



# LOQUAT

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## INTRODUCTION

Loquats are small evergreen trees with beautiful, coarsely textured leaves of deepest jade green. The small white flowers open between October and December - loquat flowers have an intense sweet scent. Winter brings abundant crops of delicious pale yellow fruit with an apricot flavor. Our loquat trees are cutting grown or grafted to insure fruiting in two years. Use fresh in fruit salad, freeze, use in pies or make jelly and jam.

Loquats are one of the easiest, most problem-free fruits you can grow - a little care will go a long way with this tree. Loquats are self-pollinating.

## USES IN THE LANDSCAPE

Loquats grow to approximately 20 feet tall. With a small, rounded crown, the graceful, evergreen trees have a distinctly tropical air. Combine with ginger lilies, cycads or bananas to move your garden south. Use as a small specimen tree or mix in with citrus varieties for a tall evergreen hedge. Loquats look great near ponds or water features.

## PLANTING AND CULTURE

### SITE SELECTION

Well-drained sandy soils are preferred, but loquats will grow on many soil types if good drainage is provided. Loquats do not tolerate flooding. Trees will grow more vigorously and produce more fruit in full sun.

## **SOIL PREPARATION AND PLANTING**

Loquats prefer slightly acid soil (pH 5.5-6.5), but soils of up to moderate alkalinity are readily tolerated. If you are in doubt about the acidity of your soil, take a soil sample to the Cooperative Extension Agent in your county for a soil test.

Dig a planting hole approximately twice as big as the pot and twice as deep. Enrich the planting hole with peat moss, compost or pine bark mixed with soil dug from the hole (50:50 mix). Remove the plant from the pot, gently loosen the root ball and place in the planting hole. The loquat should be planted **at or slightly above** the same level at which it grew in its pot. Fill the planting hole with the mix of soil and organic matter; gently tamp it in. Water thoroughly to settle the roots and eliminate air pockets. Do NOT put fertilizer in the planting hole. Only apply fertilizer if it is the correct time of year (see Fertilization section below).

If desired, construct a water basin around the base of the tree approximately 36 inches in diameter. Mulch in spring and summer with approximately 4-6 inches of mulch.

## **FERTILIZATION**

We use and recommend the Espoma line of organic fertilizers. Espoma's Citrus Tone is a good choice for loquat trees. When not available look for an organic mix that contains an analyst of roughly 5-2-6. Make sure they contain iron, zinc, manganese, magnesium, molybdenum, copper and boron. These minor elements are very important to plants and most soils are low in these elements. Application rates vary according to size and age of plant, so read the instructions on the bag and fertilize accordingly. Be sure to spread the fertilizer evenly under the entire canopy of the plant avoiding a 2-inch area around the trunk. Water or rake in. For Zones 8b-10, fertilize 3 times each year in February, May and late July/early August. Never fertilize after August as this will promote new growth when the plant needs to go dormant.

## **WATER**

The first year is a critical time for the establishment of a new loquat. Water thoroughly twice a week on light soils and once a week on clay soils. Soak the entire root system deeply. Loquats should receive at least 1 inch of water each week for best growth and fruit production, but established trees are drought resistant. Fruit may drop prematurely if insufficiently irrigated during dry spells.

## **PRUNING AND CARE**

Loquats require little pruning. Remove dead and damaged wood when appropriate. Loquats are essentially free from pests and diseases. Freezes below 27°F may damage fruit and flowers, but will not harm the trees.

## **VARIETY LIST**

**CHRISTMAS** This variety ripens very early in the season, escaping most of the hard January and February freezes. Fruit is huge, up to 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Bright yellow with a tangy apricot flavor.

**LOVETT** A chance seedling originating in central Florida. Pale yellow loquats with pure white honey sweet centers. Ripens early spring.