



Thursday, May 1, 2025

**ORDER YOUR ALMANAC TODAY!**[HOME](#) > [GARDENING](#) > [GROWING GUIDES](#)

How to Grow Goji Berries: The Complete Guide



Photo Credit: LianeM

Bot *Lycium*
ani- *bar-*
cal *barum*
Na
me:

Pla [Fruit](#)
nt
Typ
e:

Su [Full Sun](#)
n
Exp
os-
ure
:

FREE GUIDE!

Har 3, 4, 5,
di- 6, 7, 8,
nes 9
s
Zon
e:

Planting, Growing, and Harvesting Goji Berries

By [Andy Wilcox](#)

Last Updated: April 14, 2024



Sign up for daily gardening advice and tips

SIGN UP

ADVERTISEMENT

The Almanac Garden Planner - Use It Free for 7 Days!



Plan your 2025 garden with our award-winning Garden Planner.

TRY NOW

Goji berries are all the rage, and for good reason. These sweet and tasty red berries are superfruits, which are packed with nutrients and health benefits! Learn how to plant, grow, and care for goji berries.

ADVERTISEMENT

Although they sound exotic and are often found in health food stores, goji berries (*Lycium barbarum* L.) are hardy in Zones 3 to 9, depending on the cultivar.

They can be eaten fresh, juiced, or dried.

Considered a “superfruit,” the berries are high in protein and antioxidants, including carotene and vitamins A and C.

The goji berry plants most grown for fruit are *Lycium barbarum*. The berries grow on long vines that can be staked or pruned into sprawling shrubs about 4 to 6 feet tall. They also grow well in pots up to 18+ inches in diameter.

ADVERTISEMENT

by small orange to red $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1-inch-long fruit about 4 to 6 weeks later.

Goji berries are expensive to buy, so growing your own is a great option if you enjoy these tasty superfruits. They are self-fertile, meaning that you'll get fruit with only one plant.

However, the harvest will be heavier, with two varieties acting as pollinator buddies.



Goji Berries. Credit Sima

Read Next

- [5 Flavorful Superfruits to Grow This Spring](#)
- [How to Grow Elderberries: The Complete Guide](#)
- [How to Grow Pomegranates: The Complete Guide](#)

PLANTING

Plant in neutral to slightly alkaline soil in a sunny spot. These fruiting shrubs need at

site with good drainage. While goji berries will tolerate many soil types, they won't do well in wet clay soils.

Some varieties are more upright, and others sprawling, but they can be staked or trellised to keep them neat and tidy.

When To Plant Goji Berries

Like many perennial shrubs, goji berries can be planted in spring or fall. Containerized stock can be planted anytime after your last frost, up to about six weeks before your ground freezes.

Bare root stock is planted in spring before the plants break dormancy; the plants are typically only available from vendors for spring shipping and can be planted as soon as possible after receiving them. [Now, you can buy Goji Berries at Walmart.](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

If your site isn't ready for planting, store the plants in a cool, dark location and check the roots. Keep them moist but not soaking wet.



Bright red goji berries. Credit: Dionisvera

How To Plant Goji Berries

Goji berries are available as containerized stock or bare root. Planting methods are similar. For bare root plants, soak the roots in a bucket of water for 12 hours before planting to ensure they are hydrated.

For potted nursery stock, water thoroughly an hour beforehand. The plants will release from their pots more easily, and it minimizes transplant shock.

- Dig a hole twice as wide as the root ball

like a shallow bowl with sloping sides.

- Use your shovel or a garden fork to break up the soil at the edge and bottom of the hole. Compact soil can act like an impermeable wall, preventing root growth and holding excess water.
- Cut any circling or girdling roots. Use a trowel or soil knife to loosen up rootbound plants by scoring the edges of the root-ball.
- Test fit the shrub in the hole and adjust the depth as necessary. If planting bare root shrubs, you'll likely be able to see the old soil line on the trunk.
- For bare root plants, spread the roots out and prevent them from circling around the base of the hole. Don't leave them clumped.
- Backfill the hole with the soil you removed. Water when the hole is half-filled, then continue adding soil. Lightly firm the soil around the roots as you go to avoid air pockets.

irrigate. Water the plant in well once finished.

