

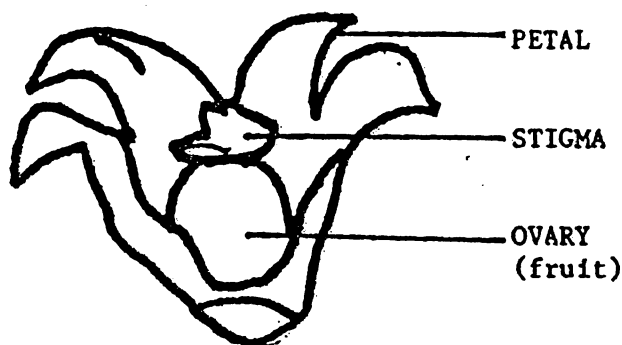
Determining the Basic Flower Types of Papaya

Perhaps you may have noticed healthy and vigorous papaya trees which flowers profusely but fail to set fruits or even have small, roundish fruits up to approximately 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long turning yellow and dropping off. This is a normal occurrence if it is a female flowering (pistillate) papaya tree because these small fruits, which are really ovaries of female flowers, probably have not been pollinated.

Pollination requires pollen from hermaphrodite flowers and if this occurs, then a papaya develops and matures but becomes somewhat round in shape. Even if hermaphrodite flowering trees are growing nearby, they are not very good pollinators of female flowers. Because of this difficulty with pollination and because of the round, softball shaped fruits, female trees are usually considered undesirable.

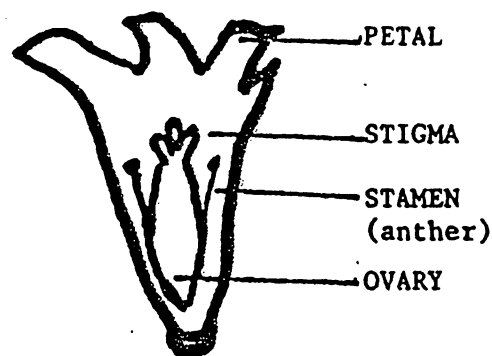
Hermaphrodite papaya trees have flowers with both male and female parts and are usually consistent bearers of fruit because they are self-pollinating. These fruits are slightly more elongated than fruits from female trees.

When planting papaya seeds or seedlings, plant to establish at least three trees per planting hole. These plants should be allowed to grow until they reach flowering stage. (Note: Buying papaya plants at plant nurseries will not assure one of having a hermaphrodite flowering papaya tree since only after flowering can trees be determined whether it is female, or hermaphrodite, or male.) At this time, the trees can be sexed by looking at the flowers and the males (long pendulent inflorescence) and the females should be cut down. There are approximately two hermaphrodite plants to every female plant. Male flowering trees are practically non-existent.



FEMALE FLOWER

Flowers rather large. Ovary present but no stamens. Five separate petals fused to one another at base of ovary.



HERMAPHRODITE FLOWER

Flowers tubular shape. Have both pistil and stamen within flower.

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