

## How to grow passionfruit successfully

*Beautiful fruit – can be difficult to grow, but very rewarding*

**Siting:** A sunny well-drained, sheltered easterly position is ideal. As vines they must be supported either with a strong free standing frame or with wires fixed horizontally about 30cm apart on a wall or fence (normally metal fences are not suitable with the reflected heat). Train the vine in a fan shape on the wires. If planting more than one vine, plant no closer than 5m apart due to their vigour.

**Soil Preparation:** Prepare the ground by deep digging, working in half a bucket of well-rotted cow manure plus a handful of blood and bone fertilizer for every square metre of soil. Mix all this in to a full spade depth. This will get the vine off to a good start.

**Fertilising:** Water in the plant with **Multicrop Seaweed Plant Nutrient** at planting time and every month during the establishment stage to encourage strong root growth. **Multicrop EcoFish**, an organic natural fertiliser is also recommended and/or **Neutrog Seamungus** pelletised seaweed and chook poo (from free-range hens).

**Pest control:** It is essential to watch for thrips and aphids. These can be controlled with **Multicrop EcoPest**. If holes appear in the leaves this could be earwigs appearing after dark. Control these with a milk carton upside down on a stick and the earwigs will enter this overnight. Dispose of the insects each morning. If it is only a minor infestation of aphids, these can usually be controlled with *Pyrethrum*, safer than using chemicals.

**Pollination:** In a well-grown vine it is not unusual for some of the flowers to drop off without setting fruit. As the weather warms up it becomes more favourable for fruit set. If desired, hand pollination may be carried out with a small camelhair brush transferring pollen from one flower to another.

**Watering:** It is important not to let the ground dry out, especially in the heat of summer. As the roots grow they will extend several metres from the plant. A good mulch such as composted cow manure over which a layer of Canberra Organic Mulch (available from Canberra Sand & Gravel) laid 50-75mm thick is ideal. Dripper systems for watering are preferable to overhead spray irrigation.

**Pruning:** Usually the vine does not need pruning for the first 2-3 years. All pruning should take place in early spring. The main sapwood must not be pruned, but overcrowded laterals should be shortened back to a third node or leaf joint from the leader. This tends to increase fruit over a longer period, a definite advantage in the home garden. **It is vitally important to keep the graft above the ground. Cut off any shoots of the 'wild' vine that appear under the graft as soon as they appear. These are a dull grey-green five fingered leaf, whereas the fruiting vine leaves are a full leaf, dark green and glossy.**

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