

## Forest Farming Quick Guide

### Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)

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Pawpaw is an understory tree native to most of the Eastern United States, including Ohio. The pawpaw is America's largest edible fruit and is a nutritious food for both humans and wildlife. Native people have a long history cultivating this unique tree, using its fruit for sustenance and bark for medicine. Cultivating Pawpaw brings ecosystem benefits and economic opportunities for growers.

#### Site Selection:

- Prefers moist, well-drained, loamy soils but can tolerate saturated and clay soils.
- Slightly acidic to neutral soil, with a pH range of 5.5-7.
- Hardy in USDA zones 5-8.
- Seedlings thrive in shady conditions due to their sensitivity to direct sunlight. Once mature, pawpaw trees can tolerate full sun, which is optimal for fruit production, making forest edges, light gaps, or open areas ideal planting locations.

#### Site Preparation and Maintenance:

- Remove large sticks and debris that will interfere with planting.
- Selectively prune small understory trees & shrubs to improve airflow and reduce competition.
- Remove invasive species from the site.
- Remove and prune suckers and clonal growths from existing patches, if desired.
- Monitor for disease and pests.
- Pawpaw foliage is undesirable to deer, but shoots are vulnerable to buck-rub and can benefit from cages, tree-tubes, or other forms of protection for the first couple years of establishment.

#### Planting:

- Plant saplings or seedlings in the spring or fall.
- Pawpaw's are clonal and require a genetically different plant nearby to cross-pollinate and produce fruit, so if there are no pawpaw's nearby, at least two individual trees should be planted.
- Dense plantings should be spaced 8-15 feet apart, while orchard-style plantings should be spaced 8 feet apart with rows 12-18 feet apart.
- Be cautious as to not damage the taproot or secondary roots when planting.
- Water seedlings thoroughly during establishment.

#### Harvesting:

- Harvest fruit in late summer when soft to the touch.
- Pawpaw fruits are ripe when they begin to soften and can be gently pulled off like a peach.
- Fruit has a 5–7-day shelf life at room temperature; however, fruit can be stored under refrigeration for up to 3 weeks to maintain quality.

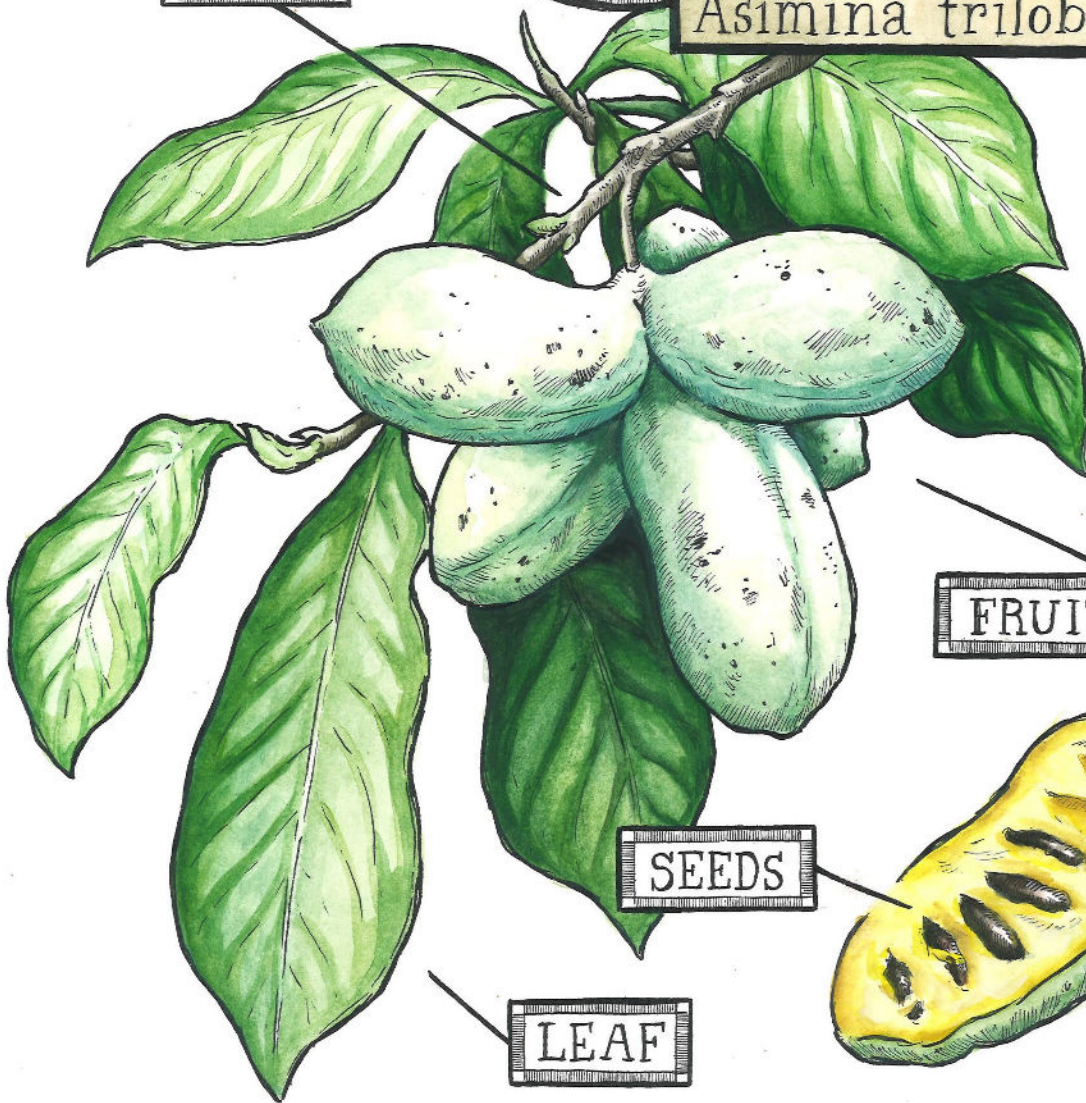




FLOWER

TWIG

PAWPAW  
*Asimina triloba*



FRUIT CLUSTER

SEEDS

LEAF

FRUIT

