

Banana Trees

Info Sheet

Musa spp.

The Banana thrives during hot, humid weather and grows best in rich, well-drained soil. The Banana plant grows like giant grass with the main stem of the plant rhizome remaining below the ground. Unprotected plants may freeze to the ground when temperatures drop below 32 degrees, the Banana will report with the return of warm weather. If plants are protected and well cared for, flowering and fruiting should occur after a 10 to 15 month growth period. Each stalk of a Banana plant produces only one stem of fruit. Once harvested, the main stalk should be cut to the ground to allow room for smaller, younger stalks to develop and eventually flower and fruit.

PLANTING

Best growth can be expected when plants are set in a well-drained, rich soil in full- or half-day sun. Plants should be placed in the ground at soil level and mulch should be applied around the root zone to keep the soil moist. Water plants regularly in spring and summer and slightly less during fall and winter. Mix Espoma Bio-tone Starter in the soil when planting. This promotes strong healthy roots.

FERTILIZING

For proper growth, Bananas must be fertilized each month from February through October. Use **Espoma Plant-Tone** and apply 1 to 1 1/2 cups over entire root zone. Manures and natural organics should be used in addition to synthetics.

FRUIT & HARVESTING

After a 10 to 15 month growth cycle, a central stalk pushes up through the center of the leaf stalk and starts to flower. Until they open, the flowers are covered by purplish bracts and the end of the stalk has one huge, heavy purple-maroon bud. Flowers bloom and fruit develops with out pollination in groups called "hands". Harvest fruit when first hand of bananas begin to turn yellow. Remove the entire stem from the plant and hang in a cool, shady spot. Remove the lower bud or male flowers as they appear because they would otherwise take nutrients away from developing fruit. Gather hands daily as they proceed to mature down the stalk.

Variety	Fruit	Taste	Height
Cavandish	6-8"	Good	7-8'

Traditional banana found in stores. It is dwarf and hardy

Ladyfinger	3-4"	Excellent	18-20'
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Very tasty fruit. Somewhat hardy.

Ice Cream	5-6"	Excellent	16-20'
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Delicious flavor.

Raja Puri	6-7"	Very Good	6-8'
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Best for cold areas

Orinoco	4-6"	Cooking	12-14'
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Type of plantain.

Hua Moa	5-6"	Cooking	12-14'
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Excellent Hawaiian plantain

Giant Plantain		Cooking	8-12'
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Superior fruit in the Caribbean

Double Maxi	6-8"	Excellent	5-6'
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2nd generation & beyond normally produces multiple branches.



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