

Frequently Asked Macadamia Questions

How long before Macadamia trees are bearing nuts?

A grafted tree will usually start bearing in its 4th or 5th year. You will have a reasonable crop after 7 or 8 years. A seedling tree will usually not bear before it is 10 to 12 years old.

What about maintenance?

Macadamias are a low maintenance tree and will grow in almost any soil type as long as it is not water logged. It is a forest tree native to Queensland Australia and likes a good mulch. The main pest in NZ is the green vegetable bug, attacking the young nuts causing black spots on the nut kernel. Long grass and seeds are known to harbour them, keep grass short or have it grazed by sheep. Organic growers and a majority of the smaller growers take the risk of losing some of their crop (in a bad year up to 30%) and don't spray. If you spray, 3 times a season will do the job, start 3 weeks after flowering at intervals of 3 weeks.

Can Macadamias be pruned?

Yes Macadamias will stand quite heavy pruning. The aim when pruning is to keep the tree to a manageable height (3 to 4 metres), cut strong leaders out and open up the interior of the tree to light, air and bees to help pollination, particularly because Macadamias tend to flower into the centre of the tree.

In short, keep the tree low and open on the inside to aid pollination and to make picking easier. Reduce multiple forks to a minimum of two to avoid the incidence of wind damage.

When are Macadamias ready for picking?

For varieties which do not drop their nuts (Beaumont), the simplest way is to look at the lining of the husk after the shortest day of the year. When the lining has turned deep brown, to about the same colour as the nut inside, the crop is ready for picking. Pending on weather and position of the trees this can be as late as July or August. Beware, trees can drop (abort) quite a lot of nuts if stressed through drought, these nuts will be immature and can be mistaken as ripe.

What to do after picking.

- 1 Remove the husks preferably within 24 hours of picking.
- 2 Bag in 10kg onion bags and hang in an airy and shaded position (open carport), for a 3 month minimum. The dry out weight loss will be approximately 15%.
- 3 Store on the hot water cylinder for a minimum of 3 weeks. The additional dry out weight loss will be approximately 8%. (a dehumidifier can be very helpful)
- 4 Dry and ready for cracking. The kernel will ideally be rattling in the shell and above all will be crunchy and sweet.
- 5 **WARNING – Rats love Macadamias!!!** If you see empty shells with little holes chewed into it You know you have them!

Do Macadamias keep well?

All nuts deteriorate over time, however Macadamias 'in shell' will keep well for a couple of years in a dark, cool and airy place. After cracking, the kernels will keep for about six months if kept in an airtight and moisture proof container.



Macadamia Equipment

Manufactured by Beadblasters

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