



Urban Harvest
Gardening for good.

Dragon Fruit

Category:	Tropical
Hardiness:	Not winter hardy; protect at 28°F - 32°F
Fruit Family:	Cactaceae
Light:	Full sun, filtered sun
Size:	Varies as trained
Soil:	Well-drained
Planting:	Spring, after danger of frost has passed



Dragon Fruits (*Hylocereus undatus*) are a fruit bearing, vining member of the cactus family. They are a dramatic addition to the garden with snaking limbs, gorgeous giant white flowers, and brightly colored, decorative fruits that bear scales like a mythical dragon. The magnificent night blooming white flowers can be up to 14 inches in diameter.

Unlike the prickly cactus pear, this fruit is spine-free and the seeds are very tiny. The fruit is most often eaten chilled and cut in half so the flesh may be spooned out. The juice is used in frozen drinks. The red fruits are high in lycopene which is a natural antioxidant that is known to fight cancer and heart disease.

Care of Dragon Fruit

Planting: Dragon Fruit is tolerant of clay soil as long as it is never water-logged. Raised beds are recommended. In containers, use peat-free, compost based potting soils with expanded shale or angular sand to maintain adequate pore spaces. Make sure the container has excellent drainage and that the drain holes are never clogged.



Pruning & Training: Dragon Fruit can be grown on trellises, poles, or arbors. It can be allowed to climb into shrubs and trees, but this can complicate management and harvesting, as well as winter protection. A common method of training is to place a sturdy post such as a 4x4 or a landscape timber in the center of a 25-30 gal container. The post must be anchored well in all four directions. Staple burlap over the center post to support the air roots. Train the Dragon Fruit to the top of the post, and then provide a horizontal platform for the crown of the vine.

Production: In tropical areas or greenhouses Dragon Fruit will produce multiple cycles of fruit within the year, but outside here in Houston they bloom only in summer, from July to September.

Watering: Typical of the cactus family, Dragon Fruit can withstand occasional dry periods. However, it needs more water than other succulent varieties. In the summer months, it requires a deep watering two or three times a week if planted in a container and once a week in the ground. Decrease this amount to once a week or once every ten days during winter. Allow the top inch or two of soil to dry out in between waterings, especially during the winter months. Water only when temperatures are above freezing.

Fertilizing: Use light feedings of a slow release organic fertilizer once a month from March – August.

Harvesting: Fruit is ripe approximately a month after bloom drop. Ripe fruit is fully colored up – red body with green spine tips. It should yield slightly to thumb pressure. Twist the fruit on the stem. If it separate easily from the vine, it is ripe. If not, try again in a few days.

Pests: Aphids and mealybugs are sometimes a problem for Dragon Fruit. Use insecticidal soap, but exercise caution in full sun.

Winter Protection: Protect from frost when young and from prolonged frosts or freezes when mature. Protection is needed from winter freezes below 28° F.

Varieties of Dragon Fruit for the 2020 Sale

Not available

Varieties of Dragon Fruit for Southeast Texas

Dark Star - A medium to large sized fruit that typically weighs .75 - 1.25 pounds. Has long skinny bracts or “fins” that make it especially attractive. The fruit has a mild, grape-like flavor that is most enjoyed when chilled and eaten fresh. Fruit is reddish outside and pink inside. Self-fruitful.

Purple Haze - A large, sweet fruit with relatively few seeds. The fruit weighs up to two pounds, and has a pleasant grape-kiwi like flavor. Can be eaten fresh or juiced. Red outside and dark pink inside. Self-fruitful.