



Urban Harvest  
Gardening for good.

## Moringa

Category:	Tropical
Hardiness:	Root hardy
Fruit Family:	N/A
Light:	Full sun
Size:	See pruning & training
Soil:	Well-drained
Planting:	Spring, after danger of frost has passed



Moringa (*Moringa oleifera*) is cultivated for its edible leaves, seeds, and pods. The edible seed pods are known as “drumsticks”. The root is said to be edible – it is used like horseradish – but there is controversy about the safety of ingesting the root. Only the leaves are recommended for daily consumption. They are usually dried, powdered, and used in smoothies or soups. Moringa leaves are noted for being high in nutrients and antioxidants. The leaves are considered a “super food”.

The tree is also valued for its ornamental qualities. It has lacy, bright green leaves and pretty, creamy pale yellow flowers. Moringa grows very quickly. It can be maintained at any convenient height.

### Care of Moringa

**Planting:** Select a site with full sun and excellent drainage. Moringa will not tolerate wet feet. Dig a hole twice as wide as the container and the same depth as the height of the root ball. Backfill with unamended native soil. Mulch well with compost and tree leaves or native mulch.

**Pruning & Training:** When the Moringa is 30”-36” tall cut it back to 18”-24”. Allow 4 – 5 new branches to grow in a vase form, producing a fuller canopy. These branches will grow quickly. When they reach 8’-10’, cut them back to eye level. New shoots will grow again and you can repeat the cutting back. Thin shoots if necessary. Harvest and dry the foliage each time you prune.

**Production:** Moringa will often bloom 6 months from planting.

**Watering:** Moringa is drought tolerant when established. Water once a week when sufficient rainfall is absent. Do not overwater.



**Fertilizing:** Moringa is not a heavy feeder. Compost is usually sufficient. You can apply a cup or two of organic fertilizer once or twice a year if desired.

**Harvesting:** Fruits, called “drumsticks”, can be harvested when they are approximately 3/8”-1/2” diameter. Leaves can be harvested at any time. Dry the leaves in a shady place.

**Pests:** Moringa is seldom bothered by pests.

**Winter Protection:** Moringa is root hardy in normal winters. You can cut the tree back to 12”-18” before the first frost, bank the trunk, and cover the top with dry leaves and a cardboard box turned upside down and weighted with a brick. In spring, when danger of frost has passed, uncover the trunk and pull back the banking materials. The top will usually re-sprout. Some growers “plunge” the container. The container can be dug & lifted for winter storage and replanted the following spring. Moringa can also be restarted each year from seeds or cuttings taken and established before winter.