





# Peach, Nectarine (*Prunus persica*)

Type	Deciduous/ Evergreen	Height x Width (metres)	Spacing (metres)	Pollinator	Soil type	Sun	Moisture	Shelter	Plant	Harvest
	D	3-6 x 4	4-6	N				Y	Midwinter	Summer

## Site

- Very fussy. Needs a warm site with good sunshine. Prefers a hot, dry summer, cool winter and dry weather in spring – but not late spring frosts.
- Needs good air circulation, but not strong winds. Prone to diseases in humid conditions.
- Prefers deep, sandy loam with good drainage – very sensitive to waterlogging. Plant on a mound if necessary.

## Care

- Short-lived.
- Hard to grow in this region without regular copper sprays.
- Plant in midwinter so the tree can get established before new growth starts in early spring.
- Has shallow roots that should not dry out. In spring, spread a mulch of well-rotted manure and compost over the whole root zone.
- Most varieties are self-fertile. Pollinated by bees and other insects.



**Flower buds** (rounded)  
**leaf buds** (pointed)

## Training & pruning

- Best trained in a *vase* shape that lets sunlight into the tree (fruiting buds die if they are shaded), or as a *fan* against a fence or a wall (wires 15cm apart). See the section 'Part 2 – Training' for details.
- Prune in summer to minimise the chance of diseases – after harvest is best, and always in dry weather.
- Seal all cuts with pruning paint, to protect against silverleaf disease.

### Once the tree is established

- They're naturally large, vigorous trees, so don't let a lot of heavy wood develop, pushing the fruiting zone further and further out – shorten the limbs every year, and regularly thin strong growth to keep the fruiting wood near the centre of the tree.
- Bears fruit on the previous season's growth, as well as on short spurs from 2-year-old (or older) wood. Make sure you don't cut off the flower buds for the next season's crop (see the diagram below).
- To get a succession of new fruiting wood:
  - cut out 2-year-old laterals
  - thin to space out new laterals
  - shorten weak laterals by two-thirds.
- In early summer and again after harvest, remove any over-vigorous laterals – the laterals you keep should be fairly flat, a lot thinner than the leaders, and flexible enough to flatten out when loaded with fruit next season.
- If strong laterals develop higher up the tree, summer-prune them back to a weaker side shoot so they don't shade out the lower branches.



### Companions

- Tansy, garlic, chives, and on dry sites, creeping rosemary, oregano, thyme, borage.

### Harvest

- Fruits within 2 or 3 years.
- Fruit ripens in mid- or late summer. Pick when ripe for best flavour, just as they start to soften. Handle them gently to prevent bruising.
- Eat fresh, add to fruit salads, yoghurt, ice cream, cook for desserts, bottling, chutney, or dry for use as a snack.

### Health

- High in vitamins A and C, and also good levels of vitamins B3 (niacin), E and K.
- Good source of fibre and minerals, especially potassium.

### Recommended varieties

Even varieties labelled 'disease-resistant' get curly leaf and brown rot in the Top of the South region. The following varieties have been found to be the best performers:

*Peach*: Blackboy, Golden Queen, Late White, Red Haven

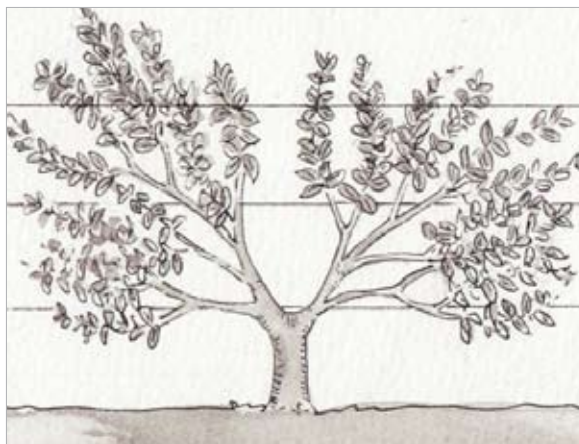
*Nectarine*: Theo Ching, Goldmine, Black Pearl

### Vase shape



Adapted from *Fruit Gardening in NZ*

### Fan shape



Adapted from *How to Make a Forest Garden*