

THE CITRUS DECUMANA OR SHADDOCK

This excellent fruit has had an involved and not entirely fortunate nomenclative history. A citrus fruit of the East Indies, it is said to have been taken from there to the West Indies by a Captain Shaddock, late in the 17th century, and called the *shaddock* (1696) or *pomplemousse* (1696) (See Weekley, *Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*, 1921). There is no difficulty thus over the word *shaddock*, except that it has unhappily dropped out of common usage. There are variant spellings, of course. But *pomplemousse*, again spelt variously, is given a variety of interpretations, partly because it is an international word and involves different languages in its etymology. A. Dauzat, *Dictionnaire Étymologique*, (1938), gives

pamplemousse, (pompelmous, 1666, Thévenot), empr. au néerl.

pompelmoes (comp. de *pompel*, gros, épais, et *limoes*, citron).

L. Clédat, *Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Française*, (1931), abandons it bluntly as

pamplemousse, mot tamoul.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* takes it further back, giving *pompoun* pumpkin (Dutch) and *limoes* (Javanese fr. Port. *limoes*. plural of *limaos* (lemon). The *Shorter Oxford* gives *pompoen* for pumpkin. This is reasonable, since the fruit has the colour of a lemon, is a citrus fruit and is shaped rather like a small pumpkin. The *Shorter Oxford* gives *lemon*, *limon* (Fr.), *limaos* (Port.), *lima* (Sp.), *limone* (It.) and medieval Latin (*limo*-(n) as probably of oriental origin, cf. Arab. *laimun*, Pers. *limun*, etc. Onions, *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (1966), takes it ultimately back to Arab. *lima*, coll. *lim* (cf. the English word *lime*).

Another international word for the *citrus decumana* is *pomelo*. *Shorter Oxford* gives *Pomelo*. 1858. (origin obsc.) a. In the E. Indies, a synonym for Pompelmoose or Shaddock. b. In America, a variety of *Citrus*, also called «grape-fruit».

So we come to the most puzzling name of all, grapefruit, for surely there is no sufficient similarity between the grape and the shaddock to justify this name. OED. under *grape* gives, *grape-fruit* (U.S), the pomelo, a smaller variety of the shaddock, *citrus decumana*. Onions also sidesteps the issue, giving under *grape*, Hence *grape-fruit* (orig. U.S.), haddock, pomelo. XIX (i.e. 19th centry).

Eric Partridge in *Origins* (1958) blandly gives, under *grape*, «Such compounds as *grapefruit* and *grapevine* are self-explanatory.» Are they indeed! The only attempt I know of to explain this word occurs in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1959), under *Grapefruit*. «In 1914, John Lunan in his *Hortus Jamaicensis* mentioned that there was a variety of the shaddock «known by the name of *grape-fruit* on account of its resemblance in flavour to the grape.» I am very fond of both fruits but such a resemblance has eluded me.

Unjustified though it may be, this 19th century American invention seems to have ousted *shaddock*, *pomplemousse* and *pomelo* from teh usage of the English-speaking world, though forms of *pomplemousse* are still current in French, Dutch and German, and my Cassell's *French-English Dictionary* (1933) nobly gives, *pamplermousse - shaddock*.

More unfortunately, the American word is finding its way into other languages. This fruit is groên very successfully in Turkey but is known there commercially as *greffurt* and *greyfruit*. I have even met *greyfurt*. But in popular Turkish usage there are excellently descriptive names, *altin top* (golden ball) and *kiz memesi* (girl's breast).

As for disappearing *shaddock*, which would certainly provide a more oriental sounding word than *greffruit*, the first use recorded by OED is the following: 1707. Sloane *Jamaica* I. 41. In Barbados the Shaddocks surpass those of Jamaica in goodness. The seed of this was first brought to Barbados by one Captain Shaddock, Commander of an East-India ship, who touch'd at that Island in his Passage to England, and left the seed there.

OED. also records a pleasant use, a. 1818. M.G. Lewis, *Jrnl. W. Ind.* (1834) 23.

My coffee walks and shaddock bowers.

In the case of another citrus fruit, the orange, it is curious that Near and Middle Eastern languages should associate it with the farthest western country, Portugal, whilst the western languages, but not German, use forms of the Arabic *naranjs*, Persian *narang*. The German word is *Apfelsile* and the medieval French *pomme d'orange*, and this suggests that *pomelo* is also a word of Romance origin. Another curiosity is that though the Turkish word for orange is *portakal*, the word for the bitter, Seville orange is *turunc* (the c pronounced as j), which must come from the Catalan word for orange, *taronja*, the name having travelled to Turkey with the fruit.

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