Papaya

Carica papaya

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 10 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 9

Description:

A small succulent, broadleaf evergreen tree that may bear papaya fruits throughout the year; its non-woody trunk bears scars of old leaf bases, topped with an umbrella-like canopy of large palmately lobed leaves; excellent for containers

Edible Qualities

Papaya is a small tree that is commonly grown for its edible qualities. It produces gold oblong fruit (technically 'pomes') with a yellow blush and pink flesh which are typically harvested when mature. The fruits have a sweet taste.

The fruit are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking
- Juice-Making

Features & Attributes

Papaya has attractive dark green evergreen foliage on a tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. The lobed palmate leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter. The fruits are showy gold pomes with a yellow blush, which are carried in abundance in late fall. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up. The gray branches add an interesting dimension to the landscape.



Papaya fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Papaya fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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This is an evergreen tree with a strong central leader and an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other landscape plants with finer foliage. This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. It is a good choice for attracting birds, bees and butterflies to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.



Papaya foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Papaya is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- General Garden Use
- Orchard/Edible Landscaping
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Papaya will grow to be about 20 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 10 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 3 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years.

This plant is typically grown in a designated edibles garden. It should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America.

Papaya is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Its large size and upright habit of growth lend it for use as a solitary accent, or in a composition surrounded by smaller plants around the base and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.