



QUINCE
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INTRODUCTION

Quinces (*Cydonia oblonga*) used to be in every yard. The flowers were one of the early signs of spring and the fruit was used in a variety of savory and sweet recipes. Having lost popularity due to no fault of their own, we're pleased to offer some great varieties. All quinces are self-pollinating.

USES IN THE LANDSCAPE

Uniquely gnarled and twisted in form, the quince makes an unusual tree to add to the shrubbery border. Delicate, large pale-pink blooms resemble apple blossoms and are sweetly fragrant, as is the ripe fruit. If grafted trees grow as a single trunk. Ungrafted trees may be allowed to sucker and planted closely together, growing a fabulous hedge. Low-growing flowering quince makes a show when interplanted with spring-flowering bulbs.

PLANTING AND CULTURE

SITE SELECTION

Quinces produce best on deep, heavy loam, but they will grow on many soil types. Trees will grow more vigorously and produce more fruit in full sun.

SOIL PREPARATION AND PLANTING

Quinces prefer slightly alkaline soil (pH 6.5 to 7.0 or higher). If you are in doubt about the pH of your soil, take a soil sample to the Cooperative Extension Agent in your county for a soil test. Adjust soil pH as necessary. A soil pH of 7.0 or higher releases extra calcium, preventing bitter rot on ripening fruits.

Dig a planting hole approximately three times the width of the pot and at the same depth as the root ball. Set that soil aside and mix it 50/50 with either aged mushroom compost, aged manure, or rotted pine bark & aged manure/compost. Remove the plant from the pot, gently loosen the root ball and place in the planting hole. To avoid burying too deep, make sure plant is positioned with the top most roots at the soil line. 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. Pull mulch a couple of inches away from the trunk for good air circulation.

FERTILIZATION

We use and recommend the Espoma line of organic fertilizers. Espoma's Citrus Tone is a good choice for quince 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 type and age of plant, so read the instructions on the bag and fertilize accordingly. Spread the fertilizer evenly under the entire canopy of the plant avoiding a 5-inch area around the trunk. Water or rake in. For Zones 8a-10, fertilize 3 times each year in February, May and late July/early August. For Zones 5-7, fertilize 2 times each year in March and June/July. **Never fertilize after August** (June/July in Zones 5-7) as this will promote new growth late in the year which will be subject to freeze damage. Over-fertilization with nitrogen may contribute to fruit drop and promote fire blight. If fruit drop occurs, switch to a bloom buster-type, low nitrogen fertilizer.

WATER

The first year is a critical time for the establishment of a new quince. Water thoroughly twice a week on light soils and once a week on clay soils. Soak the entire root system deeply - this usually takes 40-50 minutes. Quinces should receive at least 1 inch of water each week for best growth and fruit production. Water regularly, especially during dry periods. Fruit may drop prematurely if insufficiently irrigated during dry spells.

PRUNING AND CARE

Quinces tend to be bushy and ungrafted quince will sucker to form a hedge if left unpruned. Quinces can be trained to a single trunk by frequent removal of suckers while grafter trees do not sucker. The open center pruning style is best in hot, humid climates like the Deep South. Light annual pruning of established trees encourages fruit production. Remove dead and damaged wood during late winter and remove sprouts and suckers as they appear.

HARVEST

Quinces are ripened like pears off the tree. Ripe fruit are highly fragrant. Most quinces are used for cooking, but **AROMATNAYA** and **PINEAPPLE** can also be eaten fresh.

VARIETY LIST - FOR MORE VARIETIES GO TO OUR WEBSITE WWW.JUSTFRUITSANDEXOTICS.COM

AROMATNAYA Round yellow quince from southern Russia that is deliciously sweet when eaten fresh as well as cooked. Extremely aromatic (thus the name!), with a fresh pineapple-like flavor, it will have a dense texture when first picked (October) but will soften up in a few days. Grafted. Zones 5-9. Self-pollinating.

ORANGE Medium size fruit are round with a golden-colored skin and tender orange-yellow flesh. Excellent cooked in sauces, butters or preserves. Grafted. Zones 8-9. Self-pollinating.

PINEAPPLE Large, smooth golden-yellow fruit. White flesh has a distinct pineapple flavor. One of the few you can eat fresh and also makes excellent jellies. Grafted. Zones 8-9. Self-pollinating.

SMYRNA Large, elongated fruit are lemony yellow in color with a tender, highly fragrant flesh. Excellent flavor-one of the best for jellies and preserves. Grafted. Zones 8-9. Self-pollinating.

RECIPE - APPLE QUINCE PIE (FROM T. DAY-LEWIS, FOOD NETWORK.COM)

Peel, core and slice 1½ pounds Granny Smith or other cooking apple. Peel, core and grate one large or two small quince. Layer in a pie pan, sprinkling granulated sugar over each layer. Add water to come about halfway up the fruit (about a cup). Top with a short crust pasty top or puff pastry, brush with egg wash and sprinkle with sugar to glaze. Bake for 20 minutes in a 400 degree oven. Turn the temperature down to 375 degrees and bake an additional 20 minutes. Cover with foil if the top is browning too quickly. Eat warm or hot with heavy cream. Yummy!