

Diospyros kaki
Japanese persimmon, Oriental persimmon, Sharon fruit



Diospyros kaki (Japanese persimmon, Oriental persimmon, Sharon fruit) was native to the Yangtze Valley in China from where it was distributed and became naturalised in a large swathe of China and Japan. In 1780, a Japanese specimen was described by Swedish naturalist Carl Thunberg and consequently he gave the species its second name in Japanese *kaki*. The kaki grows in Asia in mixed, deciduous woodland at the edge of the subtropical evergreen forests. *Diospyros kaki* develops into a large shrub or small tree with a dense round crown, in its native habitat up to a height of 25 metres and in cultivation up to a maximum of ten metres. This tree has been in cultivation for a long time because of its edible fruits; there are as many as 2,800 selections in existence.

The familiar and popular, fragrant and edible, orange-yellow, tomato-like fruits of *Diospyros kaki* are produced during high summer temperatures. Being dioecious, a female and male tree are needed for fruit formation in September to November. A unique feature is that the pollinator affects the flavour of the fruit. The kaki is also greatly prized for its magnificent and spectacular autumn colours, in a wonderful array of orange, yellow, orange-red and violet shades. The large, pendulous and attractively glossy leaf emerges bronze-green, has a hairy underside and changes to dark green in summer. At the end of June or early July *Diospyros kaki* bears inconspicuous pale yellow, bell-shaped flowers which are very attractive to bees. *Diospyros kaki* has a grey-brown bark which is deeply grooved in older specimens.

Diospyros kaki prefers a site on slightly acid and fertile, moist soil where the tree can develop deep roots. Tolerant of some shade but - due in part to its somewhat tender foliage - the tree performs best in a very sunny site in cities and other warm micro-climates. *Diospyros kaki* is a true park and garden tree. The edible fruits are highly decorative but can be a nuisance when they drop on pavements.

TYPES OF PLANTING
Tree types: standard trees, half-stem trees, multi-stemmed trees, characteristic trees, fruit trees | **Topiary on stem**: multi-stem umbrella

USE
Location: park, central reservation, large garden, small garden, patio, cemetery | **Pavement**: none, open | **Planting concepts**: food forest

CHARACTERISTICS
Crown shape: wide egg-shaped | **Crown structure**: dense | **Height**: 6 - 9 m | **Width**: 4.5 - 7.5 m | **Winter hardiness zone**: 8A - 11B

ASPECTS
Wind: slightly tolerant to wind | **Soil**: loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level**: rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level**: dry, moist | **Light requirements**: sun, partial shade | **pH range**: acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant**: birds, small mammals, humans

PLANTKENMERKEN
Flowers: bell-shaped, discrete | **Flower colour**: daffodil | **Flowering period**: June - July | **Leaf colour**: dark green | **Leaves**: deciduous, ovate, big, polished, underside hairy | **Autumn colour**: yellow-brown, orange-red | **Fruits**: striking, edible, large, aromatic | **Fruit colour**: orange | **Bark colour**: grey-brown | **Bark**: deeply furrowed | **Twig colour**: cinnamon-brown | **Twigs**: bare | **Root system**: deep, extensive, tap root

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