

GROWING GRANADILLAS

In South Africa, the purple granadilla, also known as the passion fruit, is grown commercially as well as for home use. Here is an overview of how this crop is produced.



Passiflora edulis is a vine species of passion flower originally native to South America. It is now cultivated commercially in tropical and subtropical areas for its sweet, seedy fruit – the purple granadilla.

Photo: FW Archive

Climatic requirements:

- Granadillas prefer moderate temperatures throughout the year.
- In hot areas, they should be planted on cool slopes and in cool areas on the warm northern slopes. The average maximum monthly temperature should not exceed 29 °C and the minimum should not fall below 5 °C.

Soil requirements:

Deep soil preparation is important because granadilla plants develop shallow root systems in compacted soils. Thorough soil preparation will also improve drainage. This is very important, because granadillas are sensitive to excessively wet soil conditions. It is best to avoid clay soils.

When preparing the soil, add lime and phosphate, as well as calcium if necessary, to the root zone. Then deep-plough or rip. The granadilla is usually grown from a seedling (see below). If you do choose to use seed, make sure it's from ripe fruit selected from healthy plants:

- Scoop out the contents of a granadilla that has been cut through;
- Wash the contents to separate the seed and pulp;
- Dry the seed in the shade and sow in seedling trays or planting bags filled with a well-prepared

soil mixture;

- To enhance germination, place the seed and pulp in a plastic container and allow to ferment for one to three days. Then wash well, dry and sow as soon as possible;
- Seed may be stored in closed containers at 13°C for about four months.

Feeding:

Granadillas are considered heavy feeders. The first application should be in very early spring. Plants cultivated for fruit are fertilized 4 times per year, but those grown in your garden should be fertilized every 4 to 6 weeks.

Using a water soluble fertiliser such as Nitrosol or Nutrifeed will provide the plant with all the necessary nutrients. When the yellowing of the leaf occurs it could mean a deficiency in micro nutrients. Apply a dosage of Trelmix to correct the imbalance.

Seedlings:

All soil used in the nursery must be sterilised by fumigation or steam treatment, as the presence of rootknot nematodes can affect the growth of the plants.

- Seed can be sown in trays or polyethylene bags (75mm to 150mm in diameter and about 200mm high);
- If possible, sow two seeds per hole in the seedling tray (or bag) and select the stronger of the two;
- Push a thin stake into the soil next to the emerged seedling so that it can be trained up the stake;
- Remove the developing side shoots regularly;
- The seedlings should be ready for transplanting when they reach a height of about 400mm;
- Select only those seedlings that have dark green leaves and are free of any symptoms of nematodes or fungal diseases;

The optimum time for transplanting is during August/September. Use a plant spacing of 1m to 2m. The average lifespan of a healthy granadilla plantation is about three years. A plant spacing of approximately 1m should ensure high production over the short term. When the main leader reaches the top wire, wind it loosely around the wire as it grows.



**STARKE
AYRES**

**GARDEN CENTRE
& RESTAURANT**

www.starkeyresgc.co.za

Solid trellising and careful training:

Erecting a trellising system is the main initial expense. The structure must be sturdy, as the trellis has to support a heavy weight. The wooden posts should be solid and resistant to termites. Draw a single strand of 12-gauge wire taut along the tops of wooden posts 2m high and about 6m apart along the row. Tie a selected leader from each granadilla vine loosely to a stake or train it up a string until it reaches the top wire. Remove all the side shoots, but not the leaves.

Source: Infopak compiled by Directorate Communication, department of agriculture, in co-operation with the ARC-Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Crops. This article was originally published in the 22 May 2015 issue of Farmers Weekly.



RECIPE: No-Bake Granadilla Cheesecake

Ingredients

200 g (1 packet) coconut biscuits, crushed
65 ml (¼ C) butter, melted
80 g (1 packet) granadilla or pineapple jelly
250 ml (1 C) boiling water
250 g plain cream cheese
1 x 385 g can condensed milk
to serve: 1 x 115 g cup Rhodes Granadilla Pulp



Recipe source:
<http://www.rhodesquality.com/recipes/no-bake-cheesecake/>

Method

Combine the crushed biscuits and butter and press onto the bottom and sides of a large loose-bottomed pie dish.
Whisk the jelly powder into the boiling water until dissolved.
Set aside to cool completely.
Beat the cream cheese until smooth and slowly beat in the condensed milk until smooth.
Beat in the cooled jelly mixture.
Pour the cream cheese mixture over the biscuit base and refrigerate for 3 – 4 hours or until set.
To serve: remove the cheesecake from its pie dish and pour the Rhodes Granadilla Pulp over the top before cutting into slices.