

# THE COFFEE

# TREE

## COFFEA

Sixty different species of coffee tree, two alone dominate world trade:

### ARABICA

- Altitudes: 3,000 to 6,500 feet
- Refined flavor containing 1% of caffeine by weight
- Yield 1 to 1.5 pounds of green coffee per year
- Used by specialty roasters
- Accounts for 75% of the world production.

### ROBUSTA

- Altitudes: lower elevations
- Harsh flavor containing 2% of caffeine by weight
- Yield 2 to 3 pounds of green coffee per year
- Used for lower grade coffees
- Used in instant coffees and popular commercial blends

## SOIL

Coffee grows on varied soils - volcanic, siliceous clay, alluvial and peat and sand. Like the vine, soil gives a particular character to the same botanical species and different "Vintages" arise. Soil must be deep (roots are 1 to 2 metres) and acid (pH 4.5 to 6).

## CHERRIES (DRUPES)

- Green to begin with, the berries ripen over several months, becoming successively yellow, then red, garnet red, and finally almost black
- The ideal time for harvesting is when the berries are red
- Inside the drupe, protected by the "mesocarp" or pulp, lie two small beans separated by a groove. These must be extracted and roasted before they can be used for consumption

## GROWING FACTORS

- Avoiding excessive cold and heat
- 1200-1500mm of rain per annum
- A few hours of light per day
- No strong winds
- Altitude - The higher the better

## LEAVES

- Evergreen with spear-shaped leaves
- Green and shiny on the upper side
- Leaves grow in pairs on either side of the stem and they are stipulated
- Robusta tree leaves are much larger than those of the Arabica

