Kei Apple

Dovyalis caffra

Height: 19 feet

Spread: 12 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9

Description:

A wonderful drought resistant, upright growing fruit tree with a densely branched crown; can be grown as hedges when planted close together; produces round, yellow fruit with a juicy, slightly acid flavor, ideal for jams, jellies, and preserves



Kei Apple fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Kei Apple
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Edible Qualities

Kei Apple is a large shrub that is typically grown for its edible qualities. It produces yellow round fruit with yellow flesh which are typically harvested when mature. The fruits have a tart taste with a juicy texture and a light fragrance.

The fruit are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Baking
- Preserves

Features & Attributes

Kei Apple features showy clusters of creamy white flowers with light green overtones at the ends of the branches from early to late spring. It has green deciduous foliage. The large glossy oval leaves do not develop any appreciable fall color.

This is a multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other landscape plants with finer foliage. This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and can be pruned at anytime. It is a good choice for attracting birds, bees and butterflies to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Kei Apple is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Hedges/Screening
- Orchard/Edible Landscaping

Planting & Growing

Kei Apple will grow to be about 19 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 5 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 40 years or more. This is a dioecious species, meaning that individual plants are either male or female. Only the females will produce fruit, and a male variety of the same species is required nearby as a pollinator.

This plant is typically grown in a designated edibles garden. It does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America..