

Asian Pears

Asian pears, distinctly flavored as well as ornamental, can be grown at most locations in Yavapai County. The tree is covered with early white blossoms and the glossy attractive leaves are tinged with purple in the autumn. This tree, however, may not be hardy in the coldest locations. Trees on *Pyrus betulaefolia* rootstock are reportedly hardy to -10 degrees F; trees on Old Home X Farmingdale rootstock are hardy to about -20 degrees F.

Asian pears, originally from China, Korea, and Japan, comprise two species: *Pyrus ussuriensis* and *Pyrus pyrifolia*. They differ from *Pyrus communis*, the common pear, in that they remain firm and are crisp and juicy when ripe. Asian pears have a totally different texture and flavor than apples. They should be allowed to ripen on the tree. Harvest is from August through October. Ripe fruit can be stored 10 to 14 days at room temperature and longer under refrigeration.

Asian pears are almost identical to common pears in culture. The codling moth is the principal insect pest of Asian as well as of *P. communis* pears. Asian pear varieties are susceptible to fireblight (*Erwinia amylovora*), but most varieties are not damaged as severely as Bartlett and other European pears.

Plant trees in full sun with a 15-ft spacing. At maturity, Asian pears can be maintained at 12 to 15 ft. They need to be pruned a little more severely than European pears. Spread the new branches to discourage a tendency to make V-shaped crotches. As the tree matures, most of the fruit is borne on long lived terminal spurs.

Trees are partially self-fruitful, but the close presence of another variety will increase yield. Choose a variety that blooms at the same time; European pears can be used as pollenizers for Asian pears. Trees tend to overbear. Thinning fruit to one pear per cluster is very important in order to have large fruit.

While Asian pears have not been widely planted in Yavapai County, varieties that appear promising include:

YALL. Fruit medium to large, pear shaped, light yellowish green and smooth. Flesh is white, mildly sweet, aromatic, crisp, juicy, coarse. Tree is large, upright, somewhat spreading, dense and productive. Use Shinseiki as pollenizer.

SHINSEIKI. Fruit round to oblong. Skin is yellow, medium, tough, thick and smooth, dots small, numerous, conspicuous. Flesh is white sweet, mild, faintly aromatic. Tree is of medium size and vigor, spreading, medium dense.

HOSUI. Fruit is golden colored, acidic, and highly flavored, medium dense.



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