

— EXPLORE —
**FOOD &
DRINK**

— Enjoy —
Plums

A GUIDE FOR BUYING, COOKING, USING AND
LEARNING ABOUT THE PLUMS OF PERSHORE

www.valeandspa.co.uk/plums



Festival characters



Prunella

Prunella is the face of the Pershore Plum Festival, first showing her Pershore Purple face in 2009. Adults and children alike are excited to see the easily recognisable character, so you know plums are ready when Prunella is about!

Plum fact

The name “plum” was derived from the old English “plume”, which was extended from the Latin language (*Prunus Domestica*)

Eggbert

This Yellow Egg plum joined the festival family in 2016 and provided a colourful companion to Prunella. They are often seen together and act as a reminder of the variety of Pershore-based plums that are available to be consumed.



Plum fact

Every variety of plum stone has a different marking

The plums of Pershore

In 1827 George Crooke, a publican of the Butchers Arms in Church Street discovered the famous Pershore Yellow Egg plum by chance when walking through Tiddesley Wood. It was since then that his son, Thomas, forced the growing of this distinctive variety which became widespread throughout the Pershore district by 1833.

The Pershore Purple plum, formerly known as Martin's seedling was created by Walter Martin of Drakes Broughton in 1877 as he developed the variety by crossing the Purple Diamond plum (found in late August) with the Rivers Early Prolific plum (late July).

Since these historic occasions, the town has been synonymous with plums and has great pride in the fruit. So much so that there's now a month-long celebration held in August.

This guide will educate on the fruit's history and growing techniques, but also provide some useful, practical advice including where to buy them and how to cook with them; enabling you to enjoy it to its maximum potential.

There's plenty more information available about plums on its dedicated page www.valeandspa.co.uk/plums or on the Pershore Plum Festival website.

 www.pershoreplumfestival.org.uk

 [@PlumFestival](https://twitter.com/PlumFestival)

 info@pershoreplumfestival.org.uk

 [Pershore Plum Festival](https://www.facebook.com/PershorePlumFestival)

 01386 565373



Contents

Festival Characters	2
The plums of Pershore	3
History & about	4
Planting, Growing & Harvesting	5
Plum Varieties	8
Timeline	12
Events	13
Where to buy	16
Cooking with plums	20
Recipes	21

History and about

There are three distinct varieties of Pershore plum (*Prunus domestica*): the Pershore Yellow Egg, the Purple Pershore and the Pershore Emblem. The Yellow Egg is a firm dry fruit whose seedling was discovered in the ancient Tiddesley wood. The Purple variety is a cross between the Yellow Plum and a similar seedling, it was originally called Martin's seedling. However, although the shape and uses are similar there is some doubt as to whether these two varieties are actually related. The Emblem is also known as the Evesham Red and was discovered by local grower Ged Witts on his allotment in Pershore as a seedling grown from a stone in 2000. The Pershore plum was the mainstay of the English plum industry in the Vale of Evesham in Worcestershire from the mid-19th century until the early 20th century.



None of the Pershore Plums are really a plum for eating fresh off the tree – the flesh appears to have little or no juice, and the flavour is merely acidic. Cooking, however, transforms them all.

Pershore plums have many culinary uses including jam and chutneys, and can be added to cheese and sausages and make luscious puddings. There is the local drink called Plum Jerkum which is still made from various recipes.

Planting, Growing & Harvesting



Plums make good small trees for any garden and the delicious home-grown fruits are well worth the effort.

There are many different types of plum, including sweet and cooking varieties, damsons, gages, mirabelles and sloes and they have many different uses, from eating freshly picked to making cakes and preserves and adding to gin.

Growing plums

Plums grow best in a sunny spot in well-drained, fertile soil. Small trees, grown on semi-dwarfing rootstock are easier to maintain.

The same growing conditions apply to most trees in the plum family, although gages grow best against a warm wall to ripen the fruit.

Damsons are hardier, smaller trees that will often do well where larger varieties fail. They can be trained on walls and grown as pyramids and are also used for windbreaks or hedging.

