

May 3, 2017



Plant a Persimmon

By Paula Bertram

UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

Looking for an amazing tree that provides luscious fruit, incredible fall color, a winter bright spot and is easy to grow for the home gardener? You guessed it – Japanese Persimmon (*Diospyros kaki*).

Now, you might be saying that you hate those astringent/squishy fruit. But wait! There are two main types of persimmon.

An astringent to squishy variety is the Hachiya. It is a larger tree (about 20 feet wide). The fruit is large deep red/orange. The fruits are harvested when firm and allowed to ripen off the tree. They make beautiful table decorations at Halloween and Thanksgiving. When soft, the very sweet pulp is frequently used in jams, cakes, cookies and puddings. (Mom used to eat the very soft ones with cottage cheese – a double horror that provoked a great deal of disgust amongst the kids!) The pulp can easily be frozen for later use during Christmas baking. There are other colors and varieties available, including light yellow and chocolate brown.

The second type includes the Fuyu persimmon. This tree has medium sized flattish, orange to red fruit. The flesh is firm, sweet and non-astringent, and crunches pleasantly like an apple. They are delicious eaten raw or in salads. These trees stay a bit smaller — around 14 feet. Dehydrated slices of these make for a great chewy dried fruit snack.

Both types of fruits begin to ripen in September and last thru November. If left on the tree, they will hang on well into late Fall, providing a striking look on the bare branches. Pruning involves thinning out crossing or misshapen branches. Avoid heading (shearing new growth) as the fruit is born near the tips of one year old branches. The fruit can be very prolific, so some thinning out may be required to prevent branch breakage.

May 3, 2017

Persimmon Trees are close to ideal for the home gardener. The leaves are large, glossy green and drooping, giving it a “languid, almost tropical appearance” according to California Rare Fruit Growers website <http://crfg.org>. They bloom late, thus avoiding late spring frost damage. No cross pollination is required (i.e self-fruitful). They don’t require a lot of winter chilling, so they will bear fruit at lower elevations compared to apples and pears. They thrive throughout the state, including the Foothills, and are very tolerant of different types of soil. Good drainage and full sun is important. And, they are nearly pest free!

Master Gardeners are pleased to present classes throughout the year. The class on Saturday, May 6, 9am till noon will be on “Deer Resistant Gardening” at the Government Center Hearing Room, Building C, 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville. Master Gardeners Debbie Hillel and Gail Fulbeck will discuss methods of keeping deer from ruining our gardens. They will share insight into deer behavior, resistant plants, repellants, and fencing options.

The class on Wednesday, May10, 9am till noon is titled “Turning Dirt into Gold” and Master Gardener Kit Veerkamp will talk about soil. Nurturing soil is one of the best things we can do as gardeners. Plants thrive when soil is teeming with life. Learn why this really matters and how we can modify our soil to improve plant health and reduce disease and pests. Join us at the Cameron Park Community Center, 2502 Country Club Drive, Cameron Park.

UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling [\(530\) 621-5512](tel:5306215512). Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news. You can also find us on Facebook.