

## Veritable Vegetable's Produce Notes

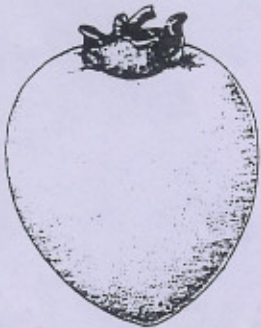
# ✿ PERSIMMONS ✿

Persimmon season is upon us; orange as a Jack o' lantern, sweet as pumpkin pie, persimmons spell autumn like cherries do spring. Although there is a native variety of persimmon, the ones we commonly eat are of Japanese and Chinese origins. *Diospyros kaki* is native to China and has been grown and bred for centuries in Japan. California provides an ideal growing climate for the several hundred Japanese varieties available, although the Hachiya and Fuyu types supply most of the commercial market. *Diospyros virginiana*, as the name suggests, is the species native to the eastern United States. Consumed mostly locally in the Southeast and Midwest, our native persimmon is small and very tannic. Like the Hachiya, it needs to be completely soft to be edible. The name 'persimmon' comes to us from the Algonquins who called the fruit *putchamin* or *pessemin*. Throughout the persimmon's Far Eastern homeland, however, it goes by the name *kaki*.

Like pomegranates, persimmons are an autumn fruit that is found growing throughout the state. Organic persimmons are grown for market as far south as Fallbrook and Escondido and as far north as Gridley and Chico. Relatively pest and disease free, persimmons can grow to be quite tall, although they are usually kept to a manageable height for harvesting.

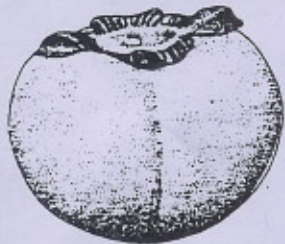
Delicious fresh or dried, persimmons are rich in vitamin A, fiber and potassium. A piece of fresh fruit weighing 3.5 oz (100g) contains approximately:

Calories: 77	Sodium: 6 mg	Phosphorus: 26 mg
Protein: .7 gm	Vitamin A: 2,710 I.U	Niacin: .1 mg
Carbohydrate: 19.7 gm	Iron: .3 mg	Thiamin: .03 mg
Fat: .4 gm	Potassium: 174 mg	Riboflavin: .02 mg
Vitamin C: 11 mg	Calcium: 6 mg	



### Hachiya: long and tapered

Hachiya persimmons are ready to eat when they are completely soft and mushy. Only at this point have the mouth puckering tannins subsided to allow the sweet, custard like flavor to come through. Hachiyas are good eaten out of hand, scored and sliced like a mango, or frozen then partially thawed and scooped out with a spoon. Some aficionados like to dribble a little of their favorite liqueur onto a Hachiya, too. The Chocolate Hachiya has its own added flavoring, naturally, and some connoisseurs claim this spicy version to be the best.



### Fuyu: full and round

Fuyu persimmons are ready to eat when firm as well as when they are soft. Unlike Hachiya persimmons, the Fuyu isn't loaded with tannins so it can be eaten crisp like an apple. They are also delicious when soft. Fuyus can be easily eaten out of hand; peeled and sliced they go well in salads and desserts.

Store persimmons at cold temperatures (31-36°F) or at room temperature. The Fuyu variety will not store well at temperatures in the 40-50°F range. Ripen at room temperature. Fully ripe Hachiyas freeze well. ~ L.B.