



Urban Harvest

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Tangerines, Mandarins, and Satsumas



Satsumas are a variety of tangerine. Buy early, mid and late season varieties to have months of ripe fruit harvests. All Satsumas are cold tolerant to at least 26 degrees and perhaps more. They grow in a weeping posture and can become about 10' tall and 10' wide. Satsumas are unique in that they are seedless or close to seedless and their flesh is separated from the rind. They are all of outstanding quality. Satsuma. Photo by TreeSearch Farms.

Care of Tangerine, Mandarin and Satsuma Trees

The following information on care of citrus applies to tangerine, mandarin and satsuma trees:

Planting: Citrus trees that are purchased in fall or winter need to be kept in the pots until late March or when all danger of freeze has passed. Do not plant these trees before late March or they will very likely die in the winter freezes. Bring them into the garage or house if there is going to be a frost and take them back out after the frost. Plant them in an area that receives at least ½ day of sun. If possible, plant them on the south side of a house or building or where they will get a lot of protection from winter winds. Citrus do not require full sun as most other fruit trees, however the more sun the more production of fruit. Plant them in existing soil without amenities, and make sure the graft is a couple of inches above the soil line. Water every few days while in pots unless it rains. Test the soil in the pot by pushing your finger into the soil. If it is dry an inch down, it is time to water. When planted in the ground, water every day for a few days and then back off to once a week unless it rains.



Okitsu Satsuma.

Photo by TreeSearch Farms.

Fertilizing: Do not fertilize the first spring, but you could fertilize with an organic fertilizer such as Microlife once during the first summer. In the next spring and summer, you can fertilize a couple of times.

Care: Citrus do not need to be pruned, but you could prune them if they get too big and in the way. And you can prune them on the top to keep them to a height for easy harvesting. You are likely to notice the new growth leaves start to curl. This is citrus leaf miner which is a leaf miner that affects the new leaves of most citrus. You can spray NEEM Oil on the new growth (both sides of leaves), and repeat a week later. This may stop the leaf miner, and it may not. The tree will still grow and produce even though the leaf miner attacks the leaves; but the tree will be more productive and healthier if the leaf miner is prevented.

Cold Tolerance: Some citrus have very good cold tolerance down to 22 degrees and some even to 10 degrees; but most can be damaged by freezes especially when they are young. In the first couple of years, if there is going to be a freeze, protect the plant by covering with a blanket with a large bucket of water sitting right next to the plant and under the blanket. Also pile mulch or leaves around the base of the tree to protect the graft. In this way, if the tree freezes, it will come right back. After the freeze, remove the blanket and pull back the mulch or leaves. As the tree gets bigger, it is less sensitive to freezes. Some trees, like limes, are very sensitive to freezes and should be kept in pots and brought in if there is going to be a freeze.

Harvesting: Citrus ripen depending on the variety. Some like limes may produce several times during the year. Some satsumas produce as early as August and others as late as December. Oranges can ripen as early as November and some in January. Except for satsumas and some limes, all citrus will change color before they are ripe. You can taste when you think they are ripe and keep tasting on a weekly basis. You will soon learn what they taste like when ripe.



Varieties of Tangerines, Mandarins and Satsumas for the Houston Area Climate

Pong Koa Mandarin/Tangerine A large fruit for a mandarin. The fruit is very uniform in shape, size and color (a yellow-orange color) and has a fairly thin peel. The fruit quality is outstanding-crisp, sweet, and flavorful. It has a clear medium orange flesh, juicy, sweet and very full flavored. Is cold hardy.

Page Mandarin/Tangerine Page Mandarins are a medium size citrus fruit, with medium-thin, leathery rind that is moderately adherent but easily peelable. Color is reddish-orange at maturity. Flesh is deep orange, tender and juicy, and the flavor rich and sweet (known as one of the best mandarins for juice). This early ripening, high quality variety ripens in the winter. Has seeds.

Seedless Kishu Mandarin/Tangerine The tree grows well, and is small at maturity with a round form. It would make a good container specimen. The fruit is small, no more than two inches in diameter, but sets reliable crops. It has a thin orange rind that is easily peeled. The flesh is bright orange, seedless, mild-flavored, sweet, and juicy. It is early in maturity, and the fruit holds well on the tree

Clementine Mandarin/Tangerine The Clementine is an early season mandarin producing sweet, juicy, fine flavored fruit that will hold on the tree for months. Easily peeled, highly ornamental fruits are held to the outside of the tree. Seedless. Moderate grower to 10 to 12 feet tall or clipped shorter. Almost thornless. Fairly good freeze tolerance.

Atlas Honey Mandarin The Honey is also called the Murcott, and it is from an old Tangor variety, a hybrid between a Mediterranean and a King Mandarin. The fruit has a deep orange exterior, is thin skinned and has a glossy texture. The Honey Mandarin is slightly flat in shape with no neck. It is very

juicy, peels and segments easily and has many seeds. Fully ripe late November, so start tasting early November. Fairly good freeze tolerance.



Sunburst mandarin.

Photo by TreeSearch Farms.

Sunburst Mandarin Sunburst is the most widely grown commercial early Florida tangerine. It is a cross between the two citrus hybrids Robinson and Osceola. The fruit is medium in size, about 2½ - 3 inches in diameter. Fruit shape is oblate and is flattened at the stem end and has a depressed navel. The rind is thin, smooth, and somewhat easily removed. There are between 10 and 20 seeds per fruit. Sunburst trees have dark-green foliage, moderately vigorous, thornless, up-right, and spreading shape. In most years the fruit will start ripening by mid-November and reach maturity mid-January. Like all mandarins, handles

moderate freezes to 26 degrees for a few hours. Need to protect with harder freezes. This fruit needs one other citrus in area for pollination.

Okitsu Satsuma Growth of this tree is more vigorous than other satsumas. Start tasting late August with a fully ripe fruit in September or early October maturing fruit that stores better than other varieties. Satsumas all can withstand freezes to 22 degrees without much protection.

Dobashi Beni Satsuma Dobashi Beni Satsuma is similar to Owari but with reddish tinge on skin. Also "zipper" skin and seedless. Start tasting late August with a fully ripe fruit in September or early October maturing fruit.

Owari Satsuma The original satsuma. Very good flavor, great production. Hardy to 22 degrees F. or lower. Still hard to beat. Seeds: 0-6, but rarely present. As maturity passes, the neck, if present, increases in size. The rind roughens and loosens. Tree moderately vigorous but slow-growing; medium-small, spreading and drooping; very productive. Start tasting in October, and ripe into December.

BC2 Delicious, sweet, easy to peel, early maturing, seedling of 'Armstrong Early' grown by Bonnie Childers, quite cold hardy, seedless.

Seto Early maturing, high quality dwarf satsuma. Large fruit. A more notable smoother and thinner peel than other dwarf Satsumas. Limbs tend to droop like many other satsumas. Harvest around Thanksgiving.

Miho Early maturing, high quality dwarf satsuma. Large fruit. Limbs are more upright than most satsumas. Harvest around Thanksgiving.

Vermillion Exceptional taste and perhaps a bit more hardy than most satsumas.

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2311 Canal Street, Suite 200, Houston, Texas 77003, 713.880.5540, urbanharvest.org