



# ‘Pawpaw, not papaya’



Walk 2—  
Mapping Edges:  
Marrickville



'I eat a lot of the leaf,  
so I grow the papaya  
every year.'

The fruits of papaya  
are delicious but can  
be hard to reach

## Walk 2: Papayas

Papayas originated in Mexico and are one of those edible species, like chillis and lemongrass, ubiquitous in suburbs which are, or have been, home to Southeast Asian communities. Sydney is home to Australia's largest Vietnamese community. Arriving as refugees and family reunion migrants in the mid 1970s, many settled in Marrickville and probably began cultivating papayas, or at least eating them and spitting out the seeds at the edges of their properties.







**'So my grandmother (in Indonesia) ate this. You never have to buy any vegetables, so they grow their own things. They've got the pond for fish. The only thing she bought I think it was salt.'**



There are as many stories as there are now papaya trees.

During one of our interviews, the papaya tree was one of our first talking points' when the gardener we were visiting corrected our identification. 'Pawpaw, not papaya', she said very pleased as, she explained pawpaw and mango do



Papaya trees often  
appear in gutters  
and cracks in the  
pavement

not grow in Pescara, one the east coast of Italy, where she is originally from (whether picked green or ripe, papaya, pawpaw, or papaw are all from the same plant, *Carica papaya*). In Australia the red-fleshed fruit from hermaphrodite trees is labeled as papaya and the larger yellow-fleshed fruit from dioecious trees as pawpaw). The papaya tree came out of her compost, which means that she or one of her children probably made the choice to eat a papaya before she chose to grow it. It's not just humans putting the seeds in their compost heaps: papayas also collaborate with other species. Bats and birds, for instance, help papayas to move across the urban landscape.



Papaya plants like abundant water so often flourish around drains.

**‘This papaya came up because I buried the food scraps just in holes in the garden.’**

**'Oh I grow them from seed but I transferred this one, because this is full sun here.'**



# Mapping Edges – Marrickville

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