

Brazil Nuts

Bertholletia excelsa · Brazil nut family

DIFFICULTY Demanding

TYPE Large evergreen rainforest tree

MATURITY 10–15+ years to first crop



SUN
Full sun once established



WATER
Regular, high rainfall



SOIL PH
4.5–6.5



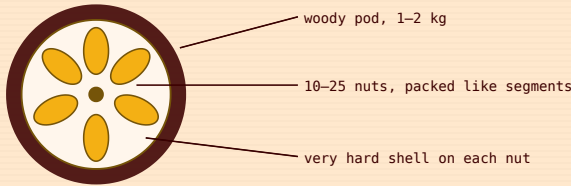
SPACING
10–15m



DEPTH
Same depth as in the pot

01 Pod anatomy

Brazil nuts grow inside a hard, round, woody pod about the size of a large coconut. Inside, 10 to 25 nuts are packed together like orange segments.



02 Planting

METHOD	Plant a nursery-grown seedling into deep, rich soil at the same depth as in its pot, with shade and wind shelter for the first two years.
SOIL	Deep, rich, moist but well-drained, slightly acid soil with plenty of organic matter.
TIMING	Plant at the start of the wet season, once cold nights and frost are no concern.
REALITY CHECK	Wet Tropics only. Brazil nut trees depend on large forest bees for pollination, and reliable crops in Australia are not well documented. Treat it as a long-term experiment.

Planting timing varies significantly by Australian climate zone. Set your zone above (or use the Find My Climate Zone tool) for guidance tailored to your own area.

03 Growing care

- Keep soil consistently moist; young trees dislike dry spells.
- Mulch deeply and keep grass back from the trunk.
- Shade seedlings from harsh sun for the first year or two, then expose them gradually.
- Allow plenty of room — mature trees can top 30m with a wide crown.

04 Problems

- **Frost and cold** — tender; not suited to anywhere with regular frost or cool winters.
- **Poor or no nut set** — pollination depends on large bees from the Amazon; trees may flower but set little or no fruit without them.
- **Slow growth** — seeds can take a year or more to sprout and trees many years to bear; buy a nursery seedling.
- **Falling pods** — heavy woody pods drop from a great height; never stand or park beneath a fruiting tree.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Whole woody pods drop to the ground when ripe, usually in the wet season, about 14 months after flowering.
METHOD	Collect fallen pods promptly and open them carefully with a machete or strong knife.
CURING	Rinse the nuts, discard any that float, smell musty or look mouldy, then dry in-shell in a warm airy spot for 1–2 weeks.
STORAGE	In-shell, cool and dry, 6–12 months. Shelled kernels turn rancid quickly, so freeze them for longer.
EATING	Very high in selenium — one or two nuts a day is plenty.
PRESERVING	See Dehydrating (drying nuts fully before storage) for ways to keep a harvest surplus.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY

Banana

Native groundcovers

AVOID NEARBY

Close tree planting

ROTATION NOTE

Not applicable — long-lived perennial tree.