



Fruit Trees

Planning & Location

Fruit trees are a great addition to your landscape. They can make excellent privacy barriers, shade trees or 'living fences', they offer spectacular blooms in spring and, of course, delicious, healthy fruit in summer/fall. Some folks shy away from them, however, thinking that they involve too much work. While they are not maintenance free, the tasks required are preventative to keep your tree healthy, strong and productive (and believe us, the benefits definitely outweigh the effort!). Maintenance tasks include:

- Apply dormant spray three times between November and February to keep the bark free of insects and diseases. Dormant spray is a mix of horticultural oil (prevents overwintering insects) and lime sulphur (prevents algae, lichen, moss and disease).
- Prune during the dormant season to keep the tree free of dead or diseased wood, maximize fruit production and maintain a manageable size
- Prune in summer to remove water sprouts or 'suckers' (small stems coming from the base of the tree) and encourage spurs (the shorter tree branches that bear the flowers and fruit) to flower for next year
- Spray fungicide (organics are available) as needed to control diseases like scab, mildew and European canker

Fruit trees have a long life ahead of them so select a spot where they will be happy. They need full sun (minimum 6 hours), very well-drained soil

a pollinator from the same family. Prune plums, 'Green Gage' and 'Santa Rosa' are the most popular self-fertile types. Good air circulation is really important for all plums.

Note: Metric vs. Imperial - as a quick reference for those more familiar with metric, 3' is roughly equivalent to 1 meter (3.28' = 1m)

Checklist

- Bark Mulch
- Bone Meal
- Liquid Transplanter

Our Guarantee

1 Year From Date of Purchase*

RECEIPT MUST BE KEPT AND PLANT RETURNED.

*All Country Garden nursery stock is guaranteed to the purchase price for one year from the date of purchase, providing the plant has been properly planted and cared for and has been planted in the ground, not in a container. We are not responsible for damage caused by severe winters or weather conditions. *Receipt and plant must be presented at time of return.* Nursery stock is replaced only once. 'Final Sale' items do not qualify for the guarantee.



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Cherries: Trees for home gardens are grown on one of three rootstocks: 'Mazzard' producing trees that reach 20-25' HxW, 'Colt' (semi-dwarf) producing trees 15-20' HxW or 'Gisela' (dwarf) producing trees 10-13' HxW. All sour cherries are self fertile, and there are a few sweet cherries that are self-fertile. All others required a second cherry to produce. Generally ripen in August.

Nectarines: Grown on dwarf rootstocks resulting in trees growing 8-15' HxW, depending on variety. Not as self-fertile as peaches but peaches will pollinate nectarines. Generally ripen August to early September.

Pears: Nearly all pears for home-gardens will grow to 15' HxW. Like apples, most pears need a pollinator. They prefer lots of sunshine and are slightly less prone to pests and diseases than apples, but their fruit has a shorter storage life and blossoms are a bit more susceptible to frost damage. Generally ripen August to September.

Oriental (Asian) Pears: Partially self-fertile but will increase production with a pollinator (other Asian pears or select pears). Generally grow 8-10' HxW and ripen in August.

Peaches: Most are grown on semi-dwarf rootstocks resulting in trees growing up to 16' HxW. Genetic dwarf varieties will only grow up to 6'! All are self-fertile but bees are needed. Happiest on south or west facing positions. Try planting where they'll have a bit of overhead protection (i.e. under a house eave) to prevent peach-leaf curl, which is caused by excess moisture on the leaves. Spraying with fixed copper will help prevent peach leaf curl too. Generally ripen in August to early September.

Plums: Grown on dwarf rootstocks resulting in trees growing 8-15' HxW, depending on variety. There are two distinct families: European and Japanese. Europeans are later blooming, making them better for areas with later frosts. The prune-plum is the most popular for its preservation versatility and high sugar content. Japanese plums are hard to beat for their flavour, size and juiciness. They are ideal dessert plums. Japanese plums are slightly more vigorous so do need a bit more pruning maintenance. Most need

and room to grow. Though fruit trees can be pruned to size, take their natural growing sizes into consideration. Select a spot where they will have space to fill out and have good air circulation. The ideal time to plant is in late winter or early spring. They can be planted anytime of the year, but you will have to care and monitor them closely if planting in summer (do not let them dry out!). One factor that must be considered before you plant is if you need a pollinator. Pollinators need to be located within bee flying range (use 100' as a marker). Yes your neighbour may have an apple tree and you may just be in luck, but it is best to plan on planting two of the right partners to ensure you have crops to enjoy in the future.

