

Persimmon

History

Persimmons are a fruit native to Asian countries, particularly China. It arrived in California during the 19th century. Now, the persimmon tree can be found in California and the southern region of the east coast. It is a very tall tree, sometimes up to 70 feet. It can grow in nearly any soil type. The leaves are dark green in the summer and red by autumn. These leaves can be used to brew tea.



Curing

Prior to eating, persimmons need to be cured. This can be done in several ways:

- Leaving covered persimmons exposed to near-freezing temperatures.
- Covering the fruit and exposing it to smoke.
- Putting the persimmons in a container with bananas and apples, which produce ethylene gas and cures the fruit.

Varieties

There are nearly 2,000 varieties of persimmons, but two are regularly available to purchase in stores - the Fuyu and Hachiya persimmons.

Fuyu persimmons are commonly eaten fresh and are shelf stable for up to two weeks.

Hachiya persimmons are only edible for a short period of time before going bad. They are used for cooking. They are astringent, meaning they leave the mouth feeling dry.

American persimmon is called possumwood. It is only edible after exposure to a freeze in the fall. American Indians would dry these fruits and bake with them.

Fun Facts

- The persimmon's scientific name "diospyros" translates from Greek to "food of the gods."
- Wood from the persimmon tree is very strong and used to make billiard sticks, or pool cues, and drivers for golfing.



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