Many cultivars are self-fertile so you can get away with planting a single tree, but plum trees will generally produce a better crop if cross-pollinated with other plums. There are four pollination groups but plum trees flower at very similar times, and a plum tree in one group can be successfully pollinated by another variety in its own group or in a group above or below it. Look out for the pollination group when choosing your trees

Planting plum trees

Plant plum trees during the winter when trees are dormant. Bear in mind that bare-root plants usually establish better than container-grown trees. Young trees will need staking for the first few years.

Add plenty of well-rotted compost or farmyard manure to your planting hole. Or if growing in a container choose a generous size pot and add a mix of soil and compost to help prevent the plant drying out during hot weather.

Looking after plum trees

Plums are some of the earliest fruit trees to flower. Although the trees are hardy, frosts will kill the blossom. A sheltered, sunny location will protect them to some degree, but you may need to use horticultural fleece in freezing conditions.

When the fruits have formed by June or July, it's best to remove some so they don't overload the tree.



Pruning plum trees

Don't prune plum trees in winter as this can cause them to develop silver leaf disease. Prune young trees in spring for shape and established trees later on, to remove dead and damaged wood. Summer pruning will keep the tree manageable, and allow the fruit to ripen.

Problem solving: plum trees

Plums are prone to aphids, birds, caterpillars, plum fruit moth and wasps.

The larvae of plum moth and plum sawfly tunnel through fruits leaving them inedible. The fruits may drop, but it's worth looking out for the tell tale puncture in the fruit in May. If you can spot them, remove these damaged plums before the larvae return to the soil. Pheromone traps can also help to protect trees. Plums are also prone to silver leaf if pruned in winter. Brown rot and bacterial canker are also common problems.



Harvesting plums

Allow the fruits to ripen on the tree and pick them when they are soft to touch – the individual plums should pull away from the tree easily if ready.

Storing plums

Plums are best eaten fresh if uncooked, but can be preserved in jams, chutneys, or stoned and frozen to use in cakes, stews and more through the winter.



Plum varieties

Black Prince

An old English plum variety that was raised in Bedfordshire in 1923.

The medium to large deep dusky violet-purple fruits ripen almost to black and have a succulent yellow-green flesh. They ripen early to mid-August and are easily stoned. A beautiful flavour for dessert use, mild and sweet.



Czar

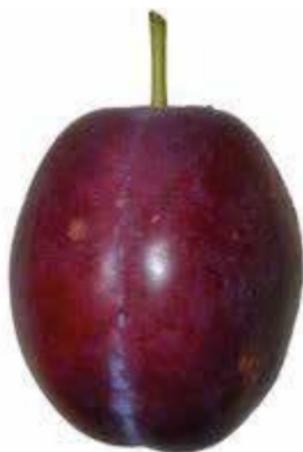
Czar is a culinary plum variety that crops heavily and reliably. The tree itself is compact in habit so perfect for small spaces or training as a cordon. Medium sized dark purple fruits that have a light blue bloom and very fine dots on the skin.

The flesh is yellow green, not very sweet but quite a good flavour that is delicious when cooked into desserts, jams, and cakes, also good for bottling.



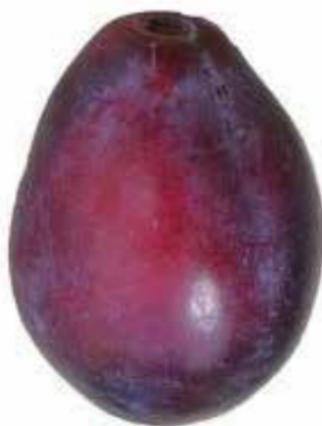
Marjorie

Marjorie is one of the latest picking plums for mid to late September. Produces good quality, large purple fruits that have brown dots and covered in thick, blue bloom. A dual purpose plum, tasty eaten straight from the tree and also baked into cakes, crumbles and jams. Flesh is yellow, and juicy. Not as sweet as other plums, but they do sweeten with age as they sit on the tree.



Purple Pershore

Also known as the Purple Plum is a very useful robust plum with good regular crops. The fruits are reddish purple with thick, blue bloom. Flesh is yellow, firm, not very juicy or sweet but good flavour for cooking and preserving. For cooking uses, pick the fruits when they are red.



Prolific Plum

As the name suggests, a good heavy cropping early season plum. Produces very attractive small, bluish-purple fruits that have a lavender bloom of good quality. Flesh is golden yellow, rather firm, juicy, sweet and of good flavour. Pleasant when picked and eaten fresh from the tree or when baked into desserts. The fruit often sweetens the longer it is left on the tree.



