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How to Grow Kiwifruit: The Complete Guide



Fruit of the kiwifruit plant, *Actinidia deliciosa*.

Photo Credit: Pixabay

Bot *Actinidia*
ani- *deliciosa*,
cal *Actinidia*
Na *arguta*,
me: *Actinidia*
kolomikta

Plant
Type: [Fruit](#)

Sun
Exposure: [Full Sun](#)

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Soil [Slightly](#)
pH: [Acidic to](#)
[Neutral](#)

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Planting, Growing, and Harvesting Kiwifruit

By [Catherine Boeckmann](#)
Last Updated: May 8, 2024



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Did you know that kiwis aren't native to New Zealand? Kiwi plants can be grown on a vine in both colder and warmer regions. These tasty and nutrient-rich fruits are an excellent choice to grow in your own home.

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About Kiwifruit

There are two main types of Kiwifruit plants grown in home gardens: Kiwifruit and Kiwiberry. Both types of kiwi are frost-susceptible, so this plant is best grown in areas with a frost-free growing season of at least 200 days.

1. Kiwifruit (*Actinidia deliciosa*) is the fuzzy brown variety you've likely seen in stores. They are typically about the size of an extra-large chicken egg. In the early 20th century, the plant was exported from southern China to Europe, the United States, and New Zealand, where most kiwifruit is grown today. Kiwifruit grows in zones 8 to 9.

are grown often for their attractive, pink-variegated foliage and fragrant flowers. Native to northern China, Japan, and Korea, this exported plant is sometimes called “hardy kiwi” or “Northern kiwi.”

As the name suggests, the hardy kiwi (*Actinidia Arguta*) does best in colder areas (USDA zones 4 to 7) and can even survive subzero temperatures. You can buy [hardy kiwi plants at Walmart](#).



The smooth, grape-sized fruit of the hardy kiwi (aka kiwiberry) plant. Photo by waldenstroem/Getty Images.

Note: If you are considering growing kiwifruit in your garden, know that both a male and a female plant are required to produce fruit. The male plant produces flowers, while the female plant produces both flowers and fruit. (However, one reportedly self-fertile variety of hardy kiwi is called ‘Issai’ if you only have

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PLANTING

When to Plant Kiwi Vines

- Plant kiwi plants in the spring after the [threat of frost has passed](#).
- Kiwis typically begin bearing fruit 3 to 5 years after planting.

Choosing and Preparing a Planting Site

- Kiwi vines need a sunny spot to produce the best growth and fruit.

- Plant the vines on the north side of the yard in colder regions to minimize the risk of freeze-thaw damage in early spring, when plants are especially susceptible.
- Kiwi plants require well-drained soil, as they are prone to root rot if kept too wet.
- Kiwi vines are slow growers and need sturdy supports. Erect a tall, heavy-duty trellis system that can support the vines that can grow 15 feet wide and 20 feet long, and produce up to 100 pounds of fruit.

How to Plant Kiwi Vines

- To get a good crop from kiwi, you'll need to plant male and female plants. The females produce the fruit.
 - **Tip:** The best ratio is said to be at least one male plant for every six female plants.
- Plant the vines 10 to 15 feet apart.
- When planting, you may need to trim the roots if too long.
- Plant vines just deep enough to cover the roots well with soil.
- Water well at the time of planting.

GROWING

- Unless it has been rainy, give the plants supplemental watering during the height of summer or during other dry periods.
- Do not fertilize in the first year. After that, fertilize with a well-balanced fertilizer or soybean meal in the spring.
- Start training the flexible vines up a support during the first year of planting.
- Prune the lateral growth (if not flowering) 2 to 3 times during the growing season.
- Kiwi plants flower and fruit on old wood.
- Regularly remove water sprouts (vigorous shoots originating from older wood) and shoots from the trunk.
- Prune female vines during the winter months, when the plant is dormant. Prune male vines in early summer after bloom.
- In cold areas, the vines of hardy kiwi may die back to the ground each year. Remove the dead stems and mulch with leaves or straw.



- Kiwi can be propagated from seeds. Here's how:
 - Remove the seeds from a mature kiwi and let the seeds dry for two days.
 - Place the seeds in a container with moist perlite and refrigerate at 40°F (4°C) for 2 months.
 - Plant the seeds 1/8 inch deep in moist sterile potting mix and cover the container with plastic wrap.
 - Place the container in a warm, bright spot and moisten the soil.
 - When seedlings start growing, uncover the container.
 - When the plants have four true leaves, transplant them into individual pots.
 - When the plants are several inches tall, transplant them outdoors.
- Kiwis can also be propagated from soft-wood cuttings (cuttings taken from new growth during the summer):
 - Cut a kiwi stem into six-inch lengths and cut off any growing tip.
 - Put the cuttings into a glass with an inch of water.
 - In about three weeks, the cuttings will have tiny roots at the ends of the cuttings.
 - Plant the cuttings in pots or

Types

Hardy Kiwi (Kiwiberries)

- *A. arguta* '**Ananasnaya**' (also called '**Anna**') has jade-colored skin, bright green flesh, black seeds and tastes like pineapple.
- *A. arguta* '**Issai**' is self-fertile (does not require a male pollinator) and produces small, juicy fruit. Pollinators love the fragrant white flowers in early summer.
- *A. arguta* '**Geneva**' ripens earlier than either 'Anna' or 'Issai' and has sweet, honey-flavored fruit.
- *A. arguta* '**Ken's Red**' has fruit with reddish-purple skins. The flesh inside is dark green with deep-red streaks.
- *A. kolomikta* '**Red Beauty**' fruit ripens earlier than most hardy kiwi species, but *A. kolomikta* can be more temperamental in general. Fruit is skinny and sweet. Foliage turns a brilliant red in the fall.

