

Guåhan Produce Guide:
Papaya (Papåya)



Papaya is a soft, tropical, yellowish-orange fruit. It is round and plump and belongs to the Caricacease family. Papaya is a popular fruit on Guam and can be found growing wild in residential areas and on the side of roads. This fruit is highly nutritious and fast growing.

Plant Traits	Details
Plant Type	Herbaceous perennial plant or tree.
Size	10-15 feet tall.
Spacing	7-10 feet between other plants or structures.
Bloom Time	6-12 months after planting.
Flower Color	White.
Root Depth	3 feet.
Pests	Papaya mealybug, leafhoppers, melon flies, mites.

Diseases

Papaya ringspot virus, phytophthora rot, anthracnose.

Health Benefits

- Rich in antioxidants and anticancer properties
- Can fight inflammation
- Can improve heart health
- Good for skin health
- Rich in Vitamin A, C, B1, and B2

Plant Care

Sun Exposure

Full sun.

Soil Condition

Less damp, well-drained soil with compost to aid in growth. A neutral pH balance is preferred.

Support

N/a.

Water

Due to its large soft leaves, papaya trees need to be watered above average, especially in Guam's warm weather.

Fertilizer

Apply compost at the base of the tree with well-rounded fertilizer every three weeks. Provide young plants with ¼ lb. of fertilizer or compost mix every 2 weeks. Provide older trees with 1-2 lbs. of fertilizer per month. This helps encourage growth and fruiting.

From Seed to Harvest

Sowing Seeds

If you are saving seeds from a papaya fruit, make sure it is fully ripe. Remove the seeds then wash them so that the jelly-like material

around the seeds comes off. Papaya seeds prefer to be directly sowed into the ground but if you do want to start it in a container, choose a large one so that the roots have room.

Transplanting Seedlings

Transplant your papaya seedling when it is 6-12 inches tall. Choose an open space that gets plenty of sun.

Maintenance

Pruning is one way to maintain your papaya tree. One pruning method is to thin it by removing branches near the center and base of the main stem. This will allow leaf girth at the top. Another method is to top it by cutting the top shoot. This will keep your tree short for easy access to fruits.

Harvesting

Papaya will fruit 6-12 months after planting. They are ripe when they are almost fully yellow and soft to the touch.

Interesting Facts

- Not all papaya trees have fruit producing organs - there are “male” trees that can only provide pollen to fertilize a fruit-producing trees, “female” trees that can produce fruits but need to be fertilized by a “male tree”, and then there are “hermaphrodite” trees that have both pollinating and fruit-producing organs so can produce fruit all on its own. Pictures below show how to tell the difference:

- Female tree:



- Male tree:



- Hermaphrodite tree:



Recipes

Pickled Papaya



Ingredients

- 1 medium young (green, unripe) papaya
- Distilled white vinegar, enough to cover the papaya

Instructions

- Salt, to taste,
- Chopped hot peppers, to taste
- Optional: sliced or chopped garlic and sliced onions

1. Wash and peel the papaya; cut in half and remove the seeds.
2. Thinly slice the papaya and place into a mixing bowl.
3. Add the vinegar, salt, hot peppers, and other optional ingredients. Stir to mix well.
4. Allow the papaya to marinate in the vinegar mixture for a couple of hours then enjoy!

Recipe link

<https://www.annieschamorrokitchen.com/pickled-green-papaya/>

Sources

1. <https://www.tropicalpermaculture.com/growing-papaya.html>
2. <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/edible/fruits/papaya/papaya-harvest-time.htm>
3. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/agricultural-and-biological-sciences/caricaceae>