

Papaya - There's a New Kid on the Block

If you love papaya but live in too cold a climate, have I got good news for you. Ta-Ta-Ta-Da {it's hard to write a trumpet flourish, so imagine it in your head} TR Hovey to the rescue!

TR Hovey is a hybrid papaya you can grow in a 17 inch container. Mr.



Ripe TR Hovey fruit. Photo courtesy of Kate Jensen

Hovey (yes, there really was a Mr. Hovey) through hybridization developed a papaya plant that was self fertile and a dwarf - both big achievements in the papaya world. Most papaya plants are huge, 10-12ft, and you need 2 or more plants to get fruit. That's because papaya plants can have either male, female or male/female flowers and you don't know which you will get until the plant flowers!

Originally developed for container and hydroponic culture, the TR Hovey can also be grown in the ground in tropical climates. The TR Hovey maxes out at 4-8ft and only achieves the taller heights if planted in the ground. Amazingly the TR Hovey starts setting fruit low, 12 inches from the plants base, and within 9-12 months.

Whether in a container or in the ground here are a few tips you need to know to grow a healthy papaya.

- Always plant your papaya in soil that is well drained. Soggy soil will kill a papaya as root rot can develop. No saucers under your containers, please! Water thoroughly but keep the soil dry-ish in Winter and moist in Summer. Using an EarthBox* is also a great way to grow your TR Hovey.
- You must maintain a soil temperature of 60F for year round fruiting. So when you take your TR Hovey inside for the Winter, the air temperature should be over 65-75F and the hotter the better.

- Papayas hate cold, even a frost will kill them. Cold soil, like wet soil, will make a papaya plant develop root rot. Once root rot starts, the plant dies.
- Remember to turn your plant a $\frac{1}{4}$ turn each week so the plant will grow straight. This is only a concern if your papaya is on a porch/deck and not in direct sunshine.
- All papayas have a limited life span; after all they are a plant not a tree. Typically you will replace your TR Hovey in 3-4 years when it stops setting fruit.

So if you love papaya and have limited space or you're way north of Miami, TR Hovey is the one to try.



TR Hovey fruit on plant

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