



HARDY KIWI

Hardy kiwi, also known as *kiwi berry*, is an aggressive vine that produces a delicious, fuzz-less fruit about the size of a cherry tomato. The *hardy* in this perennial's name refers to its tolerance of cold weather, which enables growing in our climate.

ENJOYING THE FRUIT

Hardy kiwi tastes similar to the kiwi you find in the grocery store, but it has no fuzz and is smaller. You don't have to peel off the smooth skin before eating. Most people enjoy the fruit raw, but it can be made into jam also.

The tiny fruit packs a lot of nutrition that offers many health benefits: five times the Vitamin C of an orange, twice the vitamin E of an avocado (and 60% of the calories), twice the dietary fiber of an apple, and more potassium per ounce than a banana.

The Food52 website has recipes for delicious hardy kiwi treats: <https://food52.com/blog/9100-hardy-kiwi-small-in-stature-but-built-tough>.

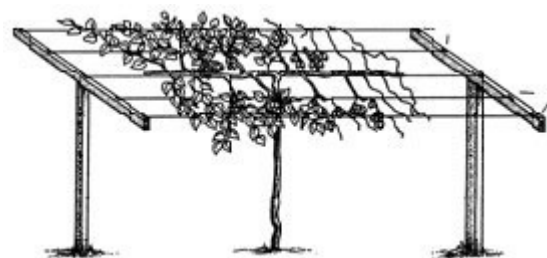
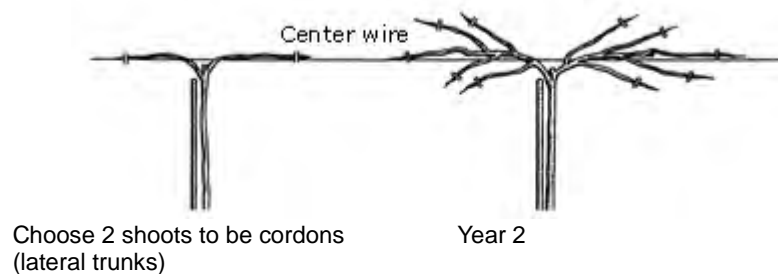
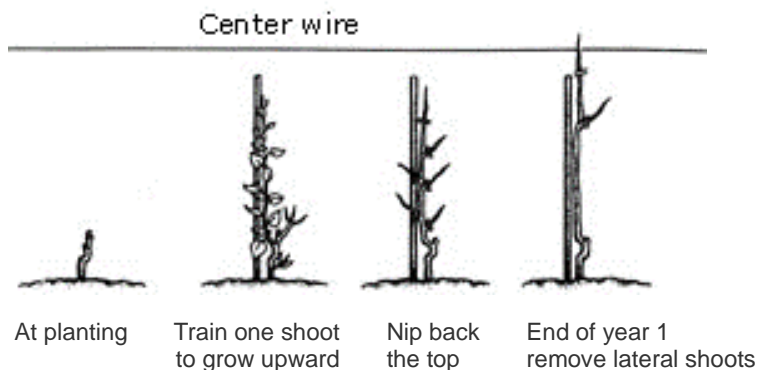
CHOOSING A SITE

Hardy kiwi likes full sun, rich soil, and consistent moisture with a soil pH between 5.5–7, so Cape Cod is perfect.

PLANTING

To produce fruit, hardy kiwi needs a male and a female; one male is needed for every six females.

You'll need to build a strong and well-anchored trellis system that can bear the weight of the heavy vines. The *A. arguta* variety can grow 20 feet a year and can bear 100 pounds of fruit per plant.



TAKING CARE: WATERING, FEEDING, PRUNING

Distribute a 2-inch layer of compost around the base of the trunk each spring, followed by a woodchip mulch layer to keep the soil moist. You don't need to apply fertilizer, because it will trigger too much leaf growth and not enough flowers/fruits.

AVOIDING PESTS AND DISEASE

Hardy kiwi has no pests or diseases of note. It has been reported that some members of the *Actinidia* genus, including kiwi berry, produce a catnip-like compound in their leaves, so you may find your cat lurking around in the kiwi vines.

HARVESTING

The vine will fruit about 3–5 years after planting, but be patient because sometimes it can take longer. Fruit will reach full size by mid-summer and then soften and sweeten in September.

You can pick the fruit early, when the seeds have turned fully black. Then let the kiwis ripen off the vine to keep critters from getting at them when they are sweet. Place the kiwis in refrigerator to slow ripening and then pull out to ripen as needed. They can keep for 2 months in the refrigerator.

CONSIDERING SPECIFIC VARIETIES

Two main hardy kiwis are *Actinidia arguta* and *Actinidia kolomikta*. For cooler or shadier locations, you want *A. kolomikta*. It can survive to -40°F but produces fewer and smaller fruits. These kiwis have more vitamin C and a higher sugar content.

A Japanese cultivar that claims to be a self-fertile female, called *Issai*, is on the market, but anecdotal reports say the harvest is not great unless you have a male *Actinidia* nearby.

