

Peaches

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Peaches are the leading deciduous fruit crop in Texas. They take 3 to 4 years to reach full production. Although they are a long-term commitment, one peach tree can potentially produce 50 to 100 pounds of fruit each year!

🌱 Grow it

Varieties

- Peaches require a certain number of chilling hours, or hours between 32 and 45 degrees Fahrenheit, to break dormancy and bloom in the spring.
- Select a variety that has a chilling requirement within 100 hours of the average number of chilling hours your site receives.



Soil Preparation

- Soil should not remain saturated 24 hours following a heavy rain.
- To improve drainage, build up a mound with topsoil, 6 to 12 inches high and 2 to 3 feet across, to plant on.

Planting

- Purchase a healthy 3- to 4-foot-tall, bare-root tree from a reliable nursery and keep roots moist until planting. Container trees could also be used.
- Allow the tree 20 square feet of space.
- Plant the tree with the root system in a natural position and the root collar at ground level. Fill the hole with the original soil and water well.

Training & Pruning

- At planting, cut the tree to 18 to 24 inches tall and remove side branches.
- During the first two years, train the tree to look like an open bowl by selecting three to four main branches that are evenly spaced around the tree. Remove branches that grow inside of the bowl and keep those that grow on the outside. Fruit will be produced on 1-year-old fruiting wood that develops from these secondary limbs.
- After the second year, prune trees to maintain an open center and uncrowded canopy. Remove dead, diseased, and gray, un-fruitful shoots.
- Prune just before budbreak or soon after.

Fertilizing

- If newly planted trees grow 8 to 10 inches by May, fertilize with 1 cup of 21-0-0 fertilizer. Spread the fertilizer 18 inches from the trunk.
- In the second year, provide 1 cup of fertilizer at the beginning of March, April, May, and June. Use a 3-1-2 fertilizer in March and 21-0-0 in the other months. In year three, increase the applications to 2 cups, using only 21-0-0.
- In subsequent years, fertilize at bud break with half a pound of 21-0-0 per inch of trunk diameter. In May, if the tree has a fruit crop, apply an additional half pound of fertilizer. If not, do not fertilize in May.
- Fertilize only if there is active growth.

Watering

- While the tree is in active growth, provide 1 inch of water once a week.
- During the dormant season, water deeply once every 6 weeks if it has not rained.

Care During the Season

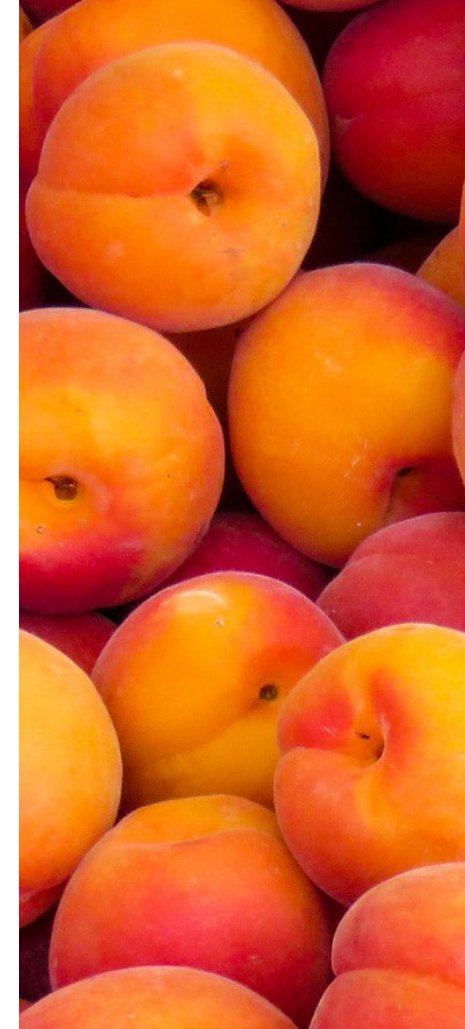
- For at least the first 5 years, keep the soil under the tree weed- and grass-free in an area at least as wide as the limb spread.
- Under favorable conditions, trees will produce more fruit than can properly develop. Remove excess fruit 4 weeks after bloom. Space fruit about one every 6 to 8 inches on a branch.

Insects & Diseases

- Peaches are susceptible to many insects and diseases. To reduce pest problems, maintain healthy trees, minimize tree damage, and collect and destroy diseased branches and fruit, and fallen litter.
- Contact your county Extension agent for more information.

Harvesting

- Peaches are ripened on the tree and harvested when mature. Harvest fruit when firm-ripe and the skin is well-colored with a red blush over a yellow background.



Sun:
Full



Soil:
Deep; Well-
drained



Planting:
Dec.-Feb.



Harvest:
Summer



Life Cycle:
Perennial

Buy it

- Select peaches that are firm but yield to gentle pressure and are free of blemishes.

Store it

- Harvested fruit can remain in good condition for about 2 weeks if refrigerated at about 35 degrees Fahrenheit.

Use it

Grilled Peach Sundae

Course: Dessert

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 2 medium peaches
- 1 cup low-fat vanilla Greek yogurt or frozen yogurt
- 4 Tbsp. slivered almonds
- 4 tsp. agave nectar or honey

Instructions:

Heat grill to 450°F.

Wash peaches, slice them in half, and remove the pits.

Brush peaches with olive oil and place cut side down on the grill. Grill for 4 minutes.

Remove peaches from the grill and place 1 half in a small bowl. Top with ¼ cup of yogurt, 1 tablespoon of almonds, and drizzle with 1 teaspoon of honey.

Peachy Blueberry Sorghum Cobbler

Course: Dessert

Serves: 8

Ingredients:

Dough

- 2 Tbsp. margarine
- ½ cup sorghum flour
- 1 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. baking soda
- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch
- ½ cup almond milk, unsweetened

Fruit Filling

- 3 cups fresh or frozen peaches, sliced
- 1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries
- 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 Tbsp. freshly squeezed orange juice
- ½ cup water



Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Melt margarine in an 8x8-inch baking dish in the oven. Once melted, set aside.

To make the dough batter, combine sorghum flour, 1 tablespoon of sugar, baking powder, salt, baking soda, and cornstarch in a medium bowl. Add almond milk and combine. Set aside.

In a separate bowl, combine frozen peaches, blueberries, 2 tablespoons of sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, vanilla, and orange juice.

Pour batter over melted margarine in dish. Slowly pour fruit filling mixture over batter. Do not stir or spread.

Bake for 40 minutes until the fruit is bubbling and the crust is brown.

Store any leftover cobbler covered in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days. To reheat, bake covered in a 350-degree Fahrenheit oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until warm.

Learn about it

Peaches are a great source of vitamin C, vitamin E, potassium, copper, and dietary fiber. They are also high in niacin, or vitamin B3,¹ which has antioxidant effects and is important in converting nutrients into energy.²

¹USDA. (2019). FoodData Central: Peaches, yellow, raw. Retrieved from: <https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/fdc-app.html#/food-details/325430/nutrients>

²Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. (2022). The Nutrition Source. *Niacin - Vitamin B3*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/niacin-vitamin-b3/>