

## Tasty Local Durian Locations

Written by Administrator  
Friday, 01 January 2010 00:00

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If only in 1952 the late former Indonesian president Sukarno or known as Bung Karno had tasted durian 'si terong' of Balaikarangan, Sanggau West Kalimantan, he would have not choose 'ajimah' of Bogor, West Java, as a durian that he liked the most. 'Si terong' of Sekayam riverbank tastes exceptional: sweet, dry, and soft like ice cream. It is even more interesting for having golden yellow pulp.

Compared to 'terong', 'ajimah' with white flesh is lowly. Though it has thick flesh, it is far less sweet. 'Now it tastes plain and tasteless,' says Gregori Garnadi Hambali, a durian hybridizer in Bogor. Whereas, according to Ir Wijaya MS, a durian breeder in Bogor, when 'ajimah' was still plucked from its parent tree in Sukajaya Village, Tamansari Subdistrict, Bogor Regency, the pulp is interesting and tasty. 'The pulp is yellowish, sweet and rather bitter, and smooth and mellow. The taste of 'ajimah' plucked from a 30-year old oculated offspring has shifted. The original rootstock of durian 'ajimah' that Wijaya tasted was dead struck by lightning 8 years ago. Thus, the only trail left of 'ajimah' superiority that still can be seen until today is its perfectly interesting round shape.

Besides 'ajimah', apparently, Bung Karno was also fond of 'saleja', 'hepe', and 'parung'. All of them are from Bogor. Unfortunately, 'saleja' and 'paruh' have extincted and no longer untraceable. The only Bung Karno's favorite durian of which delicateness still can be savored is 'hepe'. A reporter of *Trubus*, **Imam Wiguna**, had his first hand experience to taste hepe (meaning flat, **ed**) picked from its original rootstock in Bendungan Village, Jonggol Subdistrict, Bogor Regency at the end of December 2009. 'Hepe' is fine melted sweet on the tongue but rather bitter, solid, and flat-seeded. The rootstock of 'hepe' has been more than 100 years old now and is in possession of H Abroh who inherits it from his father, H Arnen.

### Limited

In Greg's opinion, the reason why all of Bung Karno's favorite durians came from Bogor is because the condition of Indonesia 58 years ago was different from today's. At that time, all kinds of fruit in Jakarta were mostly supplied from Bogor. It was very unlikely that the fruit delivered from Pontianak or Pandeglang arrived in Jakarta still in fresh condition. 'The transportation infrastructure at that time was not as easy as today's. Not to mention there were still many insurrection happening,' Greg explains.

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Interestingly, in every region there is a durian 'bung karno'. It is likely that every time Bung Karno made an out-of-town visit he was served with the most delicious local durian *Durio zibethinus*

For example 21 durian 'bung karno' native to Bangka Belitung which now are also grown in Mekarsari Amazing Tourism Park (Taman Wisata Mekarsari, TWM), Cileungsi, Bogor. They are 15 years old already. Unfortunately, the fruit yielded from those oculated offspring have not been stable yet. It is sometimes sweet, sometimes rather bitter, and sometimes tasteless. The texture is still a bit hard.

### Superior

One thing for sure, it seems all durian 'bung karno' have been conquered by newly emerged durian varieties. 'Durian explorations are conducted more often. There are also more durian competitions held in every regency. Accordingly, there are more superior durians previously known only in their local regions coming out to the surface. In addition, the criteria of superior durian has now been formulated and refined,' explains Dr Ir Winny Dian Nugraha MS, the director of the Fruit Crops Cultivation, Directorate General of Horticulture, the Ministry of Agriculture Republic of Indonesia.

According to Sobir Phd, the head of Center for Research on Tropical Fruit (Pusat Kajian Buah Tropika, PKBT) of Bogor Agricultural University, most consumers prefer thick, sweet, dry, soft textured durian. Attractive color - such as yellow or yellowish white - is an added value for it stimulates consumers to taste. 'Such is the kind of superior durian preferred by consumers. In the past, superior durians had delicate pulp texture but mushy. For that reason, they were less preferred,' Sobir says. A perfect round fruit is said to be the best durian shape. Contrariwise, only a limited number of premium consumers prefer a sweet and rather bitter durian.

As for commercial durians, Sobir said that there are supplementary conditions: 'They must be harvestable at 80% prior to ripe on the tree and remain tasty after being ripened,' he elaborates. It is done to facilitate the shipping transportation and marketing in fruit shops. As for farmer's requirement, the variety must be high in productivity.

### Productive

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'Terong' that was discovered from an exploration in Balaikarangan, Sanggau, West Kalimantan, conducted by Baharuddin Bsc, Simbul Haryadi, Dr Moh Reza Tirtawinata MS, and *Trubus* in early January 2010 is said to meet the criteria preferred by consumers. 'The pulp is sweet, fine melted, and dry. In addition, 'terong' also has interesting color: golden yellow,' says Dr Ir Ahmad Dimiyati MS, the Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture Republic of Indonesia. Other 4 superior durian varieties in Dimiyati's opinion are 'parong', 'sigapur', 'tingi', and 'merah'. They not only meet thickness requirement, but also high level of uniformity.

