

# PERSIMMON VARIETIES



With a graceful form, attractive, leathery, dark green leaves that turn yellow to scarlet in the fall, and glowing orange fruit that hangs on long after the leaves have fallen, persimmons may be the most ornamental fruit tree for our climate.

The Asian persimmon (*Diospyros kaki*) varieties commonly grown may be either astringent or non-astringent. Astringent Asian varieties are usually acorn-shaped

and must be ripened off the tree, eaten when soft like a tomato, and very sweet. Non-astringent varieties can be eaten when firm, harvested directly off the tree. They usually have a flattened shape.

**CARE:** Persimmons don't appreciate root disturbance, so be gentle when planting. Give all persimmons full sun and well-drained soil. Like most trees, persimmons require infrequent, deep watering; a slow application of 5-10 gallons to the root zone, about once a week during summer. Persimmons need little pruning, except preliminary training and potentially some heading back to protect branches from breakage in heavy crop years. The only pests we know of for persimmons are squirrels, birds, and deer! Sprays are unnecessary.

We often have varieties in the #1 (small pot size) fruit tree area that we do not see in the larger trees, so check that out! This includes the American persimmon, *Diospyros virginiana*.

**HARVEST:** The persimmon varieties we carry are self fruitful. Fruit production begins about five years after planting. The fruit is borne on the current season's growth. Heavy crops can break brittle branches so thinning may be necessary. Harvest non-astringent types when they are fully colored and firm. Astringent varieties are not edible until very soft. Fresh persimmons keep for about 2 months in the refrigerator. They may also be frozen or dried.

<b>EARLY JIRO</b>	<b>Non-astringent.</b> Large, sweet, reddish-orange fruit may be eaten when hard like an apple or soft like a tomato (when much sweeter). Early ripening, and naturally dwarf, to 10'.
<b>FIRE CRYSTAL</b>	<b>Astringent.</b> Attractive, compact variety popular in China, with round, bright orange fruit. Early ripening and very productive.
<b>FUYU</b>	<b>Non-astringent.</b> Medium to large, flattened, glossy, reddish-orange fruit. The flesh is light orange, firm and crunchy with a rich, sweet, mild taste. Great all-purpose.
<b>NIKITA'S GIFT</b>	<b>Astringent.</b> Very hardy Asian/American persimmon cross bears flattened, oval fruit to 3" across. Flavorful, sweet fruit drops from the tree when fully ripe and soft.
<b>SAIJO</b>	<b>Astringent.</b> "The best one" in Japanese. Very popular variety is a consistent bearer. Vigorous and compact, maturing at 15'.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Persimmons break dormancy extremely late in the season. A young tree may not leaf out until late summer or even fall. If you think your tree may be dead, lightly scrape a branch with your fingernail...if you see green, the tree is alive. **Please be patient!**