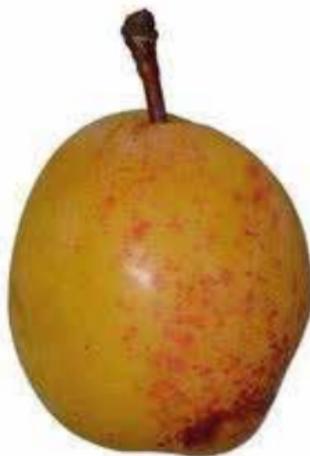
Victoria

Victoria is the most popular plum variety in the world. Produces heavy crops of large, oval-shaped bright red fruits that have darker red dots and are covered in medium, light blue bloom. The flesh is dark yellow with some streaks of red, moderately juicy, and sweet, flavour fair. Perfect for eating fresh when they are picked ripe from the tree or can also be cooked into jams and desserts or used for bottling and canning.



Warwickshire Drooper

Always crops regular large, oval-shaped yellow fruits that are streaked green, have speckled red dots and are covered in white bloom. Flesh is bright yellow, moderately sweet, and very juicy; good for eating fresh from the tree. They are also delicious when cooked into cakes, crumbles, and jams. The tree itself has a spreading, drooping habit from which it was named.



Yellow Pershore

Also known as the fondly named 'Yellow Egg Plum' is a traditional, old fashioned cooking variety. Heavy and reliable crops of large, yellow fruits that have yellow juicy flesh; sweet, sharp, and delicious. Perfect for cooking into desserts as well as being the ideal bottling plum. Also, tasty when picked and eaten straight from the tree, once it's fully ripe.



Timeline



Pershire Yellow Egg Plum discovered in Tiddesley Wood by George Crooke, publican of Butchers Arms, Church Street.

George's son Thomas grew the distinctive plum which became widespread across Pershire.



Pershire Purple plum, formally known as Martin's seedling was created by Walter Martin from Drakes Broughton by crossing the Purple Diamond Plum with the Rivers Early Prolific plum.

The Pershire Purple Plum was planted and grown in preference to the Victoria plum because of its natural resistance to Silver Leaf disease.



During the food shortage during World War One Pershire fruit and plums were transported by train throughout the country.

A poster advertising the Pershire Flower Show described it as "The Largest Plum Show on Earth"



The Pershire Plum Festival was resurrected by four local people.

Plum Festival named as the best in Worcestershire.



Events

Every year, the Pershore Plum Festival celebrates the fruit that made the town famous with a variety of events throughout August. To find out what's on offer in 2022, take a look below.

Plum Festival Race Meeting

Tuesday 26 July

Horse racing first took place at Pershore Racecourse in 1847 with the inaugural running of the Land O'Plums chase in 1899. Due to flooding at the original track, a new racecourse was opened in the town in 1935 with the final meeting taking place there in 1939 when, because of WWII, it became an army training camp. The Land O'Plums chase was revived in 2010 at the Pershore Plum Festival meeting held to this day at Worcester Racecourse.

www.worcester-racecourse.co.uk



Plum Coach Tour

Thursday 11 August

A unique plum coach tour suitable for all plum lovers. Complete with a Plum Tour Guide, the day out will provide you with an entertaining insight into the Pershore Plums and also give the opportunity to pick your own fruit from the Vale Landscape Heritage Trust orchards located in The Lenches.

Call Royal Motorways for details **01527 376098**

Plum Alley

Saturday 6, 13 and 20 August

Don't miss the opportunity to buy your local plums from the Vale Landscape Heritage Trust in Plum Alley. There will be live music, lots of stalls and a wonderful new selection of Pershore Plum Festival Merchandise. Come and meet the Plum Princess and her attendants, Queen Victoria and of course no plum event would be the same without Prunella and Eggbert!

Shop Window Competition

Saturday 20 August

During August the Plum Festival Team encourages local businesses to turn the town purple and yellow to support the Festival. There is a window display competition and this year the theme is "All About Plums". Whether it's fruit & blossom, cake & crumble, sausages and burgers, mascots and princesses, or whatever, it's all about plums.

