

Paw-paw Cravings

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Asimina triloba (paw paw)

Photo by Scott Bauer So I've been thinking a lot about paw-paws lately.

I ate one once, years ago, and I remember really liking it - it was kind of like eating banana/mango pudding.

A gardening friend of mine planted two paw-paw trees 6 years ago and got his first fruit last year. He didn't share, though, because he only got one fruit, but he swore it was the best thing he's ever tasted.

And so I got my Raintree Nursery catalog last month and have dog-eared the paw-paw page. How can I not try to grow "North America's only native tropical fruit"?

Apparently they grow pretty slowly and I'll need two for more reliable pollination (they're pollinated by flies and the flowers are a bit stinky...).

My hubby and I have been discussing the merits of an inside-the-fence planting vs. one outside-the-fence. There's more shade outside (they're an understory tree) but less room to grow.

I'm voting for outside-the-fence so we don't have to mow around it or prune it.

All the rest of our fruit trees are inside-the-fencers because the deer like to make a winter meal out of the branches (not to mention all the buck-love they would receive in the fall). Several sources have told me that deer do not eat paw-paw trees because of something astringent in their bark so we don't have to worry about that.

Someday I'd also like to grow a persimmon, but not because I actually like eating them. They taste terrible to me but they are such beautiful trees and fruits. I guess I just want one to look at.

Anyway, back to the paw paws. I think I'm going to get grafted varieties since they supposedly produce more consistently; probably one 'Pennsylvania Golden' and one 'Mango'. I'll report back in 6 years when I actually get to taste one.