

Kiwis - Smooth or Fuzzy? You Decide!

Decisions, decisions; to fuzz or not to fuzz that is the question. Well, frankly my dear, you can have them both! Originating in China, and by way of New Zealand, Kiwi came to the USA in 1904. However it wasn't until the 1960-70's that the fruit became popular.



Darlene Fuzzy Kiwi - *Actinidia deliciosa*

In your decision process, consider the different types of kiwis. Fuzzy Kiwis, *Actinidia deliciosa*, have large, fuzzy fruit with an inedible brown skin while the Hardy Kiwi, *Actinidia arguta*, have grape size fruit with smooth, green edible skin. Both types require a Male and a Female (except for Issai and Lone Star, two Hardy types that are self fertile). The Male is needed to pollinate the Female but only the Female will produce fruit -

hmm, so even in the plant world it's the same ;-). Typically one Male will pollinate 3-4 Females depending on the spacing of the trellised plants. Oh, yes, Kiwis are vines and big, heavy vines at that. You will need a good, sturdy support structure for the Kiwi vines to grow up onto and run across. In their native environment, Kiwi vines will climb up trees 25-100 feet! However with proper pruning techniques, you'll be able to keep them to a manageable length and width.

Besides lots of sun, Kiwis need well drained soils (they hate soggy or clay soils) and lots of water in the summer. They can grow in soils with a pH range of 5.0-6.5 and are heavy nitrogen feeder, so don't be stingy with the fertilizer! Mulch with manure or hay but keep the mulch from touching the vine trunks to prevent crown rot.



Hardy Kiwi - *Actinidia arguta*

Once mature Fuzzy Kiwis can only tolerate 10F while Hardy Kiwis can withstand below freezing temperatures (-25F) when fully dormant for the winter. However any Kiwi plant must acclimate to the cold slowly and

there can't be any sudden drops in temperature or the trunks will split. Young vines are especially vulnerable to frosts and freezes. Temperatures below 30F in Spring can kill new leaves, shoots and ruin developing fruit. In Winter temperatures below 27F will cause trunk damage and below 10F will kill young vines and some older bearing vines.

So, what is the right Kiwi for your area? All Kiwi varieties have different winter dormancy or chill hour requirements. If the variety doesn't get the needed chill hours it won't flower and fruit. If it gets too many chill hours it will flower too soon and a late freeze will kill the flowers. To find out the chill hours in your area, AgroClimate has accumulated chill hour data ranging from North Carolina to Florida at <http://agroclimate.org/tools/Chill-Hours-Calculator/> For detailed information on growing Kiwis, go to our growing guide at: <http://www.justfruitsandexotics.com/JF%20Kiwi.pdf>

Hardy Kiwi varieties are the most versatile as they have been found to work in both high and low chill areas. Fuzzy Kiwi varieties, however, can vary from 100 to 800+ chill hours. Here are some varieties to consider.

Hardy Variety	Sex	Chill hours
Issai	Self Fertile (Male & Female Flowers)	300-400
Lone Star**	Self Fertile	300
Male Arguta	Male - needed for all Female varieties listed below	300-400
Anna (aka Ananasnaya)	Female	300-400
Ken's Red	Female	300-400
Cordifolia	Female	300-400
Dumbarton Oaks	Female	300-400

** Lone Star is a chance seedling found fruiting in Panama City, FL. Different from Issai.

Fuzzy Variety	Sex	Chill hours
Darlene*	Female	Estimated at 500
Barbas*	Male	Estimated at 500
Vincent	Female	100-150

Tomuri	Male for Vincent	100-150
Matua, Chico Early, Cal Chico No. 3	Males for Females listed below	
Elmwood	Female	300
Haywood	Female	600-800
Saanichton 12	Female	800+

*Darlene and Barbas are chance seedling fuzzy kiwis planted and grown in the Tallahassee, FL area. The seeds came from a kiwi fruit bought at a local grocery store so we assume it's either a California or New Zealand variety. For more info on Darlene and Barbas go to <http://www.justfruitsandexotics.com/Kiwi.htm>

Kiwis don't usually ripen on the vine. Harvest times can vary by region, anywhere from August to early November. Once you harvest the fruit, keep it indoors for at least a week before eating. Hardy Kiwi fruit will store for up to 2 months while Fuzzy Kiwi fruit can be stored from 3-6 months under the right conditions.

So if you're looking for fruiting vines that will make you the envy of your neighbors and friend, go for the Kiwi!