- Apply a thick layer of mulch to keep the soil moist. Don't allow the mulch to contact the trunk(s). Keep it an inch away.

GROWING

Although goji berries are drought-tolerant, they need to be watered at least once a week in dry weather, particularly in the first year.

Much in spring with compost or other organic matter.

Too much fertilizer can be problematic for goji berries, promoting excessive vegetative growth at the cost of decreased fruit quantity and quality. A once-per-year application of organic fertilizer or top dressing with finished compost is sufficient.

Goji berries on new wood and most fruits will grow on lateral branches. Pruning in the dormant season (mid to late winter) encourages new growth and, therefore, more fruit.

ADVERTISEMENT

- Remove any dead or broken branches.
- Suckers coming from the base can also be pruned or dug up later and transplanted.
- Cut lateral branches back by about 12 inches.
- In late spring or early summer, pinch off the top 2 to 3 inches of terminal growth to encourage branching, similar to pinching snapdragons or dahlias.

Types

- ‘Sweet Lifeberry’ is a large variety, reaching 10 to 12 feet high if not pruned.
Delightful sweet flavor when dried.
- ‘Crimson Star’ bears 1 to 2 years after planting on medium-sized 6-8 foot tall plants. Large, bright red berries.

lises. Very cold hardy.

*Purple goji flowers in springtime. Credit:
Anna Gratys*

HARVESTING

- Goji berries are indeterminate, meaning they will ripen at varying times, not all at once.
- Hand-pick goji berries when fully orange-red, about a month after blooming. Pull to the side instead of straight away to help them disconnect from the stems. You may have to tug.
- Berries can be eaten dried (most common), fresh, or frozen for preservation.

with goji berries. Credit: K. Svetlana

GARDENING PRODUCTS



PESTS/DISEASES

- Goji gall mite
- Aphids
- Thrips

WIT AND WISDOM

- While not necessarily health-conscious, goji berries dipped in chocolate are delicious!

- The legend of Li Ching Yuen, the Chinese herbalist, holds that he ate goji berries daily and lived to be 252 years old.

FRUIT

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Wilcox



Andy Wilcox is a flower farmer and master gardener with a passion for soil health, small producers, forestry, and horticulture. [Read More from Andy Wilcox](#)

MORE LIKE THIS



5 Flavorful Superfruits to Grow This Spring



How to Grow Elderberries: The Complete Guide



How to Grow Pomegranates: The Complete Guide



The Complete Guide

The Complete Guide

Plants: The Complete Guide



GROW YOUR BEST GARDEN YET

Join The Old Farmer's Almanac
Gardening Club Today!

LEARN MORE

ADVERTISEMENT

COMMENTS

ADD A COMMENT

Debbie Fleischer (not verified) 1 year ago

I've grown goji berries for years now. They took

berries. I leave mine until after the first frost in the fall. That seems to produce the sweetest berries. I pick the ones that are the darkest red. It's a race to pick before the birds get them. If you're just considering these, they are thorny. Big thorns. Makes them a challenge to pick and prune the branches.

REPLY

Ibundy (not verified) 1 month ago

I think it is all according to what type you have I bought 3 types and 2 had no thorns . I took out the one that had them.

REPLY

Sharon G Smith (not verified) 1 year 1 month ago

My gogi berries have produced abundantly the last two years,, However they are not sweet. Actually, they are very bitter. Is there a reason for this or a way to correct it?

REPLY

Michelle (not verified) 1 year ago

eat them. Good to know others have the same issue.

REPLY

The Editors 1 year ago

Hi Sharon,

Some goji berry varieties are sweeter than others, but it really comes down to harvesting at the correct time. While goji berries turn red very quickly, they will continue to have a bitter taste until fully ripe. In general, goji berries should be left to ripen for several weeks before harvesting to attain that slightly sweeter flavor. Once they turn red, taste one every so often to see how the flavor is changing as they ripen on the plant.

