Patience and Passion

Gene Fifer

Figure 11. Passionfruit flower and leaves. *Source: Stacy Reader*

Passionfruit can take 12 to 18 months to fruit after planting, but patient care will be rewarded with beautiful flowers and tasty, aromatic fruit. Passionfruit is similar in flavor to guava. Its juice is enjoyed on its own or mixed with other tropical juices, and the pulp is used in sauces, gelatin, candies, jams, ice cream, and pastry fillings. The ovoid fruit is 4 to 7 cm in diameter and contains high levels of vitamins A and C.

There are both purple (*Passiflora edulis*), and yellow (*Passiflora ligularis*) forms of passionfruit. Both kinds of passionfruit are called by other common names, including granadilla, maracuja peroba, and linmangkon. Purple passionfruit is best suited to subtropical climates, whereas yellow varieties grow best in hotter, more humid tropical climates. Fruits of the purple form, as the name implies, turn dark purple or black when they mature. The skin also wrinkles when the fruit is mature.

If growing passionfruit from seed, you will need to let the fresh seed ferment a couple of days in its pulp. Alternatively, you can scarify the seed to break its seed coat. When large enough, seedlings can be planted or grafted to a variety known for productivity and disease resistance. Passionfruit vines have shallow but spreading root systems, and must be watered adequately to ensure flowering and fruiting. They require good soil fertility to produce large harvests. Passionfruit vines flower and fruit year-round in warm climates, but flowering will be disrupted by water stress, low soil fertility, weed competition, short daylight hours, and/or cool temperatures.

Vines grow best on trellises and fences. Prune them frequently to maintain vigor, to promote flowering and fruiting, and to cull insect- and disease-damaged plant tissue. Passionfruit plants are susceptible to many insects and diseases, including passion vine mites and leafhoppers, stink bugs, thrips, weevils, beetles, red scale, aphids, nematodes, Septoria spot, Phytophthora blight, and Fusarium wilt. This susceptibility weakens vines, so they should be replaced after 5 to 8 years. Grafting onto disease-resistant rootstock improves vine longevity. Development workers who are members of ECHOcommunity.org may request a complimentary trial packet of seed (visit the ECHO Global Seed Bank (https://www.echocommunity.org/pages/echo_global_seedbank_info) online for more information).

Figure 12. Purple passionfruit fuit. *Source: ECHO Staff*

For further reading

Morton, J. 1987. Passionfruit (https://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/passionfruit.html). p. 320–328. In: Fruits of warm climates. Julia F. Morton, Miami, FL.

PROTA4U (https://www.prota4u.org/database/search.asp). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa.

CABI (https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/116173). *Passiflora ligularis*.