

Texas, Mexican, Black Persimmon or Chapote Negro

Diospyros texana

The Texas Persimmon is not to be confused with common persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) which has larger fruit, single stem, is much taller and has a rough bark. Texas persimmon looks more like crepe myrtle, usually multi-stemmed with an exfoliating smooth bark.

This tree's range is primarily in the southern half of Texas, particularly southwest of the Colorado River. Its range does not extend to the upper Gulf Coast or into far west Texas. It likes dry, rocky areas and doesn't like "wet feet". It does not even like high humidity. Planting in a yard that gets regular watering can make for an unhappy Texas Persimmon. When too wet, it can suffer from foliar problems.

It can grow to 35 ft, but is typically about 10 ft high. It has a rounded crown and a smooth, gray bark. As the tree ages, the bark will start to peel away from the trunk and reveal lighter colors underneath. It is a deciduous tree but can be evergreen in its southern areas. It has 1" to 2" oval to oblong leaves which are leathery, fuzzy underneath, and curled over on the edges.

They are dioecious (separate male and female plants) and both are needed to produce fruit. They flower starting in March or April and has small white flowers. That is followed by a small, black fruit which about $\frac{3}{4}$ " and is edible when ripe. It has lots of little seeds though making that difficult. The fruit it typically ripe in August. It is also used to make a black hair dye or dying leather. Be careful, it can stain the skin black as well. The fruit is enjoyed by a wide range of birds and mammals. Its tough, dark heart wood was used for tool handles.

This tree can live 30 to 50 years.

The national champion Texas Persimmon is in Ulvalde County and is 26 ft tall, has a 21 in girth and shades an area 31 ft across.