

Black Sapote AKA Chocolate Pudding Fruit



[Black Sapote](#) fruit showing the stages of ripening. (Link to this PDF below)

Because the ripe fruit is too soft to support its own weight, if it ripens on the tree it will fall—splat. Not all varieties get this dark when fully ripe, but they all get really soft. Do not pick until the calix (flower remnant at the stem) lifts completely away from the fruit. Once that happens, it is mature and will ripen on the counter. Cold on the tree is ok but once picked do NOT refrigerate until it is ripe. Otherwise it may ripen unevenly or not at all.

Be patient, it can take a week or more, but touch them daily to see if they are starting to soften and set those aside. At first, they will turn a slight yellow cast, then get slightly soft. It may *seem* like it is going bad as it turns dark over several days, but don't worry. It will become soft enough the skin will easily dimple when pressed, and when you pick it up there will be about a 1-2" flat area on the bottom from the weight of the fruit. With most varieties, the color will be a very dark olive as in the photo above.

Cut around the equator, avoiding the seeds in the center, twist apart, remove and discard the seeds, then holding a hemisphere in one hand, use a spoon to scoop around the edge to remove the chocolate color / pudding texture fruit inside. Good plain, or stir in a little (~1 tsp) cocoa mix if you want to hide the fruitiness and have it taste exactly like chocolate pudding. Or stir in some soft ice cream. Add to a smoothie or make into ice cream. Or bake it into cakes, cookies or brownies! The pulp can be frozen.

When fully ripe the skin is so soft it can slide off when touched. The skin is slightly bitter and not the same smooth texture as the fruit. A day or two earlier, the skin still has enough integrity that it is easier to scrape all the pulp out, yet the fruit is essentially as sweet. The middle fruit in the photo was dry, pasty and not at all sweet.

Ft. Pierce is usually the farthest north the tree can grow; even that is a stretch, so it requires extra [frost protection](#).

The unripe fruit in the photo was cut open and discarded on the spot by an unknown passerby. Guess they didn't like the taste. If you have ever tasted an unripe persimmon—they are related—you understand why.

Larry Zimmerman

Treasure Coast Rare Fruit Club
meets 7:00 PM Third Thursday
Port Saint Lucie Botanical Garden
2410 SE Westmoreland Blvd,
Port St. Lucie, FL 34952

Link: <https://treasurecoastrarefruitclub/headers>