



# Caring For Fruit Trees



## Choosing a Site:

Fruit trees should be planted in a full sun location. Avoid planting trees in the shade or around any older trees. Fruit trees require well drained soils. It is always a good idea to amend the site with compost before planting.

Plant trees as soon as possible in late winter/ early spring.

## Planting Bare Root Trees:

Plant bareroot trees as soon as possible in late winter/early spring. Potted trees can be planted any time soil can be worked. Soak the roots of your bareroot tree in Root Stimulator mixed with water while you prepare the hole.

Dig the hole wide enough for the roots to spread outward and downward (about 1 ½' x 1 ½'). If the soil is heavy clay, mix compost with the soil (1/4 compost: 3/4 soil). Plant the tree so that the uppermost roots are just below the soil line and the graft union is above the soil line. If you wish to apply a slow release fertilizer, like Dr. Earth Fruit Tree fertilizer or Espoma Bio-Tone Starter Plus, you could do so now mixing fertilizer in with the soil, or you can apply fertilizer 4-6 weeks later around the drip line of the tree. Fill planting hole with soil mix, being sure there are no air gaps around roots. Put a stake about 4 inches from the trunk and attach tree trunk to stake with chain lock (never use wire or string). Prune out any crossing branches or overcrowded branches and prune broken branches back to a bud facing outward. Water your tree to get rid of any air pockets in soil and thoroughly moisten soil. Then pour the Root Stimulator mixed water that you soaked the roots in over the root area. To prevent sun scald, paint the trunk with a white latex paint slightly diluted with water from the soil line to the lowest branches.

## Planting Potted Trees:

Dig the hole twice as wide as the pot but no deeper. If the soil is heavy clay, amend with one-third organic soil amendment. Place the tree in the hole so it rests slightly above the surrounding soil level. Fill in hole with backfill, building a water basin slightly wider than the root ball around the tree. Water the tree thoroughly. Paint the trunk with white latex paint to avoid sunscald.

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## Fertilizing:

Best growth will be accomplished with the help of fertilizers. There are many organic options as well as conventional options. All fertilizers should be applied after leaf fall in autumn and again before bloom in the spring. Trees that are planted in the lawn may need more nitrogen than those planted in a garden bed. Generous amounts of lawn clippings or compost make a great substitute for a nitrogen fertilizer. Don't let fertilizer touch the trunk of the tree.

## Pests:

There are many pests that target the fruit trees. These include insects, bacterial infections and fungi. All of these are treatable and can be treated through out the year. Please see Garland Nursery's Fruits and Nuts Spray Schedule Handout.

## Harvesting:

Sour Cherries are ready for harvesting when they are easily picked from the tree. Sweet Cherries, Plums, Apples, Prunes, and Peaches will all continue to ripen after harvest. European pears should be picked while they are still green and should come off the tree easily when ready. Persimmons ripen late in the fall when they become soft. Nuts fall to the ground when mature. For best quality, gather and dry walnuts as they fall.

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