

Pawpaw

Carica papaya · *Papaya* family

DIFFICULTY Moderate

TYPE Fast-growing perennial tree, short-lived (4–5 years)

MATURITY 9–12 months to first fruit



SUN
Full sun,
sheltered



WATER
Regular, well-
drained —
dislikes wet feet



SOIL PH
6.0–6.5



SPACING
2–3m



DEPTH
as per pot

01 Fast but short-lived

Pawpaw grows and fruits remarkably quickly for a tree crop, but plants typically decline after 4–5 years — plan on periodically replacing trees to keep a steady supply.



loose stake, first year

02 Planting

METHOD	Plant seedlings, several together if seed-grown, since sex isn't apparent until flowering.
SOIL	Free-draining above all — very sensitive to waterlogging.
TIMING	Plant in spring in warm, frost-free zones.

04 Problems

- **Root rot** — from poor drainage; the single biggest risk.
- **Fruit fly** — net or bag developing fruit.
- **Ringspot virus** — mottled leaves, distorted fruit; remove affected plants.
- **Frost damage** — kills young plants; only suited to frost-free zones.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY

Native groundcovers

AVOID NEARBY

Poorly drained spots

ROTATION NOTE

Not applicable — short-lived perennial, replace every few years.

03 Growing care

- Ensure sharp drainage — root rot is the main risk.
- Water regularly but never let it sit wet.
- Feed generously — a fast-growing, heavy feeder.
- Stake young trees in windy spots; they can be top-heavy.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Skin begins to yellow from the blossom end.
METHOD	Cut with a short stem attached; sap can irritate skin.
CURING	Ripen at room temperature over several days.
STORAGE	Ripe fruit in the fridge, a few days.