



# GROWING *edibles* IN PERTH

## Growing Goji Berries

Goji berries (*Lycium barbarum*) are a popular fruit that originates from Asia. They are well known for their medicinal values plus they are high in antioxidants and vitamin C. The berries can be eaten fresh or dried, and are often used in Asian cuisine.

The fruit is small and red, with a sweet flavour comparable to that of plums or cranberries. They produce fruit in late spring/early summer after spring flowers and the fruit can be dried and kept for later use throughout the year.

Goji berry bushes live for about five years and develop into a sprawling vine-shrub around 2.5m. They produce stems that can be both straight and upright or low and rambling. The plant is easily managed by growing it on a trellis and keeping it well pruned. Tie new growth to the trellis as it develops to promote good air circulation and encourage strong growth. As the shrub is deciduous, it will benefit from an annual prune in winter before it breaks dormancy in spring.

Gojis generally have an extended root system, which allows them to find nutrients they need to survive. It also allows the Goji berry to survive climactic extremes such as frosts, periods of drought and hot summers. They prefer a sunny position in well-drained soil. Although they will grow in poorer soils, it is recommended that you improve the soil before planting by adding compost and manure to increase moisture retention and nutrient content. They also grow well in a pot when planted with premium potting mix.

Goji berries benefit from fertilising in spring and should be kept well-watered as fruit develops over late spring/summer. A regular liquid feed during this period will be of great benefit. After fruiting, the bush can be pruned lightly. This may encourage a second fruiting if conditions are good. Ensure the bush is well mulched during summer and keep well-watered through the dryer months. Note that they do not like being over-watered, and are particularly susceptible if planted in heavier clay soils.

Fertilise again in the autumn months as the shrub goes into dormancy. Perform structural pruning in late winter to take out weak or diseased growth and reduce all existing stems by a third. This will encourage strong new growth in spring.

*General advice only. Please ask one of our Horticulturists if you require specific advice for your situation.*