

About Pistachios

The pistachio tree (*Pistacia vera L.*) is native to western Asia. Trees are broad, bushy, and 8-10 m tall. Buds form in early spring and pollen is released in early to mid-April. Nuts may be harvested from late August through September. Pistachios produce male and female flowers on separate trees and are wind pollinated. Common female cultivars include Kerman (primary), Golden Hills, and Lost Hills. Common male cultivars are Peters (primary) and Randy. Pistachios produce alternating large and small crops across years.



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Climate and soil

Temperature*	Frost tolerance	Water needs	Tolerance to water logging	Drought tolerance
Thrives in cool to cold winters and long hot summers.	Freezes destroy young fruits and blossoms. -8C damages young growth.	Deep, infrequent watering essential for production.	Low	Moderate to high

*requires approximately 1,000 hours of temperature at or below 45° F.

Humidity tolerance	Wind tolerance	Soil needs	Nutrient requirements
Low	Moderate to high	Deep loamy soil. Rootstocks are saline tolerant.	Low-production year. 125 kg N/ha, 110 kg K/ha High-production year. 250 kg N/ha and 225 kg K/ha

Cultural practices

Propagation	Grafting or budding.
Rootstocks	UC Berkeley I is best; Pioneer Gold I is acceptable. Atlantica and Terebinthus are prone to disease but very saline tolerant.
Spacing	6-6.5 m between rows; 5-6.4 m between trees in row
Male : Female Ratio	1 : 19-24
Orchard care	Clean cultivated and level ground
Time to 1st harvest	5 to 6 years
Time to full production	10 to 12 years
Normal productive life	Centuries under favorable conditions
Expected yields	A fully mature tree with good soils and cultivars may produce up to 23 kg/ tree of hulled and dried nuts.
Harvest	Hand or machine (Shake and then sweep) when hull becomes puffy and loose.
Storage	Remove hulls and store in dry, vermin-proof container. Fresh nuts can be stored for 4-6 weeks if refrigerated.
Pests and diseases	Fungi Verticillium wilt and Armillaria mellea; aphid, stink bugs, leaf-footed bugs, navel orangeworm; alternaria and botryosphaeria blights.

Training, Pruning, and Thinning

At Planting	Stake next to root ball at planting.
Early in Second Production Season	Pinch primary limbs to 36 cm and tie above the tree in a vase shape. Pinch off lateral growth of rootstock and scion.
Second Winter	Thin to 2-3 branches per primary limb. Head secondary branches to 30 cm and tie upright in a vase shape.