When a reporter of *Trubus* came to visit Balaikarangan, 'terong' tree at the bank of Sekayam River were being inundated with 2.000 durians. What an amazing number indeed. Each 'terong' only weighs about 1 - 1,5 kg, thus the 100 year old tree - of which circumference is three times of adult's embrace - generates many fruits. Other durian trees with equal trunk circumference will only generate 200 - 300 durians the utmost. 'The fruit is small in size but the highest in production among other durian sekayam,' says Hizbullah Bin H Mustofa Yusuf, a mine entrepreneur in Balaikarangan who extended his assistance to obtain 'terong'.

Accordingly, Ir Ibrahim Arsyad MS, the environment manager of PT Medco thought that 'terong' is potential to be cultivated. 'This durian will open a big market. Its small size makes the price is affordable for consumers,' explained Ibrahim. Understandably, in modern market durian is priced per kg, thus the smallest the size the more affordable the price. As for farmers, they will like 'terong' due to its high productivity.

According to Winny, Other varieties comparable to 'terong' are 'si seupah', 'si kapal', and 'si lereng' originated from Pandeglang, Banten, and 'elsa', the champion of durian competition held in Jepara, Central Java. The pulps of all three are attractive and thick. The pulp of 'si seupah' is butter-like yellow with red tint. It is sweet, delicate, and rather bitter. Though the colors of 'si kapal' and 'si lereng' are not as glaring as 'si seupah', their flavors are slightly different: sweet, delicate, fine melted, and dry. The outer figures of all three varieties are perfectly round.

## New Centers

The discovery of those superior durian varieties in Bogor, Sanggau, and Pandeglang is only a small result of *Trubus* durian exploration conducted in December 2009 - January 2010. Surprisingly, a durian center in Negerisakti Village, in Gedongtataan Subdistrict, Pesawaran Regency, Lampung, retains a tasty durian variety. It is called 'negerisakti'. Its pulp is sweet, fine melted, dry, but sticky on the tongue, and thick. In one segment there are only 1 - 2 pongge.

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The uncovering of 'negerisakti' has broken the common assumption that durians of Lampung are of bad quality.

Still in Lampung, other tasty durians such as 'si bongkok', 'trenggiling', 'si gobang', 'si kancil', 'si manalagi', 'segitiga', 'si rajawali', and 'si kendit' were also revealed. They are local durians grown from seeds in Kedawung Village, Kemiling Subdistrict, Bandarlampung, belonged to Ir Hanan Abdul Rozak MS, the head of Lampung Provincial Husbandry and Animal Health Service.

In another location, precisely at Simpangasem, Batuputu Village, North Telukbetung Subdistrict, Bandarlampung, there was the offspring of 'putar alam' - a cultivar which has been popular - grown from seed. It belongs to Baharudin. Though grown from seeds, the pulp of 'putar alam' is sweet, bitter, and sticky tasted on the tongue. 'It tastes the same as the pulp of rootstock. The only difference lies in smaller size,' says Emmyati Oesman, a staff in Lampung Province Center for Seed Supervision and Certification (Balai Pengawasan dan Sertifikasi Benih, BPSB). Other tasty durians in Lampung are also spread in South Lampung.

In Malang, East Java, according to Prof Ir Sumeru Ashari MagrSc PhD there are new durian centers to be precisely in Ngantang and Kasembon. In total, there are 65.000 durian crops cultivated there. One of the proven varieties is 'jingga', the favorite of current Indonesian president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. It is called 'jingga' (orange, **ed**) for it has sweet and bitter orange pulp. Other than 'jingga', there are also 'arab' and the brand newest, durian botak (bald, **ed**)

### New Varieties

In addition to exploration in new centers, the exploration was also conducted in old centers. Take as an example old durian center in Leuwiliang, Bogor. There can be found 2 new exceptional durian varieties. They are 'cipelat' and 'si kuya'. The former is called 'cipelat' because on the outer part of its husk there is a distinct rather wide plate. A plate on outer husk is usually in form of a line, but the plate on 'cipelat' reaches 1 cm wide. The pulp of 'cipelat' is yellow and very sweet. Each fruit weighs 4 - 5 kg.

'Si kuya' is far more extraordinary. The pulp is very thick of which thickness may reach 2 cm. 'It

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is the local monthong of Leuwiliang,' says Saipudin, who owns the crops. The only different is monthong tastes bitterless sweet, while 'si kuya' tastes sweet rather bitter due to its alcoholic content. For such peculiarity, 'cipelat' and 'si kuya' on the tree is valued at Rp50.000 - Rp75.000. Far beyond other local durians in around Leuwiliang that are only priced at Rp20.000 - Rp30.000.

