



CROP PRODUCTION GUIDES

Papaya, Pawpaw

Carica papaya

Family: Caricaceae



Description

Papaya is a short-lived, fast-growing tree growing 2-10m in height. Papaya trees are either male or female. The male trees do not produce fruit but are needed for fertilising the flowers on the female trees.

Uses: Both the ripe and unripe fruits can be eaten. The young leaves can be cooked as spinach.

Cultivation

Papaya can be grown in well-drained alkaline soil (pH 6-6.5), in frost-free areas. They are drought-resistant but will produce better fruit if they are given irrigation every two weeks during the dry season.

Rotation plan: Papaya are perennials.

Soil improvement: Prepare planting holes 3m apart. Do not add manure or compost to the holes. Liming may be necessary on acidic soils. When the plant is growing apply compost or compost tea every two months from the end of August to December/ January. Keep the trees mulched year-round.

Planting: Papaya can be easily raised from seed removed from fresh fruit, washed, and dried. Plant the seeds directly into containers in August if irrigation is available. Germination takes 2-3 weeks. If planting directly into lands, plant 5 seeds per station.

Transplant the seedlings when they are 15-20cm tall. Plant 5 seedlings per station. When they flower, thin-out the seedlings leaving one male plant to twenty females. The male flowers are smaller and longer than the female flowers. They are produced in clusters on long stalks. The female flowers are larger (fatter) and grow on short stalks coming out from the main trunk of the tree where the leaf is attached.

