

houseplant with warmth, light, and moisture. In planting the seed kernel in the potting soil, it may help the roots to develop if the sprout is first dusted with rooting powder.

As the new “tree” becomes larger and taller, it may be needful to support it with a small stake to which it can be tied. If the plant seems to have outgrown its peat pot, plant the whole pot and plant in a larger plastic or metal pot to allow for root development.

Gradually, as weather permits, acclimate the young tree to outdoor living, and when all danger of frost is past, it may be planted in a nursery row and protected by staking and wire mesh around it to keep from being stepped upon by man or animal. Obviously, this final planting will have removed any metal or plastic pots, but not the peat pot. It will become a part of the soil. Suitable fertilizer and mulch may be placed around the tree.

It is best in order to obtain continuous growth in early winter and spring to not sprout the seed until about late December; then, as days become longer, the developing tree will receive the stimulus of the increased light day by day.

I have also planted seeds in the soil out of doors in the fall and allowed nature to take its course in sprouting the seed and starting the tree, but one can gain at least four months of growth by starting it artificially and opening and sprouting the tree indoors.

A few months ago, a grower in the east obtained seeds from me and decided to try my method instead of the standard method of “layering” which many growers as well as himself customarily used. Not many weeks later, I received a gratifying letter from him, jubilantly telling how well our method worked. Maybe you would like to try it...

### **Non-Astringent American Persimmon**

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For quite a few years I’ve been of the opinion that someday a non-astringent (NA) American persimmon will be found or bred. There are quite a few similarities between the American persimmon (*diospyros virginiana*) and its cousin the Asian persimmon (*d. kaki*). The kaki persimmon has been bred in Japan for several hundred years but the American persimmon only about 40 years, not long enough to develop NA varieties.

While living in the Chicago area, Martha Davis made many trips to St. Elmo, IL, to the Claypool breeding orchard to help evaluate primarily the later-

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planted varieties. For several years we have been watching for trees that displayed non-astringent (NA) tendencies. We have identified four trees that bear NA fruit. These fruit are NA, mild flavored and crunchy, similar to some NA kakis. It is regretful that I must report those trees are smaller than normal and the fruit is also small. One of the trees has small-diameter wood, making it difficult to collect good scionwood. In all four of these, either the seed parent or pollen parent were a **Morris Burton x George** cross. The seed parent of three was **Early Golden**.

**Morris Burton** is a mild-flavored, wonderful small persimmon. About ten years ago I asked Dr. Sakar, UC Davis, to run electrophoresis on **Morris Burton** and several others in the interest of identifying *d. virginiana* x *kaki* hybrids. Dr. Sakar had published a paper on differentiating kaki varieties, one from another, using electrophoresis, and is very knowledgeable on the subject. An interesting point he reported back was that **Morris Burton** appears to share an allele with kaki.

**George** is an open-pollinated male seedling of **Killen** (seedling of **Early Golden**) selected by Dr. McDaniel at the University of Illinois because it bears many flowers making it easy to collect pollen. When Mr. Claypool checked his records, **George** had the lowest percentage of progeny that are improved of the four main males he used.

**F-100** is a **Morris Burton x George** cross made by Mr. Claypool and the pollen parent of three of the four varieties showing NA tendencies. **F-100**, a male, also bears many small fruits on perfect flowers.

This spring I bagged and pollinated about twenty flowers of **Early Golden** with **F-100**. Breeding for NA varieties would be a good project for interested persons who are younger than I. But I am more convinced than ever that non-astringent varieties of the 90-chromosome American persimmon will be bred. That breeder could be you.

Quite a few years back an article was written in *Pomona*. The author wrote of using paper that had been dipped in ferric chloride to check for astringency. So I cut one-inch paper strips and dipped them in a mild ferric chloride solution. The resulting paper becomes a light tan when dry. When the treated paper is placed against a cut persimmon that is astringent, the ferric chloride treated paper turns black. Non-astringency darkens it only very slightly.

Some non-astringent seedless kaki fruit will have astringency in the flesh surrounding any seed that develops. This is called pollination variant. Just as with some kaki, we found that the NA fruit that had seeds had some astringency around the seed. It therefore appears that the American persimmon will also be pollination variant. On the paper imprint clearly the seed outline was seen with astringent flesh cells surrounding them. Originally, my hope was to be able to determine which varieties had more or less astringency to select individual

breeding trees for non-astringency. That was unsuccessful, but it will show astringent cells in non-astringent fruit.

### **\*\*\**Using the Harvest*\*\*\***

#### **Black Currant Cassis and Lavender Sugar**

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This recipe is printed in the book, *The Cook And The Gardener*, written by Amanda Hesser, published by Norton and Company.

The quantities can be easily altered—it's the proportion of sugar to juice that's important. I will keep the references to amounts and quantities intact, since some people like to follow a specific recipe. Comments in brackets are mine, not the author's. Lastly, since the black currant crop was enormous last year, we mixed in some red and white currants, as they would only be a small percentage of the mixture. This resulted in generating an additional bottle of cassis with no discernible taste difference.

Not only do we enjoy this for sipping, we also use it for cooking. Pears poached in this cassis are spectacular.

#### **Madame Milbert's Cassis**

Friends always ask for this instead of the usual bottle of wine.

#### **Part 1**

\* Black currants – enough to fill 2 one-quart mason jars, about 3 to 4 cups per jar.

\* Eau-de-vie or vodka (alcohol content should be 80 proof) – about 3 to 3½ cups per jar, or enough to cover the black currants

Sterilize the jars with boiling water and dry them with a clean towel. Loosely pack the black currants in the jars, leaving ½" of space at the top of each jar. Cover with eau-de-vie or vodka and seal. Store for 4 to 6 months before completing Part 2.

#### **Part 2**

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