

# *Coffea arabica* var 'Kona'

## Kona Coffee Plant

The coffee 'tree' is actually a variety of tropical evergreen shrub. The coffee tree will start producing berries within three years, it does not begin to produce its full yield until its fifth or sixth year and will continue *prime production* for about ten years, however Coffee plants may live on for sixty years. The tree, if left alone will grow to a height of between 16 and 40 feet. In most coffee plantations the trees are kept at a manageable six feet to get the best yield and to make it easier to harvest.

The best growing conditions are in a temperature range of 65 degrees Fahrenheit to 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Rainfall should be plentiful and the weather should switch between heavy rainfall and sunshine to bring the berries to full maturity. The type of soil is not too important but good drainage is a must.

Coffee plants are fairly easy to grow in the home as a potted specimen, which should be moved outdoors for the summer if possible.

They do best in filtered sunlight, with night temperatures in the lower to mid 60s and day temperatures of 70F or higher. Plant them in any good commercial, fast draining potting soil . The soil should be kept on the moist side, but never soggy.

Coffee plants will produce fruit without any fertilizing whatsoever, but for best results and maximum yield, they should be fed every 2 weeks from March to October, and then monthly from November through February. Use a soluble, all purpose (10-10-10) fertilizer.

The plants will grow to about 10 feet if given ample root room, but can be pruned if this is too big for the allotted space. Pruning may involve simple pinching to produce a bushier plant, or you may go as far as cutting it way back.... Right down to where only two branches near the bottom are left on it.

The fruit are red when they ripen in the fall, with a sweet pulp surrounding the bean. Each coffee berry has two beans. The coffee tree's fruit does not all ripen at one time. In fact it will have blossoms and berries in various stages of ripening. Only the ripe berries can be picked. The berries cannot be picked when green since they will not ripen once picked.

Once you have harvested sufficient beans to brew your first pot of 'home grown' coffee, you will have to roast them. There are many 'home type' roasters available on the market, which do an excellent job of *evenly* roasting your beans.

Information Provided by:

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