REPLY

Susie (not verified) 1 year 1 month ago

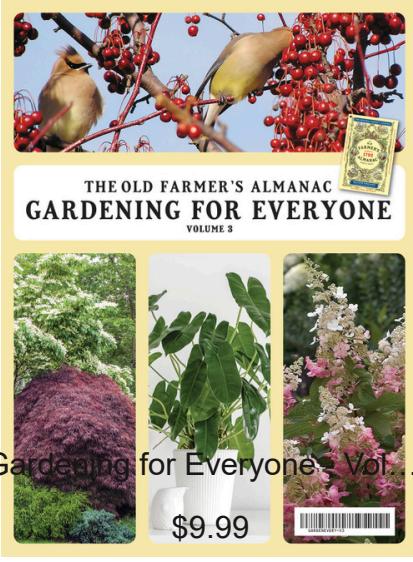
I've had the same experience with my gogi berries. Not sweet and have a bitter twang. I seldom even eat them. Had the

[REPLY](#)**Ibundy (not verified)** 1 month ago

I use mine in soups since they taste in between a tomato and a bell pepper.

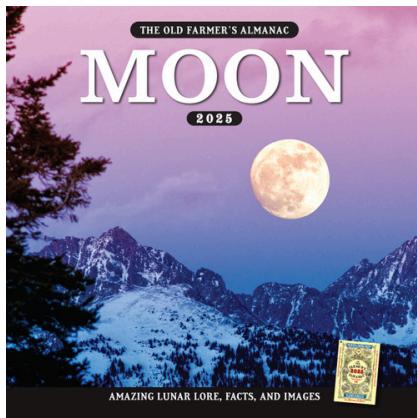
[REPLY](#)

THE OLD FARMER'S STORE



Gardening for Everyone - Vol.

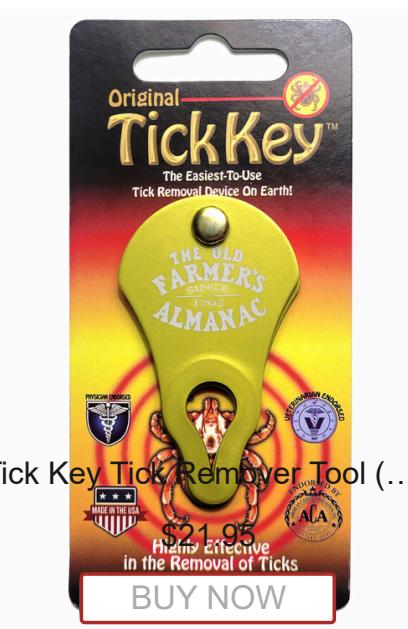
\$9.99

[BUY NOW](#)

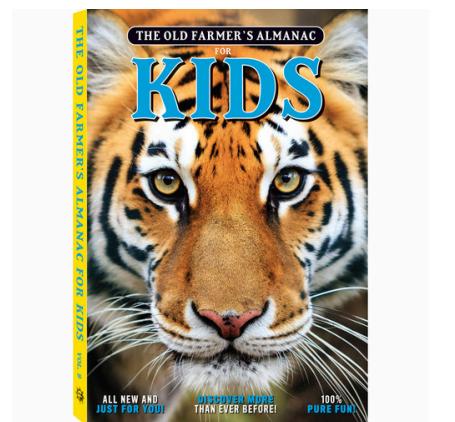
2025 Moon Calendar

\$11.99

[BUY NOW](#)



[Tick Key Tick Remover Tool \(...\)](#)



[The Old Farmer's Almanac for...](#)

\$9.95

[BUY NOW](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

Our Brands

- [The Old Farmer's Almanac](#)
- [Almanac for Kids](#)
- [Yankee Magazine](#)
- [Family Tree Magazine](#)
- [NH Business Review](#)
- [New Hampshire Magazine](#)
- [Yankee Custom Marketing](#)

Resources

- [About Us](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Free Daily Newsletter](#)
- [Webcam](#)
- [Advertise with Us](#)
- [Media Relations](#)
- [Sell the Almanac](#)
- [Where to Buy](#)

Connect with Us



[Cookie List](#)

[Do Not Sell or Share](#)
[My Personal](#)
[Information](#)

©2025 [Yankee Publishing Inc.](#), An Employee-Owned Company

1121 Main Street | P.O. Box 520 | Dublin, NH 03444