



Planting & Cultivation

American persimmon is hardy in Zones 4-9. This tree can grow to a medium size, 25-40 feet tall, or large, up to 60 feet. It is tolerant of varying conditions and therefore can be planted in environments such as woodlands, rocky hillsides, river bottoms, and abandoned fields. In urban landscapes, American persimmon is a solid planting choice for city parkways, residential parks, and wide medians. Furthermore, this tree is very shade tolerant and is a strong understory species. American persimmon has dark green mature leaves that turn yellow to red in autumn. From March to June, white fragrant flowers appear dioeciously (male and female flowers on separate individuals). Because of this, it is important to plant both males and females for fruit production.

Light: full sun, part sun

Soil: moist, well-draining, fertile

Watering: medium (will tolerate some dryness)

Tolerances: alkaline soil, occasional drought, black walnut toxicity, shade

Identification: glossy dark green leaves, alternate leaves 2-5 inches in length, brown to black bark with deep fissures and ridges, small urn-shaped white flowers

American Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*)

American persimmon is a deciduous medium to large tree that is native to the southeastern United States, although its range can reach southern Connecticut and Long Island. This plant produces tasty orange fruits that have a long history of being consumed by humans in a range of recipes. American persimmon is also relatively easy to grow and tolerant to a variety of growing conditions. All of these make it an ideal choice in agroforestry practices.

Consumption

American persimmon produces an orange to red fleshy fruit that is spherical and about 1-2 inches across. Unripe fruits are extremely astringent due to their high tannins content. Once ripe, typically from September to November, the American persimmon becomes tasty and sweet. The ripe fruits tend to fall to the ground. The sweet flavor of American persimmon has been described as "honey-like." The fruit offers many health benefits. Persimmon fruit is high in vitamin C, vitamin A, fiber, and antioxidants, and is loaded with minerals such as phosphorus and magnesium. Persimmon can be eaten on its own or added to dishes such as salad or a cheese board. Additionally, the fruit is very versatile and can be used in various recipes.



For example, American persimmon fruit can be dried and added to baked goods such as bread and pudding. The fruit can also be made into jellies or even fermented with hops to make alcoholic beverages.

Other Benefits

The flowers and fruit of American persimmon attracts varying wildlife. The flower blooms attract pollinators and insects. The fruit and seeds provide food to small mammals and songbirds. Overall, American persimmon is a great choice for pollinator, edible, and rain gardens in urban and suburban landscapes.

Additional Information Available At:

- The Morton Arboretum
<https://mortonarb.org/plant-and-protect/trees-and-plants/persimmon/#care-knowledge>
- USDA
https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/misc/ag_654/volume_2/diospyros/virginiana.htm
- University of Missouri Extension
<http://agebb.missouri.edu/agforest/archives/v21n3/gh7.php>

Contact Us



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Did You Know?

- During the Civil War persimmon seeds were used as buttons.
- Persimmon seeds can be roasted and ground to make a coffee alternative.
- Persimmon is 'dioecious', meaning individual trees are either male or female.

