




# Kiwifruit, Kiwiberry (*Actinidia deliciosa/arguta*)

Type	Deciduous/ Evergreen	Height x Width (metres)	Spacing (metres)	Pollinator	Soil type	Sun	Moisture	Shelter	Plant	Harvest
Vine	D	3–4 x 6–8	4.5	Y				Y	Early spring	Early winter

## Site

- Likes a hot, sunny site, with a long, warm summer.
- Needs winter chilling for good fruit. Tolerates light frosts (but not in early spring or autumn). *Kiwiberry* is more cold hardy, but needs about 150 frost-free days and shelter from winds.
- Both need well-drained, deep, light soil – they do not tolerate wet soils.
- Needs shelter from wind.
- *Kiwifruit* is a vigorous trailing plant that will grow to 8m wide unless it's well controlled. Grow it on a sturdy pergola or T-shaped support structure, about 1.8m high, 4–5m long, with braced T-bars 1.5m wide. Space three wires evenly across the top of the T for tying down the branches. New season's shoots can grow 5m in a season, so think carefully about where you locate it! You'll need to tie the new growth down and prune it, so make sure you can reach above the top of the wires.
- A very hungry plant, so add plenty of organic matter (especially nitrogen at the beginning of the growing season) across the whole root zone area – but keep it clear of the stem.
- Must have a male vine that flowers at the same time as the female vine. Grow them together, or buy a double-graft with both male and female plants – label which plant is which, and make sure you don't prune all the male flowers off. Restrict the size of the male plant.
- Pollinated by bees, but the flowers aren't very attractive to them so it helps to hand-pollinate by rubbing a freshly opened male flower across a female flower. One male flower can pollinate five or six female flowers.

## Training & pruning

## Care

- Plant in early spring and shorten the central stem back to 30cm, and remove all other growth below the graft. As the main shoot lengthens, tie it securely to a support stake that is attached to the top central wire. This will form the single trunk.
- Has some very deep roots (up to 15m deep), and also spreading shallow roots that must not dry out – water regularly and keep weed free. A heavy mulch in spring (include comfrey leaves to provide potassium) will help to control weeds and retain moisture.
- Once the main stem reaches the top wire, choose two strong shoots to train in opposite directions along the centre top of the structure, making a T shape. All the future fruiting canes will grow from these permanent main 'arms' or leaders. If there are no suitable shoots available, cut the main stem just below the wire to force the growth of new shoots. As these leaders get longer, loosely twist them around the central wire and tie them lightly in several places.
- During the first summer, choose healthy shoots growing at right angles from the permanent 'arms', spaced about 25–35cm apart, to be next year's fruiting wood, and carefully tie them down to the wires. Remove any extra canes.



- From then on, it will bear fruit on the current season's growth coming off 1-year-old wood. Pruning is essential to allow enough air, light and sun for good fruit production.
- In spring, after the male plant has finished flowering, cut it right back so it doesn't compete with the fruiting plant.
- During summer, choose healthy fruiting shoots (those with fat buds close together) that are either growing from the main leaders or off 1-year-old laterals. Tie them down to be next year's fruiting wood (see *a* in the diagram). Cut off any extra or over-vigorous canes.
- Shorten the ends of fruiting laterals to reduce the amount of leafy growth (see *b* in the diagram). Prune several times during summer to make sure the growth doesn't get tangled or too dense.
- In late summer, remove some of the leaves to let more sun onto the plant, to encourage fruit buds for the following year.
- Each July, remove the canes that carried fruit last season (see *c* in the diagram), and keep the new replacement canes that grew during the season (see *a* in diagram). Shorten the ends dangling over the wires to about knee height.
- Remove any suckers, and any wood that is more than 3 years old.

### Companions

- Underplanting with comfrey helps the soil stay moist and provides the potassium the plant needs.

### Harvest

- Bears fruit 3–4 years after planting. Leave the fruit on the vine until they start to soften.
- Harvest by snapping them from the branch with some of the stem attached.
- Carefully pack them into a box. They'll keep ripening over the next 3 months – pick them over regularly to take out the ripe fruit. If you want some to ripen more quickly, put them in a bag with an apple for a few days.
- Eat fresh, or add to fresh-fruit desserts, savoury dishes, make into juice or jam.
- Contains enzymes that can tenderise meat.

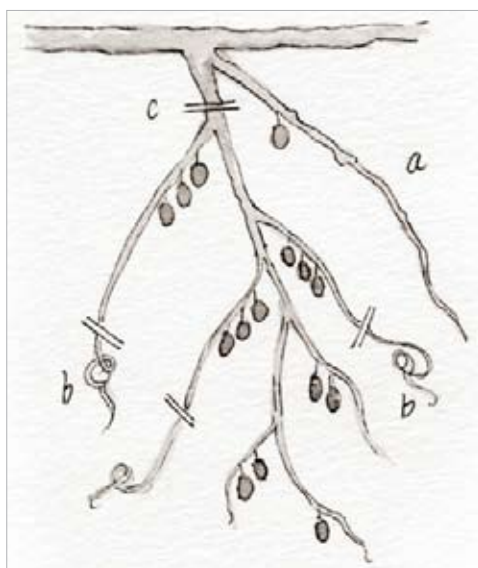
### Health

- Very high in vitamin C.
- Also high in vitamins A and E, digestive enzymes, antioxidants, fibre and potassium.

### Recommended varieties

*Kiwifruit*: Hayward

*Kiwiberries*: Takaka green



#### Pruning kiwifruit:

- a) During summer, select strong new shoots to be next year's fruiting wood and tie them down to the wires.
- b) Shorten the ends of fruiting laterals to reduce the amount of leafy growth.
- c) In winter, remove the cane that has already carried fruit, and keep the replacement lateral (a).