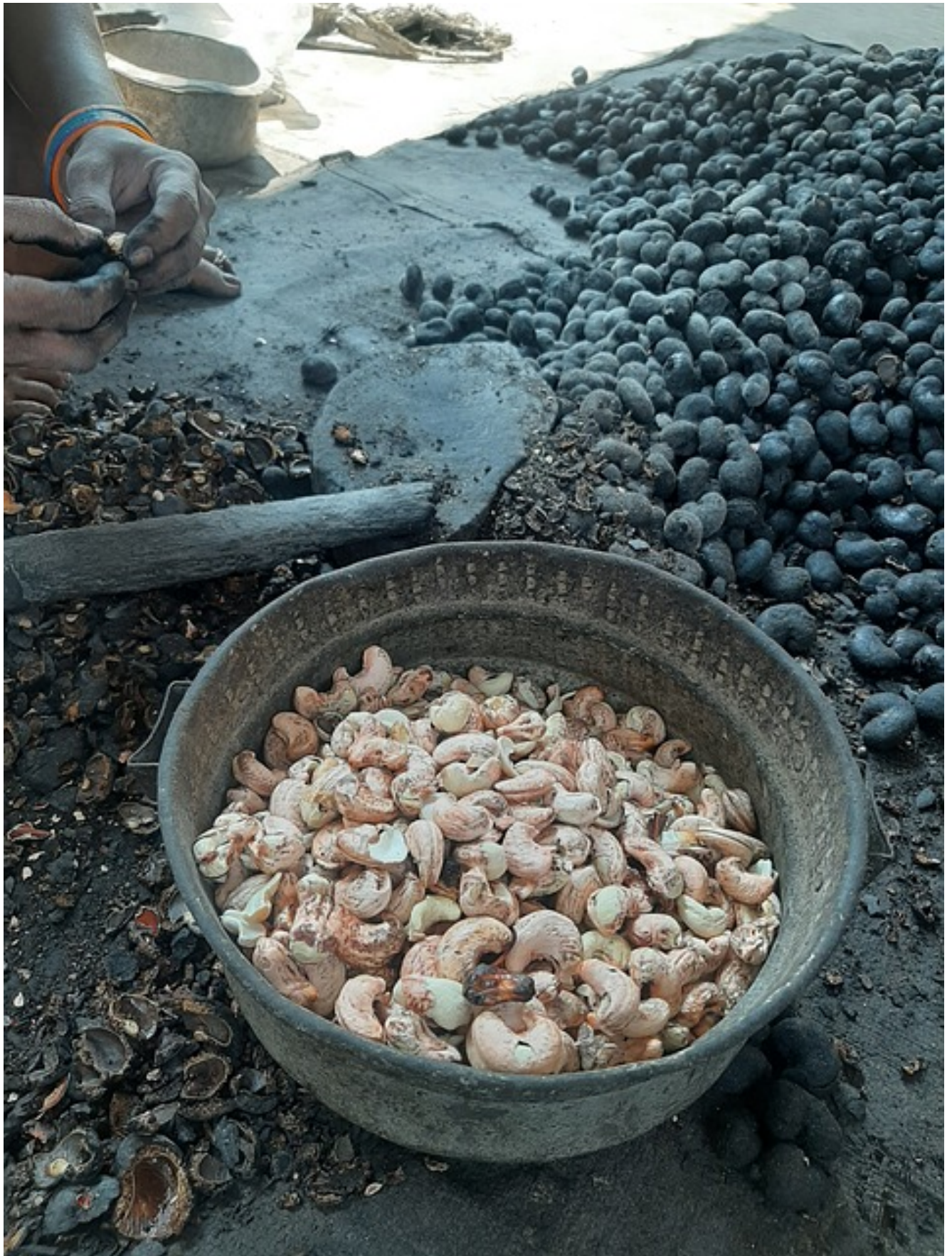
How Farmers are Benefited by Growing

Farmers can benefit from growing the Cashew tree under agroforestry by increasing their income through the sale of the nuts and other products derived from the tree. The tree also helps to improve soil fertility, reduce soil erosion, and provide shade and shelter for other crops, making it an ideal species for intercropping.



Harvesting

The Cashew nuts are harvested by hand when they are fully ripe. The nuts are then dried in the sun or in a mechanical dryer before being processed for sale.



Conclusion

The Cashew tree is an important species in India, both ecologically and economically. It provides food and habitat for a variety of animals and insects, and its nuts are used for a variety of culinary and industrial purposes. The tree is also an important species for agroforestry, helping to improve soil fertility and reduce soil erosion. Its cultivation and commercialization have the potential to improve the livelihoods of farmers and promote sustainable agriculture.

