

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.

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.

Planting timing varies significantly by Australian climate zone. Set your zone above (or use the Find My Climate Zone tool) for guidance tailored to your own area.

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	AVOID NEARBY	ROTATION NOTE
Native groundcovers	Poorly drained spots	Not applicable — short-lived perennial, replace every few years.



loose stake, first year

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.
PRESERVING	See Freezing Produce (freezing a harvest surplus) or Dehydrating (dried tropical fruit) for ways to keep a harvest surplus.