



Urban Harvest

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Jaboticaba

The jaboticaba is a slow growing large shrub or small, bushy tree. It can reach a height of 10 to 12 feet but will take a long time to get there, and can easily be pruned to keep fruit within reach. The thin, beige to reddish bark flakes off much like that of the guava. The jaboticaba makes an attractive landscape plant. The small yellow-white flowers dramatically emerge from the multiple trunks, limbs and large branches in groups of four.



The fruit are grape-like with a thick skin and melting pulp. The fruit is dark purple to almost black in color, and averages one inch in diameter. Fresh fruit is delicious eaten out-of-hand, but avoid eating huge amounts over a long period of time because of the tannin content. The gelatinous whitish pulp contains from one to four small seeds and has a pleasant, subacid flavor markedly similar to certain muscadine grapes. They are eaten fresh and made into jams and in wine. The fruit grows on the trunk! They can be frozen whole to enjoy throughout the year.

Care of Jaboticaba Trees

Care: Keep in pot until late March or early April, and bring in if there is going to be a frost. Then the tree can be planted in the ground in a well drained location. Use the existing soil with some sphagnum peat moss to lower the PH to acidic. Full sun is best. It likes regular watering during blossom and fruiting time.

Cold Tolerance: This is a pretty cold tolerant tropical, similar to lots of the citrus. Although they are cold tolerant to below 26 degrees for short periods of time, they should be protected the first winter by covering and mulching high on the trunk. Protect similarly for a harder freeze in later years.

Harvest: Fruits are ready to harvest when they have developed a full color and are somewhat soft like a ripe grape. They are mostly eaten out-of-hand by squeezing the fruit between the thumb and forefinger. The skin will split and the pulp will slip into the mouth.

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