

Paw Paw

EVEN THOUGH
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TO A PAPAYA, PAW
PAWS ARE NOT
ACTUALLY A
TROPICAL FRUIT!

WHAT IS A PAW PAW?

Paw Paws, a native of North America, are a delicious, soft, fruit that is similar in texture to a papaya. In flavor, it is said to taste like a mixture of a mango and a banana. Surprisingly enough, paw paws are not tropical and can be grown in places as cold as zone 5. They do grow wild in many areas of North America, and are very well adapted to its weather. Paw paws do not have many pests in North America, making them very easy to grow here. In addition to being delicious, paw paws have many health benefits. They are a great source of Vitamin C, iron, and magnesium. Used in shampoo, they are also effective in eradicating head lice! A truly remarkable plant, the paw paw is an invaluable addition to anyone's garden or home orchard.

PLANTING

Paw paws should be planted about 10 feet apart. We recommend digging a hole twice as wide and twice as deep as the pot of the tree, and mixing a combination of 70% soil and 30% compost. Fill up the hole enough so that the tree will sit level with the ground, and then cover the root-ball with your soil mixture. Make sure that the graft is a few inches above soil level so it isn't suffocated! Water thoroughly to eliminate any air pockets.



MAINTENANCE

The first two weeks after planting will be the most crucial to survival, so keep your trees properly irrigated. After planting, do not over water. Test the soil with your finger 4 to 5 inches beneath the surface to see if it is dry. Too much water can prevent root growth and drown the tree. Not enough water will cause dehydration. Paw paws prefer a slightly moist soil. Yearly pruning is recommended, as well as fertilization (although both should be skipped on the first year of planting). Fertilize in the spring with a high-nitrogen fertilizer, and again in the fall with a high-phosphorus fertilizer.

COMMON PAW PAW PESTS AND DISEASES

As a native plant of North America, paw paws have remarkably few natural predators and pests here. However, there are still a few that you may want to keep in mind. Here are the most common:

Black Spot

Black spot is a fungal disease that usually occurs in the spring during periods of high humidity and heavy rains. It can easily be identified by clumps of small, black spots covering the leaves and fruit. It can be treated with an organic anti-fungal like copper fungicide and by pruning the diseased branches with sterilized pruners.

Powdery Mildew

Another fungal disease that is common with paw paws is powdery mildew. Powdery mildew can cause the leaves of the paw paw to become covered with a gray, powdery substance, and wither. Treat as you would black spot.

Paw Paw Peduncle Borer

The main pest of the paw paw is the peduncle borer. This borer's larva feed on the paw paw blooms and cause bloom drop (preventing fruit). To eradicate, you can use an organic insecticide like neem oil or Spinosad.



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