

Hardy Kiwi Vines

Fuzzless hardy kiwi is hardy to -25 degrees F and can be successfully grown in Pennsylvania! They are fast-growing, pest free vines that are also excellent for covering fences, trellises, or arbors.

Location: Kiwi likes a well-drained, fertile soil in sun or part shade. They do not like a wet soil.

Spacing & Pollination: Plants should be spaced 10' apart. Male and female flowers are produced on separate plants and both plants are required for pollination. One male can pollinate up to 8 females when planted within 100 feet of one another. Male plants do not produce fruit.

Planting: Mix some peat moss into the soil where you plan to plant your kiwi. Plant the kiwi plants at the same depth they were growing at in the pot. Fertilize with a plant starter fertilizer and water thoroughly. Kiwi vines are rapid growers so a sturdy trellis should be built before they are planted. Set one 8-10 foot, 4-6" diameter post 2-3' deep at each plant. Place a 3' cross arm at the top of the post. Tightly stretch 3 8-12 gauge wires between the cross arms.

Pruning: 1st summer- Train a single trunk to grow to the top of the trellis. Try to keep it from winding around the post. When the vine grows a few inches above the trellis, cut it back to 3-6" below the wire. Allow 2 branches to grow to and along the wire for the rest of the summer. Any suckers growing from the trunk should be removed.

1st winter - Cut the new branches back to an upward facing bud.

2nd year - During the second summer allow one cane at the end of each main branch to grow along the middle wire. Canes will grow from the fruiting laterals and should be draped over the outer wires. Cut the canes back to 6-10 buds past the last flower. Remove any other growth that has sprouted along the 2 main branches.

Remove any suckers from the base or trunk of the plant and thin out non-fruiting branches to reduce shading of the fruit. During the second winter cut back the main branches to about 5' from the trunk. Cut off all but 2-3 canes from each fruiting lateral.

3rd and subsequent years - Select fruiting canes early in the summer and remove later sprouts as they will shade developing fruit and cause it not to mature. During the third winter prune the main branches to about 8' from the trunk and prune off any limbs that have completed their second year of fruiting, are damaged or are twining.

Shorten the other so that when heavy with fruit, they will not hang on the ground.

Harvest: You should get fruit 2-3 years after planting. Hardy kiwi are fuzzless and can be eaten whole. To check for ripeness, pick a kiwi and let it soften for a few days and then try it for flavor. Fruit can be picked and refrigerated for up to 5-6 weeks.

