

## GROWING TIPS FOR YOUR GOJI PLANT

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Growing Tips, season 1 (July to September)

Thank you for purchasing one of our goji plants! It will be a nice addition to your garden, but like most nice plants it does need some special care.

Perhaps within a few weeks after your purchase the plant will show some yellow leaves. Make sure it has enough water! Remember that you bought the plant in summer, which is the worst time to move trees and shrubs, even in pots. Normally, early summer and late fall are the ideal times to move or transplant. The yellow leaves are either from being too dry or from too many changes in the environment, but probably combination of both. Your plant is vigorous and very tough, so even if you lose more than 3/4 of the leaves, it will be fine in the next year. In general, you will have little enjoyment from the plant this first year, but your patience will pay off and you will be excited when you see the new vigorous shoots starting to grow in March of each! Eventually your plant should produce 300- 500 red goji berries each year.

1. After arriving home, leave them in the pots and put in a half-shady area for about 2 weeks, so it will adapt to your environment. Water the pots every day when it's warm weather, about 1/4 of a liter for small plants and up to 3/4 liter for large plants. For regular summer weather water every second day and for cool weather water every 3-4 days. You can recognize when plants get too dry, as they show a few wilted leaves in the centre of the plant (where the main stem was cut off, the shoots start from there.) The first couple of leaves on each stem are the most sensitive for wilting.
2. After a week in a partial shaded area, make a decision if you would like to continue to grow in a pot for the next couple of years, or if you would like to take the plant out of the pot and plant it somewhere in your garden. Both have their pro's and con's. But either way, make sure the plant gets the maximum amount of sun! The easiest way would be to transplant it into your garden. For the large plants you need to allow 1.5 to 2.0 m<sup>2</sup> (or 15-20 sq.ft) of space. The plants are suitable to continue growing into the pot. It can stay in the same pot for 1-2 years and then it should go to something bigger (now it's a 5-7 gallon pot, so go to 12-15 gallon and it can stay for about 4 years). If you have problems with the wind tipping over the plant, then put it into a bigger pot, but choose one with a large surface on the bottom of the pot, making it stable on the ground. When you grow it in the pot, part of the plant will normally face the shade (like on a balcony). You can keep the growth more even and prevent a lopsided plant by rotating the pot a half-turn every 1-2 weeks during the growing season.
3. Recommendation is that you maintain the current umbrella shape for many years on the large plant, with an annual pruning to remove all shoots.
4. Very important for growing in pots, is to make sure that there are several drainage holes in the pot, or at least one big drain hole. Put 2-3 cm of fine gravel at the bottom of the pot, or 5-10 cm of very coarse potting soil (with chunks). Above that, you can use regular garden soil, but avoid mixtures with a lot of fine material.
5. For planting in the soil: goji plants like sandy, well-drained soil. They prefer a bit higher pH, but it's not that crucial. Make your plant hole double the size of your current pot size and on the bottom of the hole, add about 2 gallons of sand, which you mix in with the existing soil before you plant the pot in the hole.
6. If you have already planted your goji in your garden or another pot, but you have second thoughts of what you did, it is no problem to take the plant out in mid-September and give it the final move.

7. Goji plants sometimes tend to make new shoots from the roots and thus you find new shoots coming out of the ground, also on the main stem, under the umbrella new shoots can develop. It's important to remove all these kind of shoots, also called "suckers", as they will take a lot of energy away from the main plant.
8. **The plants grow vigorously from mid-March until end of August and they need a lot of fertilizer.** A granular, slow release fertilizer is preferable, as you only need to apply it every 3-4 months: First week of Sept., first week of March, first week of June. Other fertilizers work as well, but you need to apply it every 2-3 weeks. The rule of thumb is to read the directions on your fertilizer and then double the amount of what you normally use for a similar size shrub or tree. Starting in mid-August, you can cut down the amount to 1/2 of what you were giving and then stop giving fertilizer at the beginning of a October, until new growth starts in mid-March.
9. In November, the first pruning needs to happen. Prune back to 10-15 cm. in length.
10. In February, prune all branches back to 5 cm. in length.