

Diospyros virginiana

Common or American Persimmon

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

This adaptable pioneer species' common name, Persimmon, comes from the indigenous Algonquin people who have prized the sweet orange fruit for food and medicinal purposes. Found in old fields and from swamp forests to the understory of mesic to dry upland forests, this Ebony family member's hard wood is used for golf club heads and furniture veneer.



Tree	September Tree, Bark, Flowers, Fruit	
Height: 35–75 feet	 	
Spread: 20–35 feet		
Bloom Color: Creamy greenish-yellow		
Characteristics		
Shrubby to tall, deciduous tree with spreading crown and pendulous branches	 	
Alternate , 2–6” long, ovate leaves; glabrous , dark green above, pale green below w/ smooth margins		
Usually dioecious with fragrant, bell-shaped, yellowish-green flowers May to June	Growing and Maintenance Tips	
Berries , 1–2” across, ripen** to orange Aug to Nov	Excellent Replacement for	
Yellow-green to reddish-purple fall foliage	Ailanthus altissima - Tree of Heaven	
Blocky, orange-furrowed bark over very hard wood; spreads via root runners/ suckers to create groves	Paulownia tomentosa - Princess Tree	
Attributes	<p>*It is native to DC and common in DE. In MD, it is found on the Eastern Shore and Piedmont, but is infrequent in the mountains. It is present in the southern parts of PA. In VA, it is common in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont and infrequent and confined to low elevations in the mountains.</p> <p>**Fruit may remain on the tree well after leaves have fallen. Unripe berries are astringent. Ripe berries (orange to red-purple, very soft, often wrinkled, juicy, and very sweet) usually fall to the ground.</p>	
Tolerates drought, clay /poor soil, wind, Black Walnut, air pollution; no serious pests or diseases but leaf spot may occur; deer occasionally browse foliage & twigs		
Edible fruit produced in 10-15 years used in cakes, puddings; roasted seeds used as coffee substitute		
Attracts long-tongued bees to flowers; birds, other wildlife to mast ; larval host for ~51 lepidopterans , incl. American Lady butterfly, Luna Moth, Io Moth		
Soil Requirements: Well-drained, sandy preferred	Water Requirements: Dry, Moist	
Light Requirements: Sun, Partial Shade	Adaptable; long taproot makes transplanting difficult; avoid fruit litter falling on patios/sidewalks	
Water Requirements: Dry, Moist	Use as ornamental for fruit, naturalized in understory	
Adaptable; long taproot makes transplanting difficult; avoid fruit litter falling on patios/sidewalks	Hardiness: USDA Zones 4a–9b	
Use as ornamental for fruit, naturalized in understory	<i>developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria</i>	
Hardiness: USDA Zones 4a–9b	<p>Images by Alyssa Ford Morel, Mary Free (bark, ripe fruit), and Elaine Mills (flowers, fruit), Glencarlyn Library Garden</p>	