

Jujube Planting Instructions

Growth Habit: The jujube is a small, deciduous tree, growing to 40 feet tall in the south. The naturally drooping tree is graceful, ornamental and often thorny with branches growing in a zig-zag pattern. The wood is very hard and strong.

Fruit: The fruit is typically round to elongated and from cherry-size to plum-size depending on cultivar. It has a thin, edible skin surrounding whitish sweet flesh. The immature fruit is green in color, but as it ripens it goes through a yellow-green stage with mahogany-colored spots appearing on the skin as the fruit ripens further. The fully mature fruit is entirely red. Shortly after becoming fully red, the fruit begins to soften and wrinkle. The fruit can be eaten after it becomes wrinkled, but most people prefer them during the interval between the yellow-green stage and the full red stage. At this stage the flesh is crisp and sweet, reminiscent of an apple. The fruit has been used medicinally by many cultures.

Location: Jujubes should be given a warm, sunny location, but are otherwise relatively undemanding. Given adequate heat and sun, the trees will thrive without any special care. They should not be planted in the shade of other trees

Soils: Jujubes tolerate many types of soils, but prefer a sandy, well-drained soils and do less well in heavy, poorly drained soil.

Planting: Dig a hole big enough to accommodate the root system. Bare root trees should be planted the same depth as in the nursery row (or no more than 1-inch below).

Position tree in planting hole and fill with original soil.(Do not add fertilizer to the hole)

Water the tree deeply allowing the water to soak down to the roots

Jujubes should be set out 10 to 15 feet apart since they require high light intensities for good production.

Irrigation: One of the outstanding qualities of the jujube tree are its tolerance of drought conditions. Regular watering, though, is important to assure a quality fruit crop.

Fertilization: Do not put fertilize in the hole when planting. Jujubes appear to do well with little or no fertilization. Light broadcast applications of a balanced fertilizer such as 10-10-10 at two-month intervals during the growing season would probably speed growth. Do not fertilize until the newly planted tree has several months to get established.

Pruning: Extensive winter pruning, however, will keep the plants in better health and produce more easily obtainable fruit.

Pests and diseases: The Chinese jujube appear to have no serious disease, insect, or nematode pests in the U.S.; hence, no spraying is necessary.

Harvest: The crop ripens non-simultaneously, and fruit can be picked for several weeks from a single tree. If picked green, jujubes will not ripen. Ripe fruits may be stored at room temperature for about a week. The fruit may be eaten fresh, dried or candied.

