

Sudachi Tree - Growing Guide

Sudachi trees are grafted onto specially selected rootstock (Flying dragon – Poncirus trifoliata) to allow them to produce this fantastic fruit in the UK. Hardy down to -15°C, once the tree is well established, this gives the very best chance of raising successful citrus trees outdoors in the UK.

To establish the tree, grow in a pot for the first two years and move in winter to protect it from frost. Trees can then be planted out during the spring growing season. This rootstock is not suitable for alkaline soils but will thrive in acidic conditions. Soil and irrigation water should have a pH of no greater than 6.

The Flying Dragon rootstock is a dwarfing variety that will reduce the height of the tree compared to an un-grafted tree, but still allows for heights of 2.5m in optimum conditions. They are also deciduous so do not be surprised when your tree sheds its leaves in winter. The trees are suitable for growing in pots or in the garden.

Sudachi flower in spring and form fruit in small clusters which are ready to harvest in late autumn and winter. All trees stand 100-120cm tall (including pot) and were grafted a minimum of 18 months ago. Sudachi is a sour citrus used as a flavouring for both sweet and savoury dishes; the juice is almost always used unripe when it has a powerful, zesty aroma with a peppery lime like flavour.

Planting

In containers use free draining compost, additional perlite or hardwood bark will improve drainage if the compost does not already contain these. Irrigation should be controlled to maintain the compost moist and never saturated. Re-pot every 1-2 years increasing the size of the pot each time. If you choose to move your tree in winter remember to use a light pot. Raise the base of the pot above the surrounding ground to allow for free drainage of any excess water.

Outdoors a sunny, south facing, sheltered spot is desirable. Acidic soils are essential, clay soils should be avoided if possible and if not mixed with

sand to allow for good drainage and mounding the earth above the soil level is recommended in these conditions. In dry conditions once or twice weekly watering is preferable to little and often. A summer mulch will help maintain moisture and reduce risk of the roots drying out.

Water logging is the most common ailment in the UK climate so please follow the drainage advice above and prevent the tree sitting in water.

Caring for your plant

A controlled release, nitrogen rich citrus fertiliser applied in spring will support growth, liquid fertilisers should be applied in low strengths little and often to prevent excessive levels.

The most likely pest attack would come from aphid or mites. Encourage natural predators like ladybirds, lacewings and spiders. If evidence is seen a spray bottle filled with water and a couple drops of mild dish detergent will usually deter them. Keep trees dust free (mites loves dust) by gently rinsing the leaves with a very mild soap or rinsing outdoor trees with a hose every couple of weeks.

All citrus trees require a period of nighttime temperatures below 12°C for optimum spring flowering. If flowering is prolific in the first two years it is recommended to remove some of the fruits when very small, so the tree is not overburdened. A first and second year harvest of 6-12 fruits is considered sustainable.

Harvesting

Highly fragrant, small white flowers appear with the spring and fruit is ready to harvest in October – December for a seasonally citrus lift to Christmas and the New Year.

Pick from the tree when the skin is a dark green as sudachi is most commonly used unripe, the fruits will be small, smaller even than mandarins. Add to dressing, drinks and use as a topping to sushi, fish dishes and soup. If you have a bumper harvest ripe sudachi juice and zest can both be used with excellent results and the fruit freezes whole if required.

Please don't hesitate to get in contact with The Wasabi Team if you have any questions