

THE VERSATILE PERSIMMON

Try it – you’ll like it!

The Happy Berry persimmons are non astringent and seedless. Persimmons are a very versatile fruit. They can be eaten hard ripe like an apple, firm ripe like a peach, soft and super sweet like a pudding, cooked or stored by freezing and are often dried. For example at the hard ripe stage they can be cut up into cubes or slices that are great on salad. In the firm stage they can be sliced like peaches. In the hard and firm stage they also go great on cereal. In the soft ripe stage they can be used as a topping on ice cream or nearly anything. They make great cakes, cookies and can be used to make a fantastic pudding. Dried persimmon chips make an awesome snack food. The Happy Berry website will have persimmon recipes on it.



Looks the same – but is different!

The American persimmon (many have experience with it); and some other plants like Chokecherry, rhubarb, quince, and banana peels, are astringent. The frequent comment is “I don’t like persimmons they make my mouth pucker and feel terrible”. But remember that The Happy Berry persimmons are the non-astringent varieties – so not the same at all – even though they look the same in appearance.

In case you are curious as to why astringent varieties give you the “mouth pucker” Here’s why. If astringent fruit is eaten before it is ready or cooked or frozen the chemicals that cause the astringency (tannins) constrict body tissues. The resulting feel in the mouth is a dry sensation, puckering and even numbing. Astringency is the sixth taste after sweet, sour, salty, pungent, and bitter. The tannins that cause astringency protect unripe fruit from being eaten allowing the seeds to mature so that when planted they develop into a new plant. When the fruit

matures it turns sweeter and the astringency dissipates. Some varieties of improved persimmons are astringent like Tanenashi, Hachiya and Saijo.

The take away is to know what you are buying – and don't assume the store bought persimmon you tried is what our persimmons will taste like, even though they look the same.

Persimmon Tips

If you happen to buy an astringent variety of persimmon, to hasten the ripening put them in a paper bag and fold it over with say a paper clip to enable checking for ripeness. This can be further hastened by adding an apple or banana (or other ethylene generator) to the bag. The softer the persimmon the riper (and sweeter) it is.

Another little tip, persimmons are very fluid genetically. This means they will often develop limb sports (somatic mutation in a single bud). Persimmons have two (2) types of flowers, male and female on the same tree normally. Seedless persimmons were selected by grafting a non male flower producing limb sport to a root stock, typically the American persimmon. A grower that is growing different varieties that have male flowers or has wild persimmons nearby will get seeded persimmons. It is possible for a limb sport to occur that has male flowers. These must be removed to maintain the seedless characteristic. Since limb sports are frequent the taste of persimmons can change unless the producer pays close attention to where the bud wood comes from for new trees. The result is... even if two growers are growing the "same" variety they can be quite different. Once you find a source you like you want to stick with that source.

At the Happy Berry we carefully separate Persimmon varieties by a quarter mile. We kill nearby wild persimmons and carefully manage root sprouts by cutting or killing. We scout our trees for limb sports especially those that have male flowers and remove them ASAP. The fluid genetically characteristic also means they are not genetically modified (GMO) by man.

At the Happy Berry

The persimmon varieties we have chosen to grow here at the Happy Berry were selected for a longer season. We have early IZU, mid season Fuyu Matsomoto and late season Fuyu Gaki. (As a side note, they all look almost identical.) Individual trees ripen their fruit over a long period of time which means, like blueberries, we can be harvesting the same tree for 4-6 weeks. When harvesting, we carefully select fruit that have reached the hard ripe stage, at the point of being climacteric and sweet. Climacteric means that they will continue to ripen after being removed from the tree and you can continue to ripen them at home depending on what stage of ripeness your recipe calls for. Do you like them apple hard? Peach firm? Or really soft (which is also really sweet!)? When shopping you need to be able to recognize this stage. It is tempting for a grower to pick as many as possible at one time to reduce the number of times they have to harvest the tree. The key to proper selection is the yellow ground color.

About the Fruit

The sugars in persimmons are sucrose, glucose and fructose. The latter, fructose, is usually over 1/3 in most varieties. Persimmons keep a long time. The colder the temperature the longer they will keep. They can be stored at 32 degrees Fahrenheit for months. Note that the warmer the storage temperature, the shorter the time to full ripe. At room temperature it can be just a few days – so keeping them cool is the key to keep them from getting too soft too fast.

Happy Berry persimmons are not sprayed. There is a disease of persimmons called sudden wilt. The trees just up and die and you never know when. The disease is vectored by specific type insect (common name –Sharp Shooter) with piercing sucking mouth parts. The Happy Berry manages this insect without spraying the tree and we use trap crops like Daylily's, weeds and grasses and Crape Myrtles that are treated to attract and kill the vector before it selects the persimmon tree.

Good and Good For You

Persimmons are good for you. They are very high in soluble fiber. This means they slow the digestive process and thereby prevent/dampen sugar spikes in the blood. They are popular with diabetics for that reason. They are very high in vitamin C which helps the immune system ward off disease. They are high in manganese which helps with blood clotting. They have betulinic acid; this compound is known to cause tumor cells to die. It also slows metastasizing of existing tumor cells. One persimmon contains more than half the recommended daily intake of Vitamin A thus are great for your eyes. The skin of the persimmon is high in flavenoids which have anti diabetic and have antioxidant properties. One average persimmon has 118 calories and no fat and 6 grams of fiber much of it soluble.

We hope you will come give some a try!