

Nectarine

History

Nectarines originated in China over 2,000 years ago. They were developed from a peach by a natural mutation. In fact, nectarines are identical to peaches with the exception of one gene. The gene difference makes peaches fuzzy and nectarines smooth.

Nectarines are more delicate than peaches and are bruised and damaged easily. They are smaller than peaches and appear to be a redder color. However, the coloring difference is likely only perceived due to the fact that nectarines have no fuzz on them.

Nectarines spread from China across western Asia to Persia, where they were cultivated. From Persia, nectarines were introduced to Greece and Rome. It was not until the 16th century that they spread to northern Europe and England. Nectarines were introduced to America by the Spanish. They were planted in California and flourished and continue to grow there today.

Growing Fact

Nectarine trees must be grown in regions that have a cool winter period to allow the tree to lie dormant, or asleep, for a period of time, just like apple trees. Naturally, the trees live for around 40 years and can reach 30 feet in height.

However in orchards, the trees are kept at around 12 feet tall to make harvesting easier.

The fruit is picked when not fully ripe, so they can be transported to grocery stores across the country.



Fun Facts

- Nectarines, like peaches, plums, and cherries, are a stone fruit.
- Nectarines are a member of the rose family.
- Over 95 percent of all the nectarines that are grown in the United States are from California.
- Nectarines take the name from the word “nectar,” meaning “food of the gods.”
- Nectarines and peaches have identical looking trees.
- Nectarines can be found growing on the same tree as peaches.



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