



Urban Harvest
Gardening for good.

Loquat

Category:	Evergreen, semi-temperate
Hardiness:	Hardy in normal winters
Fruit Family:	Roseacea
Light:	Full sun
Size:	10' -20' H x 10' W
Soil:	Moist, well-drained
Planting:	Containerized specimens can be planted any time



The Loquat (*Eriobotrya japonica*) is an attractive evergreen with large, pleated leaves and fragrant fall flowers. The loquat originated in Canton, China where the 'quat' part of the name means "golden". The popularity of the fruit has led to widespread planting in Japan, where they are called "Japanese Plums" and semi-tropical areas. Trees here often live many decades. Loquats are dependable, productive, low maintenance trees.

Care of Loquat

Planting: Loquat has a shallow root system. It will benefit from deep mulch and should be located where no deep cultivation or herbicide use is anticipated. Loquat is sensitive to salinity. Dig a hole twice as wide as the container and as deep as the height of the root ball. Backfill with unamended native soil.

Pruning & Training: Loquats take well to heavy pruning. Flowers form in clusters towards the ends of shoots that grew in the last summer so loquats should be pruned in April after fruiting. Prune to keep light in the center of the tree and on the lower branches, to eliminate forking and crossing branches, and to remove some terminal shoots that make the tree canopy too dense. Pruning unproductive wood so as increase new growth will increase production. Branches that are angled at 45° produce the most flowers.

Production: Grafted trees begin bearing in 2 – 3 years. Seedling trees may take as long as 8 – 10 years. Most varieties are self-fruitful. Loquats can easily produce 100# of fruits.

Watering: Once established, loquat will only need occasional deep watering during periods of drought.

Fertilizing: Apply 1# of organic fertilizer per inch of trunk diameter annually. Split the total amount required into two feedings – one in March and the second in June. More flowers result if the tree is fairly dormant in fall, so after mid-summer do not fertilize and unless there is a drought, do not promote growth with irrigation.

Harvesting: Loquats produce juicy, tangy apricot-type fruits that are sweet, and sub-acid or acid depending on ripeness and variety. The flesh is white, yellow or orange depending on variety and has 3-5 seeds. Loquats must be picked at peak ripeness when the color intensifies and the fruit softens. The best varieties are delicious at this point, especially if peeled before eating. If picked a little early, they lack flavor; and if picked a little late, they will be off-flavored or bird-pecked. So pick daily as they ripen. If cut carefully with shears, they last two weeks in the refrigerator. When slightly under ripe, they have pectin in them and can be made into excellent cooked desserts and jams.

Pests: Loquat is relatively pest free.

Winter Protection: Loquats do not need winter protection. The tree survives down to 8°F - 12°F. However, since loquats flower in late fall, and ripen their fruit in March & April, flower buds need to stay above 19°F and fruits & open flowers need to stay above the mid-20s in order to have fruit. Fruiting will be less frequent in our colder zones—north of either TX 59 or I-10.