This year judging will take place on Saturday 20 August and the judges will be local artist, Hayley Reynolds, and the Plum Princess and her attendants. We encourage everyone to keep their displays over the Bank Holiday weekend and will provide a map so that visitors can go round and view all the entries during the Festival weekend.

Plum Praise Service History of the 1 lb of Pershore Plums

Sunday 28 August | 2pm | Bandstand, Abbey Park

In 1970 the church of St Andrews in Pershore was declared redundant. In 1972, a formal agreement was drawn up between the Diocese of Worcester and Pershore Abbey saying that an annual payment of 1lb of Pershore Plums be made by the Pershore Parochial Church to the Diocese as a "peppercorn rent" for St Andrews centre.

As the Plum Festival grew, the presentation of the 1lb of Pershore Plums became a fundamental part of the historic element of plums in the town and this presentation is now performed at a special "Plum Praise Service" on Bank Holiday Sunday.

Plum Bike Nite

Thursday 25 August

Our Pershore Plum Festival Bike Nite is back! This year we will be welcoming bikes from all across the area for an evening of fun, live music and plum themed food and drink!

August Bank Holiday Weekend



Saturday 27, Sunday 28 & Monday 29 August

Once again, these three days see the culmination of plum celebrations in Pershore, with live music, children's activities, food stalls and lots more.

Shops and market stalls throughout in the town will turn yellow and purple, so please make sure you visit to get into the "plum spirit" and support our local businesses.

The Angel Hotel will be hosting "The Big Plum" over the Bank Holiday weekend including entertainment, children's activities and plum food and drink. Other businesses in the town will also be providing plum menus and products.

Where to buy

You'll typically only find Pershore plums in the farm shops and greengrocers in or close to the town with different varieties available from mid-July to late September.

In addition to buying the fruit loose, there are many tasty creations produced locally inspired by Pershore's famous fruit including pork pies, sausages, preserves and alcohol. They are all definitely worth a try!

Below is a selection of local establishments where it's possible to buy the freshest of fruit and associated products.

Abbey Butchers

High Street, Pershore, WR10 1BG

📞 01386 554349

Locally sourced plums, plum sausage and sausage rolls, plum pork pies, plum cheese.



Chadbury Farm Shop

Worcester Road, Evesham, WR11 4TD

📞 01386 446705

Plum growers with many varieties. Plum gin and wine, homemade jams and chutneys, plum cakes, plum cheese.

Clive's Of Crothorne

Clive's Of Crothorne, The Heath, Crothorne, WR10 3NE

📞 01386 860439

10 varieties of homegrown plums; homemade jams and chutneys.

Croome Cuisine

🌐 www.croomecuisine.com

📞 01905 350788

Artisan cheeses including Pershore Plum Cheese.



Ellenden Farm Shop

Evesham Road, Evesham, WR11 8LU

📞 01386 870296

Selling a range of traditional varieties including Prolific, Czar, Heron, Swan, Victoria, Belle and damsons, which ripen in turn from mid-July through to early September.

Fruit Salad

46 High Street, Pershore, WR10 1DP

📞 01386 552148

Locally sourced plums, plum cakes.

Gwillams Farm Shop

Ombersley Road, Bever, Worcester, WR3 7RH

📞 01905 756490

Locally sourced plums, jams, chutney, plum cheese.

Hampton Farm Shop

Pershore Road, Evesham, WR11 2NB

📞 01386 41540

18 different plum varieties being sold until late September, and homemade jams.

Ken & Jen Mason and Daughters

Pershore Retail Market, Cherry Orchard, Pershore, WR10 1EY

📞 07841 420975

Locally sourced plums.



Pershore Juneberries

🌐 www.juneberries.co.uk

Gin, vodka, trees and fruit.



Revills Farm Shop

Bourne Road, Defford, Nr Pershore, WR8 9BS

☎ 01386 750466

Locally sourced plums, jams, chutney.

Vale Fresh

The Valley, Evesham, WR11 4DS

☎ 07545 332055

Local plums.

Wayside Farm Shop and Tearoom

50 Pitches Hill, Wickhamford, Evesham, WR11 7RT

☎ 01386 830546

Locally sourced plums, homemade chutney and jams, plum sausages and sausage rolls, plum cakes and plum cream teas.



Cooking with plums

The window to enjoy local plums is quite short, so it's important to make the most of them whilst you can.

