



Persimmons

Persimmons

- Trees are small, easy to grow, and adapted to most of Texas
- Trees and fruit have no serious disease or insect problems
- Fruit is rich in vitamin A and has more vitamin C than citrus fruit
- Wood is very hard, prized by woodworkers

Persimmons – Wild Varieties

- American Persimmon
 - Grows wild in the South and reaches as far west at the Colorado River of Texas
 - Groves are common in abandoned pastures and along fence rows
 - Fruit is small and very bitter until completely ripe
 - Usually ripe after the first frost and all the leaves have fallen from the tree
 - Makes excellent rootstock and is graft compatible for cultivated Oriental persimmons

Persimmons – Wild Varieties

- Texas Persimmon

- Found in northern Mexico and Central and West Texas
- Especially abundant in the Edwards Plateau
- Tree has small, purple fruit and is known for its peeling bark
- It is not graft compatible with American or Oriental persimmons



Persimmons – Wild Varieties

- Oriental Persimmons

- Introduced into the US in the mid-1800s from China and Japan
- It has been an important food crop in each of those countries for hundreds of years, eaten fresh, dried or cooked



Persimmons – Soil Adaption

- American persimmon, used as the rootstock for Oriental persimmon trees, thrives in sands to bottomland as long as the soils do not stand in water
- Texas persimmon resists root rot; American persimmon is moderately susceptible; Oriental persimmon is highly susceptible
- Oriental trees must be grafted onto American root stock in order to grow!

Persimmons – Site Preparation

- Plant trees every 15 to 18 feet in rows that are 20 feet apart
- Plant the tree to the same depth it grew in the nursery
- Water thoroughly



Persimmons - Pruning

- Shape young plants by pruning the shoots during the first few seasons
- Forces growth into framework branches off a central leader
- Goal is to develop a pyramid shape with 3-5 main limbs at about 1-foot intervals on the trunk

Persimmons - Pruning

- Prune mature plants during winter
- Open the canopy to prevent self shading, reduce excessively vigorous shoot growth, and regulate crop load
- Preserve limbs that grow off the leader at wide angles
- Persimmon fruit develops on have grown in the current season

Persimmons - Cultivation

- Supplement rainfall with irrigation during the spring growth flush and during summer
- Apply fertilizer, if needed, as new shoots emerge in early spring
- Persimmon typically produce seedless fruit, which tend to drop before full maturity
- Heavy mulch and appropriate water will help reduce the amount of fruit drop

Persimmons - Harvest

- Fruit should be allowed to hang on the tree as long as possible unless varmints (opossums, racoons, birds, deer, rats) are an issue
- Remove fruit with a gentle pull when they develop a vibrant orange color
- The astringency (tartness) from unripe fruits is caused by tannins in the peel
- Fruit ripen equally on or off the tree

Persimmons – Oriental Varieties

- Most Oriental varieties, except 'Eureka' produce seedless fruit
- 'Eureka' and 'Fuyu' will pollinate other varieties
- 'Eureka'
 - Heavy producing, medium-sized, flat-shaped red fruit
 - Tree is relatively small and self-fruitful
 - Fruit typically contains seeds
 - Best commercial variety in Texas

Persimmons – Oriental Varieties

- ‘Hachiya’
 - Productive, very large, cone-shaped seedless fruit with bright orange skin
 - Dual purpose tree – fruit and ornamental
- ‘Tane-nashi’
 - Moderately productive, cone-shaped, seedless orange fruit
 - Excellent landscape ornamental
- ‘Tamopan’
 - Moderately productive, very large, flat orange fruit
 - Most vigorous and upright variety grown in Texas

Persimmons – Oriental Varieties

- ‘Fuyu’
 - Medium sized, non-astringent, self-fruitful
 - Fruit is rather flattened, orange-colored, and of high quality
- ‘Izu’
 - Medium sized, non-astringent fruit.
 - Seems to be more cold hardy, ripens in September
- ‘Fankio’
 - Large, conical gold fruit
 - Leaves turn bright red as the gold fruit ripens in the fall