

JUST FRUITS: QUINCE



QUINCE

CYDONIA OBLONGA

RECOMMENDED CULTIVAR -
AROMATNAYA



Ecology

Member of the Rose Family, Antiquely native to Persia and



Mesopotamia. Zone 4; Mature height 12 - 20'; Plant spacing 8 - 12'; Sun/shade - prefers full sun.

Small deciduous trees, irregularly shaped growing to about 15 feet tall, physically comparable to its apple and pear tree cousins. As they mature, trees take on an unusual gnarled form. Foliage is alternately arranged, simple, deep green and pubescent underneath, turning yellow in fall.

Primary pollinator

Self-fruitful

Flower

Showy pink blossoms, set late, avoiding spring freezes. Flowers need cross-pollination to ensure good fruiting.

Fruit

Unlike most quinces, the skin of *C. oblonga*'s pear shaped, fragrant, golden ripening fruit, is thin and smooth. Harvested in late summer, the fruit is a good source of pectin, vitamin C and B2, potassium, potash, and phosphorus-- when they are golden yellow.

Soil Conditions

Quinces prefer a fertile site in full sun. They are slightly more tolerant of wet soils and drought than apples, but will fruit more reliably on moist but well-drained soil with a pH of 7.0. Avoid heavy, moist soils as well as sandy soils, or those high in carbonates.

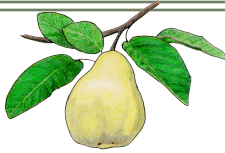
WHY GROW QUINCE?

Quince as a fruit variety that has been grown in many countries all over the world for over 4,000 years. For a successful production of quince, location is important. Choose a site that is well protected from temperature and moisture extremes. Planting a windbreak will also go a long way in preventing damage from wind, sun and frost. The flowers are susceptible to winter injury at temperatures below about -15° F, but trees are hardy in Zones 4 to 9.

Quince are often interplanted amongst pear and apple trees. Once established, quince generally do not require pruning, unless growers prefer to train to a single stem til 5 - 6'. Flower bud injury, fireblight, borers, codling moth, curculio, scale and tent caterpillars can all cause problems. To avoid fireblight, and other pest issues, in general, avoid monoculture plantings, do not use excessive nitrogen and keep pruning to a minimum. Thin out suckers in winter or early spring. Other than minor pest issues, weed management

and deer protection are the only major maintenance tasks. Recommend woodchip or clean straw for mulch, and fencing to prevent animal browse, and wire mesh at the base of the trees to prevent rodent damage (installing raptor perches will also help minimize rodent damage). Mowing between rows or plants may also be required depending on orchard layout. Quince also serve as the rootstock for many dwarf pear tree varieties. Economic Potential - Medium input, first harvest 2 - 3 year, with peak at 8 - 10 yrs. Quince trees can last up to 70 years. Yield/tree is around 320 lbs, with single trees known to produce up to 880 lbs/mature tree. Total costs of growing quince are 40% less compared with apples. Depending on market, growers can anticipate wholesale prices of \$1.75 - \$2.00/lb with direct market sales ranging from \$2.00 - \$2.45/lb.





Quince- Social Benefits, Tastes, Potential Uses

Quince are one of those old time fruits, rarely seen in the markets of today's world. Having lost popularity due to no fault of their own, it's hard to believe that they occupied an important place in the kitchens and gardens of almost every rural home at the beginning of the 20th century. Prized for jelly and added to many cooked foods and meat dishes, quince has a high pectin content and is not commonly thought of for fresh fruit consumption.

The health benefits of quince are many. Sir Thomas lauded the quince as the 'stomach's comforter' and we know now that quinces are high in vitamins, C and B2, potassium, potash, and phosphorus as well as high in malic acid - owing to the fruits tart taste. Though in the raw form, the sour taste might not tickle your taste buds and you might find it inedible, cooked quince provides for a great culinary advantage as it gives out a wonderful smell and delicious flavor. Quince is high in pectin and that makes it extremely useful for the purpose of canning and also displays a wide palette

and potential for other products including: compote, sulc (headcheese), cheese, pasta, sausages, juice, tea, and infused liquors. Store fruits in an airtight, sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 2 months.

In Iran and parts of the Middle East, the dried quince pits, soaked in water, are used to treat sore throat and to relieve cough. When put in water, the seeds of the quince engorge and are used for their mild laxative features: the seeds puff up when placed in water and forms a sticky substance. This sticky mass formed is used to heal respiratory ailments, particularly in children. In addition, this gelatinous substance is also applied topically to heal minor burns and bruises. Quince has also been used as an adjunct to skin lotions and creams.

Historically, cultivation of quince may have preceded apple culture, and many references translated to "apple", such as the fruit in Song of Solomon, may have been to a quince. Among the ancient Greeks, the quince was a ritual offering at

weddings, bringing fertility and love to a newly wedded couple while warding off the 'evil eye'. "There is no fruit growing in the land that is of so many excellent uses...serving as well to make many dishes...and much more for their physical virtues." John Parkinson, *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris*, 1629.



Rob, weeding around the newly planted Quince tree at Hilltop Community Farm. Quince trees form the center planting of our orchard guilds, with currant shrubs 5' out on the quince's 'drip-line'. Photo by Erin Schneider



Aromatnaya, a quince variety that has gained a reputation for being deliciously sweet eaten fresh as well as an excellent choice cooked and sweetened, often used in preserves due to its high pectin content. The strong fruit perfume of quince enhances the flavor of apple pies, sauces, and other jams. The term marmalade originally meaning a quince jam, derives from marmelo the Portuguese word for the fruit. Quince are lauded as the 'stomach's comforter'. Apicus, author of the world's first cookbook, recommended whole quinces boiled with honey and wine. Cover, washed, cored, and quartered quinces with water in a big pot, boil and mash, strain, add just under a cup of sugar for every cup of juice rendered, re-boil till thickened and jar for an excellent preserve.

- RECIPE SAMPLER -

SPICY QUINCE

- 8 quinces, cored, peeled and chopped
- 2 C water
- 3 tbsp grapeseed oil (or any light vegetable oil)
- 4 tbsp mustard seeds
- 2 tbsp black peppercorns, crushed
- 1 tbsp fenugreek seeds
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 bulb of garlic, cloves peeled and grated
- 2 TBS fresh ginger, peeled and grated
- 6 fresh red chiles (as hot as you like), de-seeded and finely chopped
- 3 tart cooking apples, peeled, cored and chopped
- 2 C cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp sea salt
- 3 - 4 C dark sugar.

CHUTNEY

Substitute red chiles for cranberries and golden raisins for a savory taste. Combine the quinces and water in a pan. Bring to a simmer, cover, and cook until soft (about 90 minutes, depending on the ripeness). Turn into a fine-meshed sieve set over the bowl (it's the fruit pulp you need for this recipe, use the quince juice for making ice cream or jelly). Heat oil, add mustard seeds, other spices, stirring ~ 2 minutes then add garlic, ginger, chiles, add apples combine spices add, vinegar salt, sugar, quince pulp. Stir over low heat until the sugar has dissolved then bring to a simmer and cook, uncovered, for about 2 hours, or until thickened, stirring occasionally (add a little water if the mixture looks as if it's becoming too thick). Allow chutney to cool slowly, and pour into clean sterilized. Seal in hot water bath for 20 minutes. Use as needed.

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