




# Cape gooseberry *(Physalis peruviana)*

Type	Deciduous/ Evergreen	HxW (metres)	Spacing (metres)	Pollinator	Soil type	Sun	Moisture	Shelter	Plant	Harvest
Trailing or bush	E	1-2 x 2	1.5	N				Y	Spring	Autumn

## Site

- Copes with drought and a little shade.
- Needs shelter from heavy frosts.
- Prefers light well-drained soil, but copes with clay if it's well drained.

## Care

- Easy to grow, and is better not pampered with fertiliser or watering. Over-watering leads to fungal diseases.
- Its papery husks protect the fruit from most pests, and it seldom has any problems.
- Good in containers amongst other pots, and in the ornamental border.
- Plant 90cm apart in the ground, or in 30cm (diam.) pots.
- Self-fertile, easily pollinated by bees and other insects, as well as by wind.

## Training & pruning

- At planting, pinch out the new shoots to encourage the development of a more compact, bushy shape.
- Provide support (you could stake it like a tomato) or help it scramble up into other taller shrubs.
- No ongoing pruning needed – just cut back the stems after fruiting has finished.

## Harvest

- Produces bright yellow/orange fruit in autumn of the first year.
- Fruit is enclosed in papery husks – great fun for children to open and eat! But make sure they don't eat them when unripe, as they are poisonous then (like green tomatoes).
- Let the fruit ripen until it's a deep yellow/orange colour and the husk is a pale colour. They fall off at the slightest touch when they are ripe.
- Harvest in dry weather. Fruit will last for weeks if you leave it inside its husk.
- Eat fresh, dry into 'raisins', or cook for a dessert topping or jam (has a high pectin content), or for a sauce with meat.

## Health

- High in vitamins A, B and C, protein, phosphorous and iron.

## Plants for free

- The plant can survive the winter in milder areas, but it fruits best on new plants.
- Transplant self-sown seedlings to where you want them when they start popping up after spring, or grow plants from seed each year.

