



22/05/09

Information Sheet – Sex and papaya

The variety Solo Sunrise produces trees that are either **hermaphrodite** (male and female sex organs on one flower) or **female**. A hermaphrodite tree will only produce hermaphrodite fruit and a female tree will only produce female fruit.



Hermaphrodite fruit



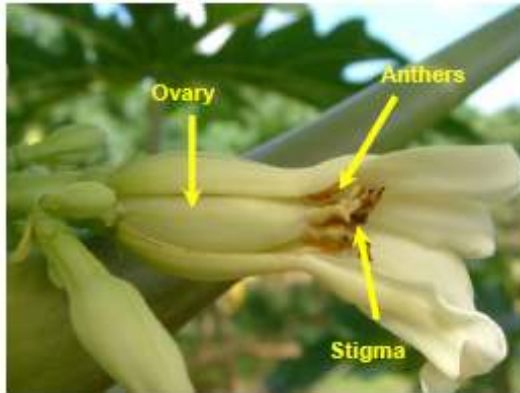
Female fruit

Hermaphrodite papaya fruit are more popular because they have more flesh and less seed per fruit.

Export markets are becoming more particular and will begin to demand only hermaphrodite fruit. The Hawaiian papaya industry is based only on hermaphrodite fruit with no female fruit exported. Even local markets will slowly be turned away from buying female fruit because you are getting better value for your money with the hermaphrodite.

The **sex** of a tree can be determined once the tree starts flowering. You can identify the hermaphrodite flower by its shape. The hermaphrodite flower is longer and has two noticeable parts where the female flower has one complete section and is more swollen where it attaches to the flower stem.

If you are unsure of the flower type from its external appearance you can also tell by the parts inside the flower. The pictures below shows the internal appearance of the hermaphrodite flower (note the yellow anthers alongside the ovary) and the internal appearance of the female flower (note there are no yellow anthers just an ovary and the stigma.)



Hermaphrodite flower



Female Flower

A common farming practice in other papaya producing countries is to control the sex of trees by planting 3-5 trees per hole and then 'sexing' plants once they begin to flower.



