



LAMMSCAPES!

Guidelines for Your Fruit Tree Care

Fruit trees can be one of the most satisfying plants in your yard. Pleasures of sight, smell and taste come to you with your own living fruit factory! Yields of 6 bushels of apples are not uncommon on a 10-year-old tree. The shade, form and texture of your tree will also add to your landscape. In the spring, you will be able to enjoy another advantage of the fruit tree when the beauty and fragrance of the blossoms emerge. Because the fruit trees we can grow here – apples, pears, plums, cherries and peaches – ripen at different times, every summer will be a continual harvest of success.

Fruit trees, in general, prefer a sunny spot with rich, well-drained soil. Soils with some clay are acceptable but avoid heavy clay areas that are wet for extended periods of time. Low areas where frost collect are almost less desirable for these spring bloomers. A sloping area facing east or west is best.

Space your new trees so they will just touch when fully grown. For example, space dwarf apples 12 feet apart, since they will get 12 feet wide by maturity.

As vigorous as most fruit trees are, they still need to receive some special care. Top yields that are most nearly free from blemish are only achieved with pest control, pruning and fertilizing.

APPLES

Apples are the most popular of all fruit trees and are available in many varieties and potential sizes. Our semi – dwarf trees get only about 15 to 18 feet tall and 12 feet wide.

The semi-dwarf tree will be begging to bear the 2nd and 3rd year after planting, which is 1 or 2 years before a standard. Additionally, the little trees are easier to pick and spray and take up less yard space.

Apples need another variety of apple to pollinate its flowers to develop fruit. Fortunately, they are often pollinated well by other apples in the neighborhood, including flowering crabapple trees.

Pruning should be completed each spring in March. This is done to increase the ratio of roots to top growth and to get better air movement through the crown. This care will increase fruit size and quality. You should also remember to thin the number of fruit developing along each branch. In early June, pluck off tiny fruit leaving one apple every 6” along a branch.

Both insects and diseases can cause reduced yields with apple trees. A preventative spray program is suggested with apples, as well as with any fruit tree. This program will help prevent most insect and fungus problems.

PLUMS

Plums are also a very popular fruit tree. Although they vary in height, plum trees are usually 15 to 20 feet tall at maturity. Space 12 to 15 feet apart in a sunny, well drained area.

Plums tend to be short lived because of their susceptibility to several insects and diseases. For example, Black Knot fungus produces strange, black growths along the twigs that greatly slows growth and can kill the tree. Prune plums in March, removing twigs infected with Black Knot and then burning them. Pruning tools should be wiped or dipped in alcohol between cuts. Plums do not need fruit thinning.

CHERRIES

Cherries are a versatile plant to add to your fruit tree collection. Wisconsin conditions limit us mainly to the sour cherries that are enjoyable in desserts, juice, pies and other baked goods.

You can find a spot in almost any yard for the small cherry trees. Generally, cherry trees will grow to be about 15 feet by 10 feet wide. The natural dwarf, North Star, matures at only 10 feet tall and 6 or 8 feet wide.

Sour cherries are self-fruitful and therefore you only need one tree for adequate pollination. Cherries need no fruit thinning. Each summer, cover the whole tree with a Ross Garden Net to keep the birds from harvesting your crop. Cherry trees are susceptible to the same insects and diseases as the plum tree. Additionally, we recommend a preventative spray program for your trees. Follow the directions for pruning plum, especially regarding Black Knot.

PEARS

The pears wide appeal lies in its versatility. Pears are great for canning, eating fresh, sauce and wine. They are also the most consistent and prolific bearers of all our fruit trees. Pears are available in dwarf forms, which get only 15 feet tall and wide and standard forms, which can reach 25 feet tall and wide.

Insects and disease pests are not major problems with the pears. However, a stronger, better fruiting tree can be achieved with a modest spray program.

GENERAL TIPS:

- Prune all fruit trees in March.
- Fertilize annually in April with a balanced, granular product specifically recommended for fruit trees. Organic fertilizer and compost are recommended.
- Avoid mower damage by keeping a 3-foot circle of mulch around the trunks.
- Watch for bad infestations of insects and control them.
- All fruit trees need bark protection from rodents and rabbits especially when young – encircle each trunk with a tree protector each fall. Check weekly in the winter for rabbit activity, especially during deep snow when rabbits can reach unprotected branches.

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