

Guam Produce Guide: Banana Tree



The banana plant is a fruit tree that springs from an underground stem, or rhizome, to form a false trunk 3-6 meters or 10-20 feet high. Each “trunk’ bears only one bunch of fruit and is cut down after harvest to encourage new growth from the rhizome.

Site Characteristics:

Banana plant is a herb not a tree

- **Sun exposure:** at least 6 hours of sunlight most days
- The soil suitable for bananas should be 0.5-1m in depth, rich, well drained, fertile, moisture retentive, containing plenty of organic matter. The range of pH should be 6.5-7.5. Alluvial and volcanic soils are the best for banana cultivation.
- **Support:** you can get a long strong stick and lean it toward the plant to where it's leaning at, but make sure you don't damage the trunk.
- **Water:** Bananas need regular watering to sustain the large tropical leaves and produce sweet tasty fruit. You should expect to water slowly and deeply every 2 or 3 days during the warmer months. A test when to water is when the top 1/2-1 inch of soil is dry.
- **Fertilizer:** When fertilizing a mature banana plant, use 1 ½ pounds (680 g.) of 8-10-10 per month; for dwarf indoor plants, use half that amount. Dig this amount in around the plant and allow it to dissolve each time the plant is watered. Or you can give the banana a lighter application of fertilizer each time it is watered.

Plant traits:

- **Seedling:** soak the seed in warm water for 24 to 48 hours to break the seed dormancy. ... Sow the banana seeds 1/4 inch (6 mm.) deep and backfill with compost. (sowing banana seeds is not a common way to propagate plant.)
- **Size:** Most are around 5 m (16 ft) tall, with a range from 'Dwarf Cavendish' plants at around 3 m (10 ft) to 'Gros Michel' at 7 m (23 ft) or more. Leaves are spirally arranged and may grow 2.7 metres (8.9 ft) long and 60 cm (2.0 ft) wide.
- **Spacing:** Space banana plants 5 to 6 feet apart.
- **Bloom time:** Bananas are typically ready to be harvested late spring or early summer. The best time to pick your bananas is when the fruit is still green. After your banana harvest, cut your tree back to about 30 inches and let the stem dry out for two weeks before removing it.
- **Flower color:** The actual flowers underneath the bracts are usually white to ivory in color, with yellow ruffled tips.
- **Root depth:** roots can grow up to 5 feet deep and up to 30 feet wide.
- **Pests:** Banana aphids, banana flower thrips, banana fruit caterpillar, banana rust thrips, banana scab moth, banana weevil borer, banana-silvering thrips, banana -spotting and fruit-spotting bugs, cluster caterpillar, fruit piercing moths, Queensland fruit fly, spider mite, two-spotted mite, & sugarcane bud moth.

GROWING INFORMATION

How to plant seedling:

1. Soak the seed for 24-48 hours
2. Plant each seed approximately 1-inch deep in permeable soil
3. Maintain soil temperature at 60-68°F
4. Keep soil moist
5. Be patient; germination can occur within 3-weeks, or up to 6-months, depending on the variety.

Transplanting:

Grasp the pseudostem and lift the banana plant out of the ground. If any roots are still attached to the ground, cut them off at the bottom of the root ball. Dig a hole at the banana plant's new location. The hole should be twice as wide and just as deep as the root ball.

Maintenance:

Banana trees are tropical and originate in rainforests, so they need a lot of water and plenty of moisture in the air. They do best when planted in groups fairly close together, as this helps to retain moisture in the leaves. Water regularly to make sure the soil stays evenly moist but not soggy

Harvest:

Bananas generally take four to six months for fruit to reach full size after flowering, depending on temperature, variety, moisture and culture practices. Typically, there is a slight yellow tint to the fruit as it reaches maturity. The color change may be so slight that it is hard to see. The best time to pick your bananas is when the fruit is still green. After your banana harvest, cut your tree back to about 30 inches and let the stem dry out for two weeks before removing it.

Benefits:

The fruit is a source of vital nutrients. It is also a great digestive, which aids bowel movement and contains good fibre for your gut. Rich in vitamin B6 as well as vitamin C, it helps your body absorb iron better, increasing the haemoglobin count and overall blood and cardiovascular health.

Replant:

Your tree would love a sunny place with well-drained, fertile soil. But it will be quite satisfied with six to eight hours of sunlight. Good drainage is required to keep your trees “happy.” If your soil has high clay content, use our Coco-Fiber Potting Medium or add one-third peat to the soil at planting time.

Fun Fact:

Bananas are actually herbs distantly related to ginger due to the plant's succulent-like stem instead of a wooden one.

<http://www.fao.org/3/t0308e/T0308E03.htm>

http://nhb.gov.in/bulletin_files/fruits/banana/ban012.pdf

<http://www.tropicamango.com/banana.html#:~:text=Bananas%20need%20regular%20watering%20to,inch%20of%20soil%20is%20dry.>

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/edible/fruits/banana/feeding-banana-plants.htm#:~:text=When%20fertilizing%20a%20mature%20banana.each%20time%20it%20is%20watered.>

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/crop-growin g/banana-industry/pests-diseases>