

# Persimmons

Persimmon trees are small, easy to grow, and adapted to most of Texas. Their colorful fall foliage and attractive, bright-orange fruit make them excellent fruit trees to incorporate into the landscape. Persimmons are often the last fruit to ripen in the fall, welcoming in winter with delicious fruit that can be eaten fresh, dried, or used in baked goods.

## 🌱 Grow it

### Varieties

- Oriental, or Japanese, persimmons are recommended because they have superior fruit quality and varieties that only require one tree for production.
- Most Oriental persimmons, except Eureka, produce seedless fruit. Eureka and Fuyu will pollinate other varieties. Therefore, do not plant these with varieties that you wish to be seedless.
- **Oriental varieties:** Eureka, Hachiya, Tane-nashi, Tamopan, Fuyu, Izu, and Fankio

### Soil Preparation

- Prepare a 4-square-foot planting area by removing weeds and loosening the soil with a shovel or rototiller.
- If the soil has poor drainage, build up a 12- to 18-inch-high mound to plant on.

### Planting

- Purchase healthy container-grown or bare-root trees from a reputable nursery.
- Bare-root trees are usually purchased in early winter and planted immediately after purchase. Container-grown trees are best planted in late winter to early spring.
- Allow trees 15 to 20 feet of space.
- Plant the tree to the same depth it grew in the nursery and water it thoroughly.
- Fill the planting hole with the original soil and do not use potting mixes.

### Training and Pruning

- If you plant bare-root trees, prune off at least half the top at planting.
- Prune trees during the winter to remove crossed, crowded, diseased, and broken branches.

### Fertilizing

- Persimmons require little fertilizer and are sensitive to over-fertilizing. Only fertilize when needed.
- If the new growth is less than 3 inches in early May, apply 2 ounces of 15-5-10 fertilizer per year of tree age. Once the trees begin bearing, apply 2 ounces per inch of trunk diameter at budbreak.

### Watering

- Supplement rainfall by watering during the spring and summer, especially if the soil is shallow.

### Care During the Season

- Persimmons typically produce seedless fruit, which tend to drop before maturity, especially if the tree experiences growth problems from drought or excessive fertilizer, water, heat, or cold. Heavy mulch and appropriate management are essential to reduce fruit drop.
- Thinning can enable fruit to grow larger. If the tree sets a heavy crop, remove some of the fruit while small. Seedless fruit trees tend to drop some fruit and may not require thinning.

### Insects & Diseases

- Persimmons are largely free of serious pests and diseases, and when present, they often do not warrant control.
- If something does not look right with your plant, contact your county Extension agent for more information.

### Harvesting

- Persimmons start producing fruit 3 to 5 years after planting.
- Fruit usually ripens around the first fall frost.
- There are two types of persimmons: astringent and non-astringent. Most persimmons, except Fuyu and Izu, are astringent. Astringent persimmons will pucker your mouth if not eaten fully ripe and soft. Allow these varieties to ripen on the tree or on your counter. Non-astringent persimmons can be eaten before they soften, as soon as they develop a deep, rich orange color.
- Persimmon fruit ripen equally on or off the tree. Many wild animals are attracted to the fruit. It may be necessary to harvest persimmons before they are ripe to avoid losing your crop.

HORT-PU-269  
September 2023  
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Sun: Full



Soil: Well-drained



Planting: Early winter



Harvest: Late Oct.- Early Dec.



Life Cycle: Perennial

## Buy it

- In general, choose persimmons with bright-colored, smooth, glossy skin that are heavy for their size,<sup>1</sup> have the stem cap attached, and are without cracks or bruises.<sup>2</sup>
- Non-astringent persimmons can be eaten once they turn orange and while still firm. Astringent persimmons are not fully ripe when they turn color. If astringent persimmons will be eaten soon after purchasing, select soft, mushy fruit. Otherwise, buy firm fruit and allow it to ripen on the counter or in the freezer.

## Use it

### Persimmon and Cranberry Crumble<sup>3</sup>

Course: Dessert   Serves: 4

#### Ingredients:

##### Fruit filling

- 5 very ripe, large persimmons
- ½ cup cranberries (you may substitute another tart fruit, such as blackberries)
- 3 Tbsp. honey
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted

##### Topping

- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. ground ginger
- 1 egg
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 3 Tbsp. honey

## Store it<sup>1</sup>

- To ripen persimmons, store them on the counter until they are soft.
- Refrigerate unwashed persimmons in a plastic bag for 1 to 2 days for ripe persimmons and up to one month for unripe persimmons.
- For long-term storage, fruit can be frozen or dried.
- For canning and preservation instructions, visit [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu).

#### Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Cut the persimmons in half. Scoop out the pulp using a spoon and chop it finely on a cutting board.

Place the persimmon pulp in a large mixing bowl and mix in the cranberries, honey, and butter.

Transfer to an 8-inch rimmed baking dish or individual ramekins.

For the topping, combine flour, cinnamon, and ginger in a medium bowl. Add in the egg, butter, and honey. Mix with your fingers to crumble and form small dough pieces. Scatter the topping evenly over the fruit.

Bake for 20 to 30 minutes.

Serve warm or at room temperature with a scoop of vanilla ice cream (optional).



## Learn about it

Persimmons are high in natural sugar, making them a healthy and sweet way to obtain many important nutrients, minerals, and vitamins. They are an excellent source of dietary fiber, vitamin C, vitamin A, copper, and manganese. They are also a good source of potassium, vitamin B6, vitamin E, and the carotenoid beta cryptoxanthin.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Purdue University Extension. (2020). Purdue Extension FoodLink: Persimmon. Retrieved from: <https://extension.purdue.edu/foodlink/food.php?food=persimmon>

<sup>2</sup>University of Florida IFAS Extension. (2012). Eat Local: Persimmons. Retrieved from: [https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/archive/hot\\_topics/sustainable\\_living/eat\\_local\\_persimmons.shtml](https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/archive/hot_topics/sustainable_living/eat_local_persimmons.shtml)

<sup>3</sup>Purdue University Extension (2020). Purdue Extension FoodLink: Persimmon and Cranberry Crumble. Retrieved from: <https://extension.purdue.edu/foodlink/recipe.php?recipe=Persimmon%20and%20Cranberry%20Crumble>

<sup>4</sup>USDA. (2019). FoodData Central: Persimmons, Japanese, Raw. Retrieved from: <https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/fdc-app.html#/food-details/169941/nutrients>