



Vitamin-rich super-fruit

Persimmons would have to be one of the most overlooked fruits and are in season now, with growers around Australia, including the South-West, in full swing until early June. Originally from China, the fruit was introduced to Australia in 1977, though not grown commercially until 1982. It has glossy light yellow-orange to bright red-orange skin and a pretty star pattern in the flesh, which is visible only if cut horizontally. It goes well with sweet and savoury dishes and as an accompaniment to nibbles and finger foods, especially cheese platters. Serve with a wedge of aged cheddar, your favourite blue and shaved prosciutto plus crackers and crusty bread. Or, for a family meal, toss seared beef, coriander, basil, shallots and chilli in a bowl, then add a garlic and lime dressing for a persimmon Thai beef salad (see recipe). When choosing fruit, ensure the calyx — the green cap at the top — is in place and the persimmon is brightly coloured, glossy and firm. There are two types on the market — non-astringent, such as Jiro and Fuyu, the latter making up the majority of those grown in Australia — and astringent, which are usually heart to oblong shape and start firm but soften as



One of Australia's best-kept secrets, fresh sweet persimmons are a delicious, crisp and crunchy fruit that are in season from late February to early June.

they ripen. Eat when soft and jelly-like inside, otherwise they are bitter. The non-astringent varieties remain firm as they ripen and are usually round, with a slightly flattened top, and best eaten crunchy, like an apple. Nutritionally, persimmons rate better than many fruit and are a

great source of dietary fibre, contain high levels of vitamins A and C, potassium and beta carotene, as well as some calcium magnesium, phosphorus and iron. They can be eaten unpeeled and should not be stored in the fridge because this will make them go soft.