

REEMS CREEK NURSERY

Hardy Kiwi

Actinidia arguta

A Garden Guide

Hardy Kiwi (*Actinidia arguta*) is native to mountain forests and streambanks in East Asia, China, and Japan. Unlike other Kiwis, the skin is hairless and edible. The small, sweet, delicious fruits can be eaten right off the vine like a grape. The nutritious fruits are packed full of Vitamin C. This vigorous vine can produce large crops, and requires a **significant trellis system**.



Pollination: Hardy Kiwi is dioecious, with female and male plants. Male plants are required for the female plants to set fruit. One male plant can pollinate up to 8 female plants.

Siting: Hardy Kiwis require 6-8 hours of direct sunlight, and are **very sensitive to late spring frosts and freezes**. While the plant itself is hardy, fresh new growth is not. They prefer north-facing slopes, where the temperature swings are not as severe as those on south-facing slopes. If planting on a south-facing slope, be prepared to protect them in spring. Avoid planting in a frost pocket. If possible, plant them more than 10' apart on an **extremely sturdy trellis** or structure. Avoid planting in or near Solanaceae plants to avoid potential plant pathogens.

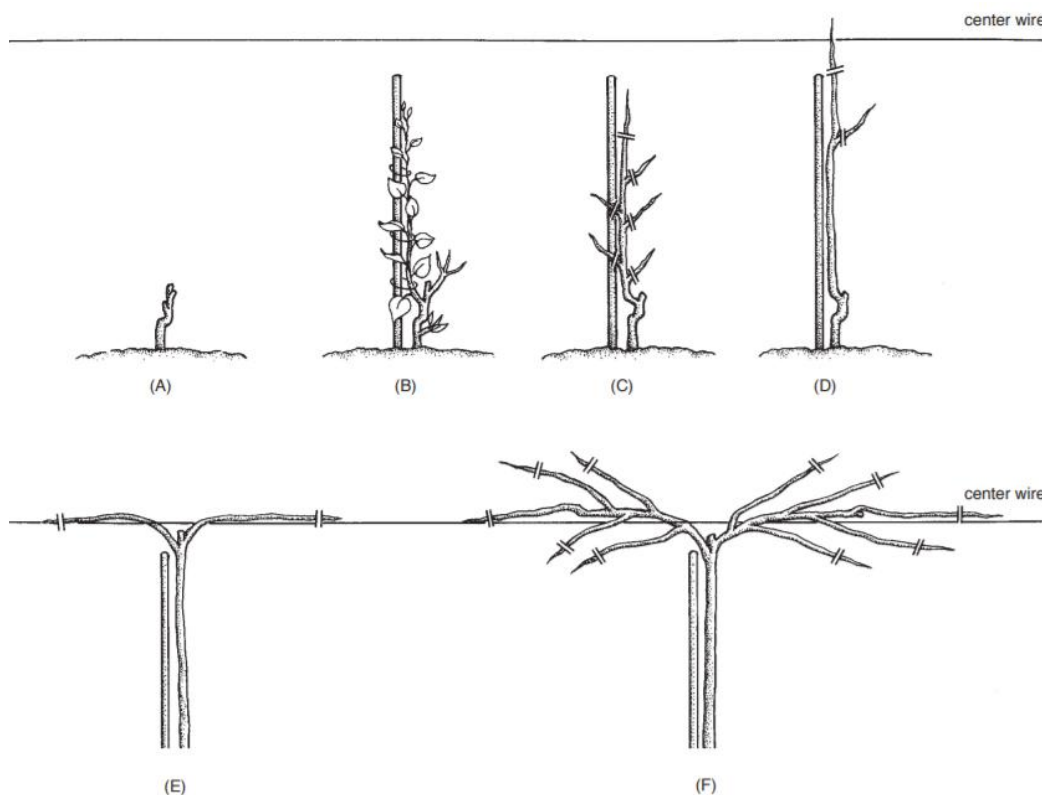
Soil and Planting: Hardy Kiwis prefer a soil pH of 5.5-6.0, with moist, well-draining soil. A good soil test will tell you exactly what to add, but usually in our soils, Hardy Kiwis will need at least $\frac{1}{3}$ soil conditioner, up to $\frac{1}{3}$ composted cow manure, mixed with our native clay. Applying mycorrhizae directly to the roots, just prior to planting, will improve plant resilience (Biotone® fertilizer includes mycorrhizae and is an excellent choice when planting). Dig a hole 2-3x as wide as the pot, 2-3x deep as the pot, plant the Hardy Kiwi in the soil at the same height as it was in the pot. Apply 2-3" of mulch to the root zone, do not let it touch the trunk or any woody roots that might be visible.

Fertilizing: Hardy Kiwi roots are easily burned by chlorides commonly found in chemical fertilizers - it is safer to use organic rather than chemical sources. Work

Happy Frog® Fruit and Flower or Plant-tone® into the soil, in spring and summer. Kelp, Greensand, and Rock Phosphate may also be particularly helpful. It is better to apply a small amount, every few weeks. Compost tea is a wonderful snack for your trees in the spring and summer. Avoid fertilizing in fall.

Watering: Slowly, deeply, and once weekly during the first growing season. Supplemental water will be needed during dry periods - drought can compromise fruit production. Less water will be needed during rainy periods. Remember, too much or too little water can cause significant health issues. As plants mature and start to set large yields, water needs may significantly increase. Do not water so much that the roots are sitting in water - good drainage is essential for root health.

Pruning: Hardy Kiwi benefit from heavy pruning - up to 70% may be removed. Pruning encourages good: air flow, fruit production, vine management, and harvesting. It is common to prune them to have a strong central vine from which all other vines protrude; leaving the central vine alone. Fruiting occurs on last year's fresh growth.



A Prune to two buds at planting.

B Train one shoot as a trunk, remove all others (growing season, year 1).

C Head back trunk as shoot growth at terminal loses vigor (growing season, year 1).

D Continue to remove lateral shoots, let trunk grow beyond wire, then head to just below top wire (growing season, year 1).

E Choose two shoots to form cordons (lateral trunks). Head back to 1/4 inch diameter in dormant season (growing season, year 1).

F Shoot growth, year 2.

Many thanks to Oregon State University for this information and diagram. They cover more pruning and trellising information in their handout 'Growing Kiwifruit, 2005'. Penn State has a simplified version called 'Hardy Kiwi in the Home Fruit Planting, 2016' that may also be useful.

Organic Spray Schedule: Hardy Kiwis are quite resilient. Pest issues, if they arise, can usually be dealt with using Neem oil or Horticultural oil, as needed.

Trellising: Can be in the form of Grape trellising systems, but needs to be sturdier. T-bar systems are popular with Hardy Kiwi farmers. Mature female vines can yield up to 100 lbs. per plant per season, although 30-50lbs is more the norm. It is difficult to over engineer their support system.



Harvesting: They will start fruiting between 5-9 years old. Harvest when ripe - juicy and sweet, with a soft give to the flesh. The best way to tell is to try some! Ripe Hardy Kiwis, right off the vine, are a wonderful treat but they do not keep well for long. Harvest carefully, as the fruits can be easily bruised. Harvested underripe, they can last up to 2 months refrigerated. Version 1.0 Feb 21

