

# Persimmon Planting Instructions

## Flowering and Pollination Requirements

In oriental persimmons, female, male and/or perfect flowers can be produced on the same tree. In addition, many oriental persimmons can produce fruit from unfertilized flowers. Although fruit can be produced without pollination, heavier and more consistent crops usually result from pollination.

## Planting and Care

Oriental Persimmon trees like a pH of 6.0-7.0. Persimmons prefer well-drained and slightly acidic soil.

The trees like full sun, although partial shade may be tolerated.

Persimmons have a strong taproot. In fact, they can appear black but should not be considered diseased or dead.

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.

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

**DO NOT** fertilize at planting time.

Mulch the entire planting area, pulling the mulch a few inches away from the trunk to keep moisture from accumulating next to the bark.

No pruning is necessary at planting time.

Oriental persimmons grow to a height of 20-30 feet at maturity although some varieties may stay as short as 10 feet. Within the landscape or garden, give oriental persimmons as much space to develop as you generally would for other fruit or nut trees.

Fertilize young trees with 10-10-10 in early spring and in mid-summer at the rate of 2 ounces per year of tree age. Fertilize bearing trees lightly. The fertilization normally supplied in a lawn situation is often sufficient. Excess nitrogen fertilization, however, can cause fruit drop.

In some years, trees will crop heavily resulting in a light crop the following year. This is called *biennial bearing* and is common in many fruit and nut crops. To reduce the problem, thin the fruit to 6 inches apart on oriental persimmons within a month after bloom in a year when the crop is heavy.

Minimal pruning, consisting of complete limb removal to prevent limb crossing and to remove dead or broken limbs, may be necessary. More extensive pruning may be necessary as the tree gets older to control tree size.

## Fertilization

Do not add fertilizer when you plant your tree. Young persimmon trees are very sensitive to fertilizers. After a few years, if the mature leaves are not deep green and shoot growth is less than a foot per year, apply a balanced fertilizer (such as a 10-10-10) in early spring.

## Pruning

The best time to prune is in the winter while the tree is dormant. We want to improve structure and reduce the chance of alternate bearing. Corrective pruning consists of removing broken, interfering, dead, or diseased branches. Trim all other branches by 1/3 to a bud that is facing the direction you would like the tree to grow. An open vase shape is best

## Watering

Persimmon roots grow slowly. For best growth and quality fruit, regular watering is required. Water your persimmon tree for 10 minutes once or twice a week in the spring and summer. Persimmon trees will withstand short periods of drought. Your climate will dictate whether more or less watering is needed.

## Fruiting and Harvest

Oriental persimmon fruit attain the size of a peach and, in general, commercial varieties are not as astringent when ripe as native persimmons.

A misconception exists that frost is required before persimmons are edible. This is incorrect and, in fact, frost will ruin immature fruit on the tree. High quality persimmons lose astringency as they ripen — often well in advance of frosts.

Persimmons continue to ripen after they are picked. Many varieties must be allowed to become fully soft ripe before they lose enough astringency to be edible. Exceptions are Fuyu and Jiro, which can be eaten green when firm with little astringency.

Persimmons typically ripen between September and late November. Fruit color will vary from light yellow-orange to dark orange-red. When harvesting persimmons, it is best to use a shallow tray especially if your fruit is very soft. The fruit cannot handle a lot of weight and you may end up crushing the ones on the bottom.

Astringent varieties must be very soft before they are good to eat. You can allow them to soften on the tree, but it is best to harvest when hard and fully colored. This will keep away the birds, deer and other animals that get into trees.

Non-Astringent varieties can be eaten when still crisp and should be harvested when they have their full deep color and are firm. They will continue to ripen off the tree and allowing them to soften at room temperatures will help with the taste.

Annual average yield per tree is 1 bushel, 15-20 pounds at age 10.  
Persimmons will keep in the refrigerator for about a month.