You shouldn't worry though, because plums are a fantastic ingredient to produce great condiments, mains, sides and even drinks!



Read on for some easy cooking ideas
or download a comprehensive cookbook
from www.valeandspa.co.uk/plums

Plum Chutney

Cooking Time: 2 hours

Preparation Time: 30 minutes



Ingredients

- 2 lb stoned plums (skinned)
- 1 lb apples (peeled)
- 1 lb onions
- 1 lb dried apricots (or raisins or sultanas)
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp allspice
- 1 pint malt vinegar
- 6 oz brown sugar (use more sugar if you like sweet chutney)

Method

1. Chop the fruit and onions into small pieces.
2. Put the fruit and onions into a pan with the ginger and allspice, and add one third of the vinegar.
3. Simmer very slowly for about 1 hours until the fruit is very soft (adding a little more vinegar if the mixture is drying out).
4. Stir in the remaining vinegar and the sugar and stir until the sugar has dissolved.
5. Boil steadily until the mixture is the consistency of thick jam. Put into hot jars and seal (Makes approximately 4lb).

Plum Jam



Ingredients

- 3 lbs plums
- 3 lbs sugar
- 1/2 pint water

Method

1. Wash the plums and simmer them gently in water until the skins of the plums are tender.
2. Remove stones as they rise to the surface.
3. Add sugar and stir until dissolved.
4. Boil rapidly until setting point is reached.
5. Transfer to warmed jars and cover.

Pershire Stew



Ingredients

- 2 tbsps butter
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 large onion
- 2 tbsps flour
- 1 1/2 oz bladebones
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- 10-15 Pershire plums, halved and stoned
- 150 ml water
- 8 oz carrots
- 150 ml local bitter

Method

1. Toss the beef and herbs in flour, seal in hot butter.
2. When well browned add vegetables, cook for a few minutes.
3. Add the water and beer, cover and braise in moderate oven for 1 hours, half way through add the plums.

Plum Cake



Ingredients

- 1 1/2 lb English plums – fresh or canned, stoned and chopped
- 8 oz self raising flour
- 4 oz butter
- 2 oz soft brown sugar
- 2 tbsps golden syrup
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsps mixed spice
- Caster sugar

Method

1. Cream together butter, sugar, syrup until fluffy and light.
2. Beat in eggs one at a time; fold in flour, spice, plums and milk.
3. Place in greased and lined 7" tin.
4. Bake at 175°C/ 350°F/ gas mark 4 for 1 1/4 – 1 1/2 1/2 hours until firm to the touch.
5. Cool and dust with caster sugar.

In the Pink

The saying 'in the pink' means to be in good health. This juice will help you to attain that.

Simple, quick and delicious, this juice is an instant booster, rich in blood building and vitality with vitamin C, bioflavonoids, potassium and carotenes. Thanks to the plums it is also a valuable source of iron.



Ingredients

- 6 plums
- 2 red apples peeled, cored & quartered
- 2 pink grapefruits peeled and remove pith

Method

1. Put all ingredients in a juicer or blender.
2. Mix, strain and drink.

Plum Jerkum



Plum Jerkum is native to the north Cotswolds and particularly to the county of Worcestershire. The drink is the fermented juice of plums, and is a very heady liquor. In the country they often mix it with cider, and thus moderate its effect.

Method

1. Collect rain water in a barrel and leave some plums in the barrel for a few weeks. They should start to ferment on their own.
2. Strain the mixture through a muslin bag into a container with an airlock and start adding brown sugar, a little at a time. The “knack” is knowing how much sugar to add and when to bottle it.
3. Leave for at least six months before drinking when it should taste like velvet. Soft water, brown sugar and not adding all the sugar in at once are recommended.

* Recipe contributed by Cecil Bloxham

Plum Wine



Ingredients

- 4lb plums
- 1 gallon boiling water
- 4 lb sugar
- Yeast (prepared)

Method

1. Cut up plums, cover with boiling water and stir.
2. Leave in covered bowl for 4 days, stirring daily.
3. Strain, add sugar and yeast until all sugar is dissolved.
4. Pour the liquid into demi-john, insert air-lock and leave for at least 6 months, preferably a year.
5. Bottle and leave for 1 month before drinking.



www.valeandspa.co.uk/plums

