

Asimina triloba (Common) Pawpaw

Tried and True
Native Plants
of the Mid-Atlantic



Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia
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Pawpaw fruit, with a complex tropical taste (some say banana-mango-citrus) and custard-like texture, is the largest edible fruit native to North America and gives rise to common names like False Banana and Custard Apple. Unpalatable to deer, Pawpaw is increasingly prevalent in the upland understories deer frequent. It commonly grows in river valleys and bottom-lands in the Mid-Atlantic Region from southern Pennsylvania through Virginia.

Tree	July & October Trees, Foliage, Flowers, Fruit
Height: 15–30 feet	
Spread: 15–30 feet	
Bloom Color: Maroon	
Characteristics	
Round, small, short-trunked <u>deciduous</u> tree or large, multi- <u>stemmed</u> shrub with <u>suckering</u> habit	
<u>Alternate</u> , obovate to <u>lanceolate</u> , pendulous, 6-12" leaves, <u>glabrous</u> above, <u>pubescent</u> below	
Bell-shaped flowers with 3 <u>sepals</u> , 3 outer & 3 inner <u>petals</u> , fetid odor, and hairy <u>pedicels</u> April to June	
Edible,* tropical-tasting, green <u>berry</u> , 3–6 inches long, ripens to yellowish late summer/early fall	
Fall foliage dull to bright yellow to copper	
Smooth brown to <u>lenticel</u> -speckled gray bark	
Spreading root suckers can form colonies	
Attributes	
Tolerates wet <u>soil</u> and Black Walnut; no serious pests or diseases; <u>deer</u> rarely damage	
<u>Ethnobotanic</u> use as yellow dye from fruit pulp	
Attracts flies and beetles to pollinate flowers; birds, mammals, and box turtles eat fruit; <u>larval</u> host for ~13 lepidopterans including Zebra Swallowtail	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
<u>Soil Requirements</u> : Average, well-drained	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i> and <i>E. umbellata</i> - Russian-olive and Autumn-olive
<u>Light Requirements</u> : Sun, Partial Shade	<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i> - Princess Tree
<u>Water Requirements</u> : Moist, Wet	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i> and <i>R. frangula</i> - Common Buckthorn and Glossy Buckthorn
Plant two or more genetic strains to produce best fruit	*Eat pulp raw (cut fruit in half and scoop out) or use for custard, pies, or ice cream. Don't eat skin or seeds. Some find the taste vile, experience gastrointestinal upset, or develop skin irritation when handling. Fruit can pose a litter problem if not eaten or harvested.
Use as a fruit tree or in rain or <u>native</u> plant gardens	
<u>Hardiness</u> : USDA Zones 5a-9b	
<i>developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria</i>	

Images by Mary Free (July tree, foliage, flower) and Christa Watters (fruit), Simpson Park Demonstration Garden and by Elaine Mills (October tree), Meadowlark Botanical Gardens



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