

## Special Instructions for Paw Paws from Red Fern Farm

Paw paws prefer rich, well-drained soil between 5.5 and 6.5 in pH. They also need protection from strong winds, such as in the lee side of a windbreak or building. Paw paws will bear the greatest amount of fruit if they are grown in full sun, but they can grow and bear fruit in shady sites. Paw paws are not self-fruitful, so you need two or more trees to get any fruit.



When paw paws are small—under 2' tall—they *need* partial shade. The very best way to accomplish this is to grow them inside a 2' tree shelter. The shelter gives them exactly the right amount of shade, as well as protection from wind, rabbits, deer, mowers, and clumsy feet. By the time the tree grows out the top, it no longer needs the shade. 2' tall tree shelters are available from Plantra Inc. at [www.plantra.com](http://www.plantra.com). You can also pick them up here, at the farm if you are close by.

Paw paws do not compete against weeds very well, except on shady sites. You should protect your paw paws against weed competition. The best way is to place a 3' square of landscape fabric around the base of the tree (staple the corners down firmly) and top it with about 2" of wood chips. Landscape fabric is available at places like Menard's, Walmart, and most other garden centers.

If pH at your planting site is above 6.5, you can lower it by watering with a mixture of ¼ cup of vinegar to 1 gallon of water. Pale green, or even yellowish leaves may be a symptom of soil with too high a pH.

Your paw paws may start to produce flower buds before they reach 5' to 6' tall. If they do, it would be better to pinch off the flower buds and not let them set fruit. Once they start bearing fruit, the growth rate of paw paws slows down dramatically. A 3' or 4' paw paw tree would only bear one or two fruits per year, and stay that size for many years if you let it bear. A 5' or 6' pawpaw may only take another year or two to reach the bigger size, then bear 5 to 10 gallons of fruit per year!

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