

PERSIMMON TREES

By Sharon Mejia, University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener of Calaveras County

Photos of Persimmon tree at the Master Gardeners' Demonstration Garden by Ed Ransom



PERSIMMON (*Diospyros kaki*)

The Persimmon is a very good fruit tree for the home orchard. The trees bloom late, therefore avoiding the spring frost and they don't require much winter chilling. They perform well

throughout the state and will prosper in the foothills. Their vivid fall foliage is an added feature.

Persimmon trees thrive in a variety of soils as long as they have good drainage. They tolerate wet feet in winter and dry conditions in summer. The tree and fruit is almost pest free. This makes the Persimmon tree an ideal choice for our area.

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF TREES:

1. The Hachiya has large, deep orange-red, acorn-shaped fruit. The fruit is very astringent until very ripe and soft; wait until the flesh is quite soft before eating. The tree does not need cross-pollination. Trees get large and require an area to allow for a 20 foot width.

2. The Fuyu has medium to large, flat, orange-red colored fruit. The flesh is firm like that of an Apple and non-astringent when ripe. Cross-pollination is not required, but when present, the fruit will have seeds. The trees are smaller than Hachiya, requiring a width of 14 to 16 feet. The fruit loses astringency at maturity while still firm and crunchy.

PRUNING

Persimmons bear mainly on new shoots that originate from near the tips of one-year-old branches, so avoid heading cuts.

FRUIT THINNING-

Persimmons are usually not thinned, though thinning increases fruit size. A large fruit load may break branches, so you may want to thin them to 6 inches apart.

HARVEST

Both types of Persimmons begin to ripen in late September through November. To harvest, use hand-pruning shears to cut the stem and allow the calyx (green collar) to remain attached.

Hachiya (astringent) can be allowed to become soft ripe on the tree but are usually harvested firm ripe and allowed to soften at room temperature.

Fuyu (non-astringent) are harvested when they develop their full color.

STORAGE

Fruit will store for a month or more under refrigeration. Persimmons can be frozen for up to a year before being used in puddings and cakes. Dried Persimmons have outstanding flavor and sweetness.

FRUIT USES

Fuyu Persimmons are eaten when firm (crisp) like an apple. They are delicious served raw alone or in salads.

The Hachiya variety is used primarily in edibles like cookies, bread, puddings, and jams.

The Persimmon tree is a great choice because it's an easy tree to grow, doesn't require much upkeep and the reward of delicious fruit is there for the picking.