

# Passion Fruit

*Passiflora edulis*,  
*Passiflora incarnata*

## Overall Ease-of-Care Ratings

**Insect and Disease Pest Control:** Easy

**Weed Control:** Moderate

**Climatic Adaptation:** Fair

**Pruning and Training:** Easy

**Pollination Requirements:** Self-fertile

**Chilling Requirement:** 200-400 hours

**Adaptation to Hot/Humid Conditions:** Good

**Cold Hardiness:** Good **USDA Zone:** 9a-10a



Passion fruit is widely grown and valued throughout the tropics and subtropics. Most *Passifloras* are vines that can climb to 20 or 30 feet. The fruit varies in color from purple to yellow-orange and in shape from an egg to a tennis ball. Inside its quarter-inch protective rind are numerous small seeds covered by a juicy, aromatic, sweet-acidic pulp. The sweeter species are used as a fresh fruit. The seeds are consumed with the pulp. The fruit is more commonly made into juice and often blended with other juices such as orange. The fruit also is used to make excellent ice creams, sherbets, jellies and pies. The downside of the passion fruit is that most desirable species are very frost tender. The best adapted of the tropical species, the purple granadilla (*Passiflora edulis*), is prone to soil diseases. There is a yellow form, however, which, although not as sweet, is not subject to these diseases.

The unusual flowers are the outstanding characteristic of *passifloras*, and many are grown only for their flowers. *Passiflora edulis* bears 2- to 3-inch spherical to ellipsoidal fruit. The fruit has a tough rind with a white pith adhering to the inside surface that is about 0.3 inches in total thickness and wrinkled when ripe. Inside is the edible portion consisting of many small, black seeds on which adheres a juicy orange colored pulp. The flavor is highly fragrant, subacid to acid. The *P. edulis* has a subspecies, yellow (*P. edulis* var. *flavicarpa*) that is more acid, less frost tolerant and less prone to disease. Yellow and purple passion fruit flowers are perfect but self-sterile and require insects to achieve

fruit set. Flowers of the purple are self-compatible. They blossom in the spring and early summer. Pollen of the yellow will pollinate the purple but not vice versa. The fruit of both ripen in seven to eight weeks.

**Site and Soil Requirements:** Plant passion fruit vines in full sun, except in very hot areas where partial shade is preferable. The vine can be rather rampant, so it is important to plant it next to a chain link fence or install a strong trellis before planting. The plants also can be trained into an attractive arbor. All three passion fruits can be propagated from seed, which should be fresh (less than 1 year old) because seeds lose viability rapidly. Seeds may be sown in flats or pots of sterile soil and kept in a moist place shaded from direct sunlight. Seeds ordinarily germinate in 10 to 20 days, and plants grow rapidly. Seedlings should be potted individually in small containers as soon as practical after germination. They can be transferred to a permanent location when they are 10 to 16 inches tall.