

Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)

Pawpaw is a deciduous understory or woodland edge tree native to Canada and the Eastern United States. Pawpaw trees produce the largest edible fruit of all native fruit trees in the U.S., and they have provided delicious and nutritious food for Native Americans, European explorers and settlers, and wild animals. Due to their size and edible fruit, pawpaw trees are ideal for foraging. As a result, these trees have become a favorite in agroforestry practices and have been increasingly used in urban landscapes.

Planting & Cultivation

Pawpaw is hardy in Zones 5-8. In its native habitat, pawpaw primarily grows in floodplains, the bottom of ravines and ditches, and stream banks. Pawpaw trees grow to be 15-20 feet tall and 15-20 feet wide. For planting in urban landscapes, pawpaw is ideal for residential areas, parks, community orchards, rain gardens, and beneath utility lines. Pawpaw should not be planted near impervious surfaces.

Light: full sun, part sun

Soil: rich, moist, well draining, slightly acidic

Watering: medium *pawpaw is intolerant of dry soil

Tolerances: shade, wet soil, occasional inundation, deer resistant



Consumption

Pawpaw trees produce custardy fruit with a unique flavor that resembles a blend of various tropical fruits, including banana, pineapple, and mango. The best way to enjoy pawpaws is to eat them raw, when the fruit is ripe. Pawpaws can be eaten by removing the skin and seeds from the pulp of the fruit. Pawpaws do have a short shelf life, however this can be extended through refrigeration. Additionally, the pulp can be frozen for longer storage. Pawpaw can also be used in cooking and baking. The fruit can be made into sauces, breads, ice cream, and smoothies.

Other Benefits

A flowering pawpaw tree attracts beneficial pollinators like flies and beetles. The flowers also attract butterflies, small mammals, and songbirds, which makes pawpaw a good addition to a butterfly, pollinator, or rain garden. Additionally, pawpaw trees are the host plant of the Zebra Swallowtail butterfly and Pawpaw Sphinx moth caterpillars.



Did You Know?

- A pawpaw festival is held annually in Albany, Ohio
- Asimina is the only genus in the Annonaceae family found outside the tropics
- Pawpaws are fly-pollinated, utilizing flowers that mimic the scent of carrion

Additional Information Available At:

- Cornell Cooperative Extension
https://harvestny.cce.cornell.edu/uploads/doc_215.pdf
- University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry
<https://centerforagroforestry.org/pawpaw/>
- USDA Plant Database
https://plants.usda.gov/DocumentLibrary/plantguide/pdf/cs_astr.pdf

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