

Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)

15-20' x up to 30-40' multi-stem tree/shrub.

Short trunk, stout spreading branches, densely pyramidal. In the wild understory, may spread by suckers into patches.

Native NY south/Midwest, found in bottomlands, rich woods, ravines, by streams. Northern-most member of Custard Apple family, mainly tropical/sub-tropical species.

6-12" oblong bright green leaves with semi-tropical look, slightly drooping. Spaced closely together on first year branches. Keeps color well into fall, then turns yellow, at times brilliant.

1-2" leathery purplish maroon flowers, with six spreading petals, and numerous pale yellow stamens. In April-May, before or as leaves develop, lasting about a month.

The largest edible native fruit in U.S. 2-5" rounded or long yellow-green autumn fruit. Long brown flat seeds, cling to pulp. Tastes like banana/melon/pear, custard texture, fragrant. Very nutritious, with Vitamins A and C, essential minerals, amino acids, anti-oxidants. Pick or shake down fruit early fall while still firm green, to beat the wildlife to it, let ripen indoors until softer yellow.

Dark brown and gray wood. Twigs and small branches brown and smooth; young shoots downy.

Sun to shade, better habit in sun. Medium to wet, prefers moist well-drained fertile soil. Tap-rooted, so hard to transplant. Easy, pest/deer free. Fruit set helped by planting 2+ trees.

Use for unusual fruit and foliage, as specimen, screen, in shrub border, rain garden, at wood's edge. Can naturalize in moist deep soils along streams and ponds. Long used by Natives and European settlers for food. Eat raw, with lemon, dried, in ice creams, breads, pies, cakes, sauces. (Note: fruit can produce nausea in some people, or cause contact dermatitis in others.)

Raccoons, opossums, fox, birds, box turtles love fruit.

For NPR story, go to npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2011/09/29/140894570/the-pawpaw-foraging-for-americas-forgotten-fruit

Photo 1 Virginia Tech Dept. of Forestry
dendro.cnre.vt.edu/dendrology/syllabus/factsheet.cfm?ID=155
Photo 2 Merel R. Black, University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point
wisplants.uwsp.edu

Photos 3, 8 Missouri Botanical Garden PlantFinder
mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder

Photos 4, 6 Will Cook, Duke University
duke.edu/~cwcook/trees/ceam.html

Photos 5, 7, 9 Steve Baskauf bioimages.vanderbilt.edu

Photo 10 Clark nova
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Asimina_triloba_red_fern_farm.jpg

Photo 11 Manuel Conde
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pawpaw-fruit.jpg

Photo 12 Jebulon wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ef/Asimina_triloba_%28L.%29_Dunal_JdP.jpg

