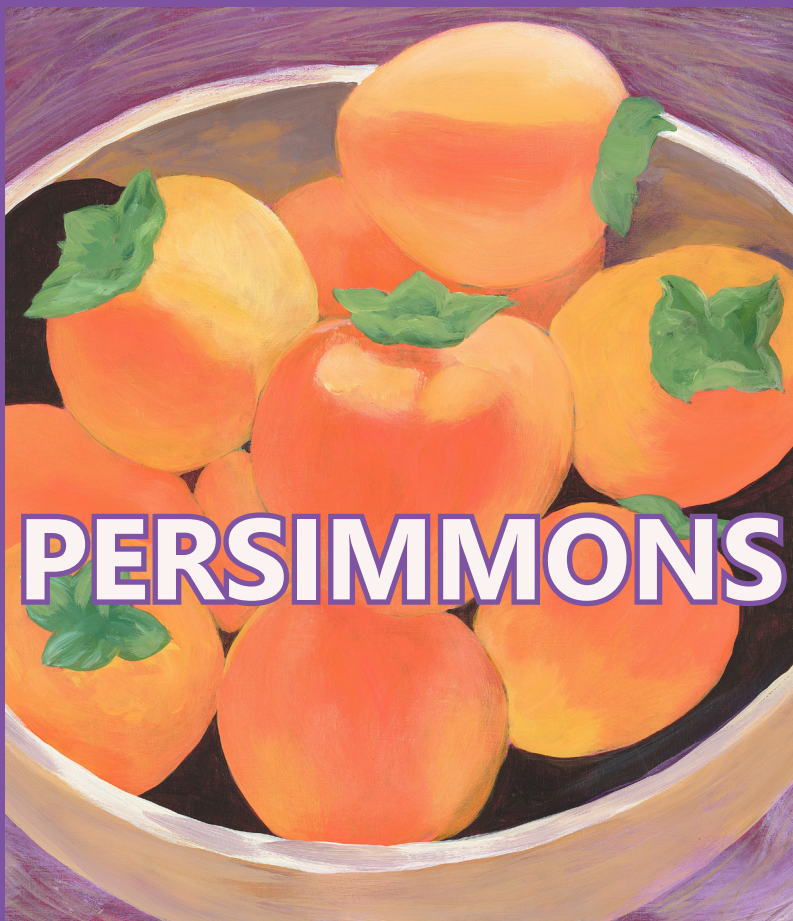


Harvest of the Month



Language Links

English: persimmon

Scientific Name (Latin):
Diospyros kaki

Spanish: los caquis

Hmong: txiv persimmon

Local Highlight

Persimmons like warm temperatures, which means you have to go inland to find them in Humboldt County.

Check out our video about local persimmons and McIntosh Farm:

hcoe.org/2024/01/persimmons/

Joke Corner

What sound does a persimmon make when it sneezes?

Ha-CHI-ya!

What does a persimmon say when it is in love?

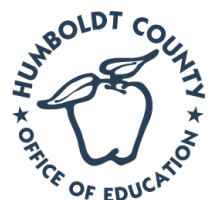
I'd do anything Fuyu.

What did the persimmon wear to his job interview?

Kaki pants.



HUMBOLDT COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
Nutrition Programs & Services



PERSIMMONS

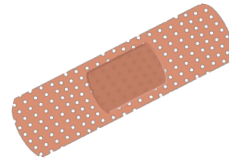


Nutrition Power

Persimmons are a good source of vitamins A and C.



Vitamin A
helps your vision!



Vitamin C
helps you heal!

Did You Know?

- ❑ Plant part we eat: FRUIT
- ❑ Sometimes called Japanese or Chinese persimmon, the *Diospyros kaki* persimmon is native to China, Northeast India, and northern Indochina. It has been cultivated in China for more than 2,000 years and is also very popular in Japan, Nepal, and Korea. It was introduced to California in the 1800's.
- ❑ California produces 99 percent of the Japanese persimmon crop grown in the United States. The two major Japanese varieties grown in California are the Fuyu and the Hachiya. They are harvested from late October through November.
- ❑ Fuyu persimmons are shaped like flattened tomatoes and can be eaten firm. Hachiya persimmons are acorn-shaped and are ready to eat when very soft, when the flesh is like jelly. If you try to eat a Hachiya persimmon before it is soft, your mouth will pucker and dry out from the fruit's tannins. We say that the unripe Hachiya persimmon is astringent.
- ❑ The United States also has a native persimmon called *Diospyros virginiana* (American persimmon). These trees are mainly found growing in the wild in the eastern states. The American persimmon is a traditional food of the Cherokee, Comanche, and Seminole peoples. The English word "persimmon" comes from the Powhatan name for the fruit, *pichamin*, meaning "a dry fruit."



PERSIMMONS



Hoshigaki

The persimmon is an important part of the lives of the Japanese people and a symbol of the fall season in Japan. Persimmons are found growing in home gardens, captured in art, and written about in poetry like this haiku (by Basho, translated from Japanese):

This old village –
not a single house
without persimmon trees

There are hundreds of varieties of persimmon. Some are astringent like the Hachiya. To eat astringent types, you must either wait for them to get completely soft, or remove the bitterness in some other way. The Japanese developed a method of drying astringent persimmons over a thousand years ago and still do it today.

The unripe, astringent persimmons are peeled and hung up somewhere warm and dry. After a few days, the persimmons are gently massaged about every other day. This helps break down the tannins and remove the astringency. Sugars in the fruit also start to come to the surface, leaving a powdery coating on the skin. It takes about a month to finish drying the persimmons, leaving them darker in color, soft, chewy, and very sweet! Called hoshigaki, the dried persimmons are a prized treat in Japan and an important part of traditional Japanese New Year's celebrations. They symbolize good luck and longevity!



Japanese Vocabulary

Astringent persimmons: shibugaki

Non-astringent persimmons: amagaki

Dried persimmons: hoshigaki



PERSIMMONS



Activity Ideas

1. Have students write a haiku about persimmons, autumn, or something from the garden!
 - Haiku are three lines of usually un-rhymed words totaling 17 syllables (5 on the first line, 7 on the second, 5 on the third).
 - Try to capture an image with your poem. Use descriptive words. Keep it simple. Don't worry about punctuation. Have fun!
2. Persimmons are a strong symbol of autumn in Japan. The fruit turns bright orange as it matures, and stays hanging on the tree as the leaves change color and fall. Have students explore the seasons by observing a deciduous tree on campus throughout the school year, starting now!
 - Refer to "The Seasons of a Tree" in the Cycles and Changes Section in The Growing Classroom.
3. Make hoshigaki with hachiya persimmons (the acorn-shaped astringent type). Look online for instructions to make sure you do it safely.

Tasting

Fuyu persimmons:

You can eat while firm. Cut up the fruit like an apple. Remove the skin if it seems tough. Careful, the fruit can be slippery! Try the persimmon on its own. You can also make an autumn fruit salad by combining with sliced apples, a squeeze of lemon juice, and some honey.



Hachiya persimmons:

Wait until the persimmon is deep orange and squishy like a water balloon. Cut in half and scoop out the pulp.