Yonder in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Reza discovered 'si gadung', a new far tastier durian than 'tong medaya' - a legendary durian of Lombok - which was discovered 6 years ago. 'Si gadung' tastes sweet, savory, dry, but sticky once on the tongue. It is as sticky as sticky rice. 'Si gadung' has yellow color and flat seed. 'In 1 to 9 scale, 'si gadung' gets 9, while 'tong medaye' gains 8,5,' Reza assessed.

### Rich local

Those various local durians discovered reaffirmed the diversity of superior durians in Indonesia. 'Since 1984 hitherto there have been 67 national superior varieties released by the Ministry of Agriculture,' Winny says. While the unrecorded number of local superior durian is estimated more than 200 varieties. Unfortunately, most of them are only superior as a single tree. In other words they are coming from old trees that were grown from seeds and not from commercial scale orchard. There have been many superior durians propagated and grown in other regions experience a change in flavor.

Moreover, those tasty durians are not easily found at stalls on sidewalks. 'All superior durians have been reserved even when they were still unripe,' says Saifudin, the owner of 'cipelat' and 'si kuya'. So if there are some superior durians at a stall, they are usually hidden by the seller. For example the case of durian 'hepe' in Jonggol, Bogor. 'I only display local durian from village. I intentionally hide 'hepe' because it is already booked by regular customers,' explained H Eem, a durian seller who also propagates 'hepe'.

The case is different for many durian monthong of Thailand peddled on sidewalk. 'Monthong has a wide adaptability. It is widely grown in Thailand as well as in Indonesia and the quality does not differ a lot,' Wijaya said. Obviously, 98,6% out of 24.679 tons of imported are durian of Thailand. Monthong covers 99% of that number, while chanee and kanjau are the rest. 1,1% of durian is imported from Malaysia; 0,1% from the United States and China; 0,07% from Chile, and 0,06% from Australia.

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### Local vs monthong

For the last 2 years, some monthong that have been sold in modern fruit shop are supplied by local farmers such as in South Lampung, Lampung and Kendal, Central Java. It is because the wide adaptability of monthong in Indonesia. Winny said that in the future the development of local durian will need a new develop strategy. 'Apparently, durian character is location specific. So if there is a plan to develop a durian variety, the choice should fall to familiar local superior durian or any tasty durian discovered around the orchard,' he adds.

Take as an example what Erick Wiraga in Subang, West Java, does. He observed superior local durians such as 'matahari', 'petruk', 'lai', and any other local durians around his orchard. He gives numeric code to any tasty - nameless - durians found around his orchards. For example 222, 127, or 228. Once they are grown and do not change in terms of flavor, Erick will immediately multiply the number of planting up to 7000 plants in total. 'Now they are being propagated,' Erick says. Obviously, 95% durian crops in his orchard are local varieties.

Contrariwise from monthong, durian seedlings of Malaysia which have also been imported since 1990s have not shown a satisfying outcome. 'The flavors of durians native to Malaysia such as D24 and Mdur have changed so that they are still not commercial,' explains Lutfi Bansir, a durian researcher of Durian Research Centre, University of Brawijaya, Malang.

The actual number of import durian, as confirmed by Winny, is merely 3,6% than the production number of local durian that reaching 683.232 tons. Import durians seem to dominate local durians because they are displayed attractively in modern fruit shop or fruit shop on sidewalk. In regards of flavor, they tend to have a relatively uniform flavor. Thus, they are relatively safe choice for novice durian lovers who worry of being tricked. Accordingly, durian consumption per capita in Indonesia has been multiplied to 10 times than 5 years ago.

### Promote local

Now, to promote the prestige of local durians, the Ministry of Agriculture is socializing a program to promote local durians as the host in Indonesia with qualities to emulate monthong. At the first

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stage, the program will be targeting on developing durians in 10 center provinces which include 15 regencies and cities. As scheduled, 500 - 1.000 local superior durian is going to be developed in every center - or equal to 5 - 10 ha. For example in Majalengka, West Java, government suggests farmers to grow durian 'perwira' that has been proven to be superior. While in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, the option goes to 'tong medaye'.

In Reza's opinion, the development of local durian ideally is not intended to substitute import durians. Instead, it should be intended to substitute local durians of low quality peddled on stalls. 'Among local durians peddled on a stall, there is at least only 1 - 5% of super quality,' Reza states. Accordingly, the number of planting in every center is different depending on the width of local center area. For example, in one center in Leuwiliang based on inventory there are 20.000 durian trees (assuming the commercial orchard is 10 m x 10 m of plant spacing or equal to 200 ha) - thus, 20.000 seedlings of superior local durian should be grown there. Farmers can choose either top working or planting new seedlings as a strategy.

By doing so, it is expected that within the next 5 years the durians will start to bear fruit and the peak of harvest will take place within the next 10 years. 'It is going to be a long term process and must be handled carefully,' Reza says. In Lutfi's opinion only time can prove the powerfulness of local superior durian in replacing local durians of low quality. **(Destika Cahyana/Reporter(s): Ari Chaidir, A. Arie Raharjo, Faiz Yajri, Imam Wiguna, Nesia Artdiyasa, Rosy Nur Apriyanti)**