

# Macadamias

## Background

Macadamias are evergreen Australian trees named after the Australian scientist Dr John McAdam. They grow in subtropical rainforests of northern New South Wales and Queensland. Indigenous Australians called the macadamia nut 'Kindal Kindal' and while it has been valued as a food for thousands of years, it is only recently that the nut has become the most commercialised bush food. Other names for macadamia nuts include: bauple nuts (because they grew near Mt Bauple), bopple nuts, and Queensland nuts.

The first macadamia plantation was established in northern New South Wales in the 1880s but difficulties encountered in cracking the tough shell thwarted development of the industry. Macadamia trees were introduced to Hawaii in 1882 for windbreak plantings and it was there in the 1930s at the University of Hawaii that the commercial potential of the nut was developed. Hawaii soon became the world's largest producer of macadamia. Commercial orchards were planted in Australia and in 1954 the first mechanised processing plant ensured a viable industry. During the 1970s and 1980s large new plantings extended throughout the high rainfall coastal areas, however, the varieties grown took some eight or nine years to produce an economic crop. Improved varieties were essential for the success of the industry. In 1974 the Australian Macadamia Society was formed and a voluntary levy on growers provided funds for research that included the development of high-yielding hybrids. By the year 2000 Australia was the leading producer of macadamias and production continues to increase as new plantings come into bearing. New technical developments also continue to improve processing efficiency and nut quality. Other macadamia producing countries include Hawaii, South Africa, Kenya, Malawi, Brazil, Guatemala and Costa Rica.

The Australian Macadamia Society is based in Lismore in northern New South Wales and has some 800 members. However, macadamia production extends from southern Queensland to northern New South Wales. The major centres of production are: the