



Persimmon Care

Persimmon trees are native to China, and are cultivated in many countries. They are easy to grow and relatively pest free. Their colorful fruit has 70% RDA of Vitamin A and 20% Vitamin C.

Tree Care

Adequate care of persimmon trees is important for fruit set. Trees must receive deep, infrequent watering. Use drip irrigation or a hose set on low and leave it until soil has been penetrated to a depth of several feet. During the dry season (May-October) water trees deeply each month. As the tree matures, use the tree canopy as a guideline for where to place irrigation.

Pruning and Training

The Open-Center Method of pruning allows the flow of air and light between branches. Choose 3-4 main tree branches (called the primary scaffolds) that are attached at wide angles. If angles are less than 45°, care should not be taken to enlarge the angle. A properly positioned stick or even a toothpick placed between small shoots can help widen most angles.

Scaffold branches should be distributed radially around the trunk of the tree, with several inches between them vertically. The lowest scaffold branch should be 12-18 inches above the ground.

Other branches below the lowest scaffold branch should be pruned to 4-6 inches long. Do not completely remove these branches, as their leaves help provide food and protect the growing young tree from sunburn. Remove them when the tree has matured. Avoid over-pruning young trees during the first season.

When the tree has been in the ground for one year, prune primary scaffold branches to encourage the growth of secondary scaffold branches, which grow off the primary scaffolds. Each limb can have 2-3 secondary branches. Prune all other branches off the primary scaffold limbs so the ones you have chosen can grow without competition, but do not remove fruit spurs.

All branches need adequate spacing and wide angles to allow for light flow and reduce competition between branches. If the branches you chose are not producing

wide angles and cannot be bent at this point, prune them back and start over.

Ringing Persimmon

Trees

The following information was taken from a publication by Norman W. Ross that was written in 1956. The procedure of ringing is done to increase sugar and starch in the fruit and ensure the tree has an adequate crop. This is done at the expense of the trunk and the root system, however, as it is temporary, it does not hurt the tree.

Ringling is done just before the tree is about to bloom. Using a thick bladed knife, cut around the base of the limbs (see diagram below), just through the bark. This makes a temporary girdle on the tree. It should be done carefully, and without bark removal.

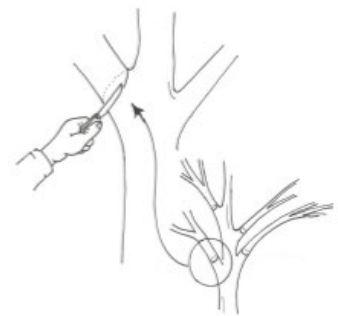


Diagram 1

Ringling is not a necessary procedure, as most years persimmons will develop normally and bear an adequate crop of fruit.

Fruit Damage

Mealybug and scale can sometimes be a problem. Control the ant population, and the problem may disappear. Ants “farm” these insects for their honeydew, protecting them from natural predators.

Occasionally persimmons get dark spots caused by sunburn. They are still edible,

but if the area starts to shrink, it will not store well.

Persimmon Fruit

There are two categories of fruit, classified as astringent and nonastringent. The term “astringent” as applied to persimmons, indicates the flavor of the fruit may cause the mouth to pucker. This happens when the fruit is not ripe.

Astringent persimmons such as ‘Hachiya’ are ripe when soft. One way to hasten this process is to put the fruit in the freezer for 24-48 hours. For long term storage, they

can be refrigerated for at least a month, or frozen for 6-8 months.

Non-astringent persimmons such as ‘Fuyu’ can be eaten when crisp or soft. Store them for short periods at room temperature, or prolong their crispness by keeping them in the refrigerator.

Dried persimmons are very tasty and have a delicate flavor. Dry and peel them whole or cut them into slices (peeled or unpeeled). Firm, astringent persimmons develop a sweet, date-like flavor when dried.

Bibliography

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