



The Alphonso Mango -- Endangered by Climate Change?

My eye couldn't help but be drawn to this headline from the *Times of India*: 'Nearly 80% of mango crop ruined by climate change'.

Wow, I thought. Even for a pessimist like myself, that's quite a lot. And how did they determine that? Then I looked at the story. Here's the lede:

Alphonso, the king of mangoes, has fallen victim to climate change. The state government's preliminary estimate is that nearly 80% of the [mango crop](#) has been destroyed, said [agriculture minister Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil](#).

"The trees flowered far in excess of everyone's expectations . The devastation has taken us by surprise. I am told it is because of climate change," said Vikhe-Patil who has called a meeting on Wednesday to assess the damage.

That's it. That's the entire evidence that we have in the article for the proposition that climate change caused the excessive flowering. The minister doesn't even bother to describe a source, much less cite the scientific basis for it. And the headline "quote" appears to be made up: no

Climate change is real. It is serious. We need to combat right now. But it does no good to ascribe causation without evidence. Maybe the evidence will be sketchy or imperfect: in fact, it probably *will* be, because it is difficult to trace causation to specific events. But there should at least be a plausible case. This doesn't help.

For the record, I can affirm from personal experience that the [Alphonso Mango](#) is absolutely delicious, and the Indian ones just put what Americans usually think of as mangoes to shame. That's more evidence than is contained in the *Times of India* piece.