Kiwifruit

- '**Hayward**' is the main female variety of *A. deliciosa* grown commercially. It produces the fuzzy brown fruit with green interiors that can be found in grocery stores.
- Male varieties include '**Chico**', '**Matua**', and '**Tamori**'.

HARVESTING

When to Harvest Kiwi Fruit

- The fruit typically reaches maturity in September/October, which can make it susceptible to early fall frosts in some areas.
- Harvest the fruit when they are soft to the touch and ready to be eaten.
- Alternatively, if early fall frosts are a concern, harvest kiwi fruits when they are still firm but have black seeds. This fruit can be stored in the refrigerator for up to six weeks. Remove it from the refrigerator and allow it to soften for a couple of days before eating.

How to Store Kiwi Fruit

- Store firm kiwi in the refrigerator or a cooler for up to six weeks.
- Freeze firm whole hardy kiwis on a cookie sheet and then put them into plastic freezer bags.

GARDENING PRODUCTS



PESTS/DISEASES

- **Root rot** can occur if plants become waterlogged.
- **Phytophthora crown rot**

WIT AND WISDOM

- The kiwi was once referred to as “Chinese gooseberry.”
- Hardy kiwi is rich in vitamins C, A, and E, potassium, fiber, calcium, and iron.
- Hardy kiwi fruit is also known as ki-wiberry, baby kiwi, dessert kiwi, grape kiwi, and cocktail kiwi.

Raw kiwifruit is rich in a protein-dissolving enzyme called actinidain. This makes the kiwi unsuitable for use in dishes that contain milk products or gelatin. If these dishes are not served immediately, the enzyme starts to digest the proteins in the dishes, destroying the texture. In gelatin-based dishes, the enzyme can prevent the liquid from solidifying.



FRUIT

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catherine Boeckmann



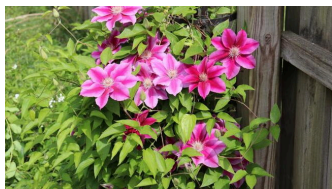
Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not

Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

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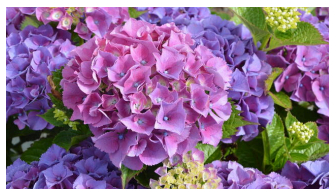
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COMMENTS

ADD A COMMENT

Margie Anderson (not verified) 1 year 8 months ago

How can you tell if the plant is male or female?

REPLY

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The Editors 1 year 8 months ago

Kiwi plants are dioecious, which means that plants only have female or male parts. So in order to produce fruit both must be present.

multi-branched stigmas in the center of the flowers with a row of white ovules at the base of the flower, which will develop into a seed when fertilized. The male vines have lots of stamens with anthers that are covered in pollen.

It is recommended that one male plant be present for every six females.

REPLY

Richard Walsh (not verified) 12 months ago

Thanks for the great article on kiwifruit. I live in New Zealand, the home of the native flightless bird called the 'kiwi'. That is why we never refer to the plant as 'kiwi'...always kiwifruit. We do occasionally refer to each other as kiwis, but never do we refer to the plant that way.

REPLY

Eric Davies (not verified) 3 years 3 months ago

There is a variety of regular (large) kiwi called Jenny that is claimed to be self-fertile.

[REPLY](#)**Luke (not verified)** 3 years 8 months ago

Kiwi Vines are very aggressive growers. This article states they don't grow quickly. Vines will grow several inches a day at each growing tip. It takes very aggressive pruning to control their size. Kiwi roots are similar to hop roots in that they get very fat and long very quickly. I would say you need to prune them at least monthly after flowering. The cold hardy kind take about 6 years to fruit. They are EXTREMELY sensitive to frost, despite them being called "arctic kiwi"

[REPLY](#)

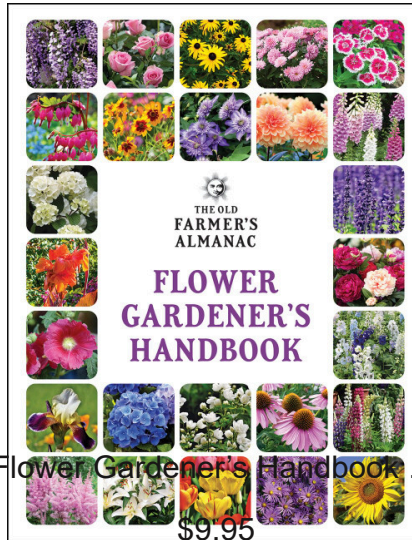
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