

Easy Growing Instructions for the Miracle Berry Plant
Synsepalum dulcificum "Miracle Fruit"
(*sin-SEP-ah-lum*)

This exciting plant from Tropical West Africa known as the Miracle Berry or Miracle Fruit (*Synsepalum dulcificum*) is a slow growing shrub that, once mature, produces fruit intermittently throughout the year. The miracle is in the berry. After you've eaten the small gumdrop sized berry, everything sour afterwards turns sweet.

A mature plant will flower and fruit year-round. Once the plant reaches two feet in height it will produce fruit. More fruit tends to set in the summer time. When the fruit is ripe, the berries turn red. Ripe berries will hold onto the bush for several weeks. Hand pollination ensures that fruit will be produced. Pollinate by shaking the leave back and forth or by rubbing your hands through the branches when the plant is in flower.

How to Care for Your Miracle Plant

Light- Keep in a full-to-partially sunlit window. The more sun, the better.

Water- Keep evenly moist, using a non-chlorinated water or, if the water is chlorinated, let it stand for 24 hours. Excessive dryness will kill or damage the plant. Do not allow to dry out. The greatest cause of losing the plant is that the roots dry out. Be especially attentive to watering, especially under high heat. We recently found a self-watering globe that will keep this plant evenly moist (new in our Fall 2007 catalogue).

Soil- It is an acid-loving plant. Pot in a soil that is free of lime and is peat based. Our recommendation is for a mixture of Canadian sphagnum peat moss and perlite (1/2 and 1/2).

Re-potting- In the re-potting process, only go up 2" in pot size at a time. Place the old root ball at the soil level in the new pot; do not drop the root ball into the bottom of the pot and put soil on top. Instead, put some soil in the bottom of the pot and then place the root ball in the pot. Do not fray or loosen the root system at all. If you pot this plant too deep, it can dry out and yet appear to be moist on the surface. Once it gets established in its new pot, then water by watching the color of the surface of the soil.

Disease- Resistant to root disease. It has a strong root system, so higher moisture levels will not harm the plant.

Feed- Sensitive to high fertilizer levels. If you find the leaves are turning brown on the edges you may find that the fertilizer levels are too high or that there are impurities such as chlorine in the water. Use a balanced fertilize like Dyna-Gro 7-9-5 at every other watering. Never fertilize when if the soil is dry. Be sure to flush the soil with clear, unchlorinated water periodically to remove any salt build up. It is sensitive to high salt levels.

Temperature- Grow above 60 degrees F. It is not a cold-hardy plant.

Most Common Problems:

Crispy leaves or brittle, dry leaves- This means leaf desiccation has occurred because the plant could not take up soil moisture. Generally, this happens because the soil was allowed to get too dry.

Solution- DO NOT ALLOW THE SOIL TO DRY OUT. Watch the soil carefully for signs of dryness, then water thoroughly, and do not re-pot too deeply.

Burned Edges/Leaves turning red- High light levels and low fertility can cause redness in mature leaves. There is no harm. Often it will shed these leaves. Leaves that turn brown on the edges may be sensitive to high salt levels.

Solution- Let the red leaves grow out. The brown edges will remain but should not keep occurring to other leaves if you flush the plant with non-chlorinated water and do not over feed.

Plant Doesn't Flower- The plant may not be old enough. It usually starts flowering at 1- ½ feet tall and flowers appear on the lateral branches. Flowers form at the lateral axis. Fruiting should begin when the plant is approximately two feet tall.

Plant Doesn't Set Fruit- The plant may not be old enough to hold fruit, even if it has been in flower. It needs to be up to 2 feet in height. The time of year makes a difference; with long days and warm temperatures, the plant will set fruit. The foliage and flower needs to be disturbed by wind or hand or shaken.

Leaves are Pale and Chlorotic- lack of fertilizer or the soil is too alkali (the ph is too high).

Solution- Make sure the soil mix is ½ peat moss and ½ perlite.