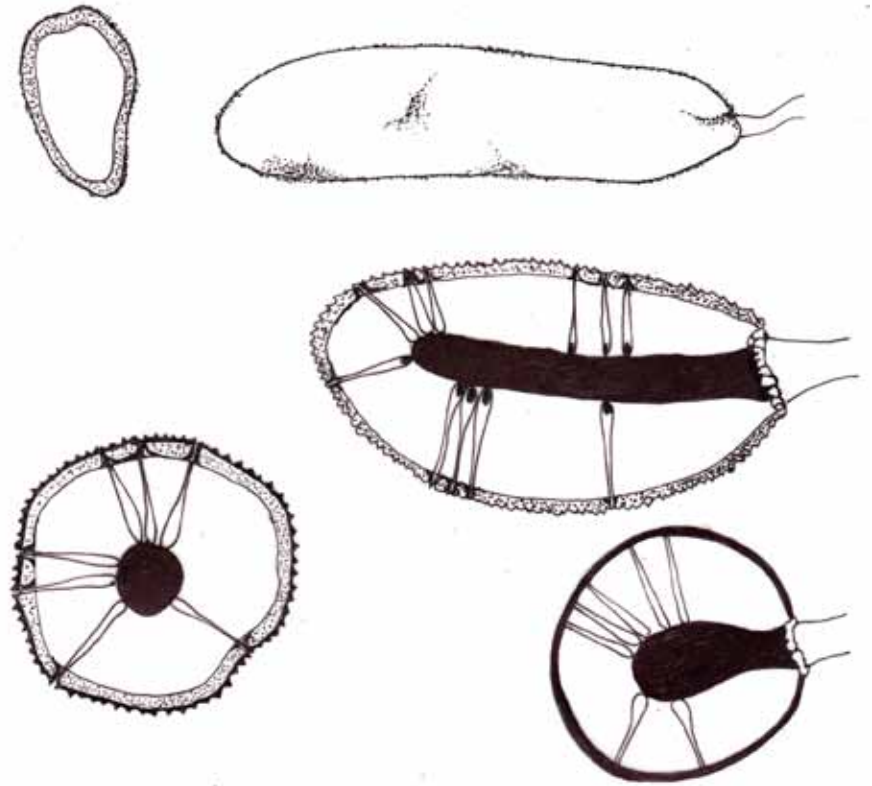
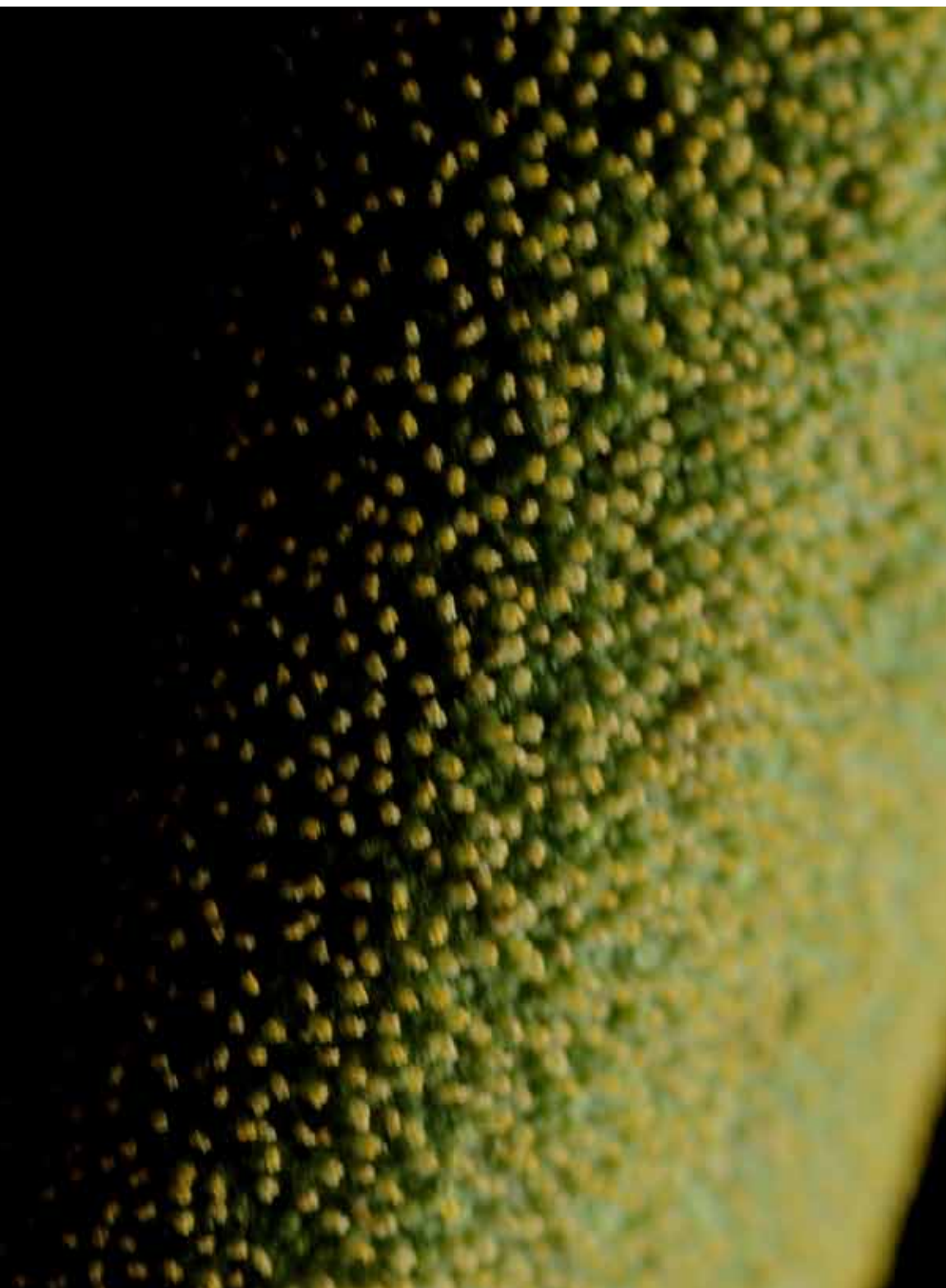


From 'Micro' flower to 'Mega' fruit

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Most of us are familiar with the curious yellow blobs of nangka (jack fruit) or cempedak - chewy, delectable layers of flesh surrounding large, no less edible seeds. But asked whether they have seen the flowers of a nangka or cempedak tree most people would answer with a perplexed but firm "no". Yet, flowers they have - members of the genus *Artocarpus* to which nangka, cempedak and sukun belong, bear male and female flowers on separate distinct inflorescences on the same tree.



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The process of fruiting starts with the emergence of male and female inflorescences from the plant. The large individual seeds in ripe fruit give little indication of their origin as tiny reduced female flowers in a compound inflorescence. Male inflorescences quickly wither and drop to the ground after discharge of the pollen, while fertilised female flowers begin to enlarge, together with the inflorescence (known as a syncarp), growing into sometimes monstrous-sized fruits. Nangka produce the biggest tree-born fruits on earth from those tiny flowers, with ripe fruit that take about three months to mature, easily exceeding 100 lbs (up to 50 kg) in weight. Such large specimens of nangka may contain up to 500 individual seeds.