Planting

The planting hole should be at least 12" wider and deeper than the root ball. For example: A root ball 18" wide and 12" deep requires a minimum hole 30" wide and 24" deep. The hole should be generally be 1½ to 2 times larger than the root ball so that it is deep enough to accommodate the root system without crowding.

Before placing the tree in the hole, enrich existing soil by forking in some well-rotted compost, a generous amount of bark mulch (fir or hemlock only) and some bonemeal. Blend thoroughly. These additives will help the roots get established. The soil mix that you used to backfill the hole should consist of up to 50% bark mulch and 50% enriched soil. Soil must be well-drained, and the bark mulch will help achieve this.

Place the tree in the hole and backfill with soil. Should the tree be on a very dwarfing rootstock, drive a strong stake into the ground (on the prevailing wind side) and attach it to the tree using plastic ties. This stake should remain until the root system is well established. Be sure to inspect the tie regularly so that the tree is not girdled. Do not stake strong or large growing trees as it can weaken them unnecessarily.

Tamp down the soil and thoroughly water the roots to eliminate air pockets. With a watering can apply liquid root starter fertilizer to help jump start the root system.

Finally, add a 3" layer of bark mulch to help hold in moisture and protect new roots from frost or heat. Be sure to water your new tree through dry periods during the first growing season, particularly in summer. Until it is fully-established you will need to give it a bit of help.

Care & Feeding

Spring: Loosen up the soil carefully with a digging fork to allow more oxygen into the soil. Work some well-rotted manure or compost into the top layer of the soil. Add 10-15-19 fertilizer (including micronutrients) to help roots develop and encourage the tree to produce more fruit. Apply this in early spring at the first signs of life, and then again midsummer when fruit is sizing up.

Summer: Water deeply during dry spells, particularly when the fruit is sizing up. Use a soaker hose around the drip line of the tree (the outer edge of the branches) at least once a week. This helps prevent fruit drop and your fruit will taste sweeter. Prune off any suckers that develop.

Fall: Place old fruit and leaves in the compost pile. Do your first dormant spray once all the leaves are off.

Winter: Dormant spray and prune. Attend our pruning seminars or ask for a pruning guide for tips on how to prune. Late winter is the best time to prune. Try not to prune on rainy or very frosty days.

Tip: Fruit Drop can be caused by abrupt weather changes from very cool to hot when the blossoms are forming fruit. This causes stress and leads to fruit drop. The other cause is lack of boron, which helps with fruit initiation. Treat by watering the roots with a boron solution of 15mL per 4 litres of water. Don't overdo it though - too much boron can harm plants.

Variety Characteristics

Espalier Trees: Are those whose branches are trained to grow flat. They make great fences or decorative walls and are ideal for small gardens.

Fruit Cocktail Trees: Have different fruits of the same general category grafted onto one rootstock. The varieties will pollinate each other.

Grafted Trees: Fruit trees are most often a blend of separate parts that are bud-grafted, or joined together, to create a better plant. A typical fruit tree is grafted to a rootstock that determines factors such as the tree's final size, the type of soil in which it will grow best, its strength and the age at which it will bear fruit.

Standard vs. Dwarf Trees: As a rule, standard trees can take from 7-10 years to produce fruit and usually grow 25-40' high. Dwarf trees (which are typically sold at garden centres) usually produce fruit in half that time and grow about 25-50% as big as standards (about 8-20'). 'Dwarf' is a variable term for each fruit family - be sure to read variety tags for size specifics.

Apples: Most home-garden types will be on dwarf tree stock growing 10-12' HxW, or semi-dwarf rootstock growing 12-18' HxW. Nearly all apples require a pollinator, and some are very particular about who is doing the pollinating. Refer to plant tags or charts for good combinations. Crabapples are a great choice as a pollinator for all apples; they bloom for a long period in spring and have their own tasty fruit too! 'Early' varieties ripen by mid-September, and their starches convert to sugar more rapidly, meaning they soften quickly. 'Late' varieties ripen from mid-October on, remain hard and may be a little starchy at first but become sweeter over time. 'Midseason' varieties become sweeter earlier but are not as long lasting as late varieties.

Apricots: Grown on dwarf rootstocks resulting in trees growing 8-15' HxW, depending on variety. Some are self-fertile. Happiest in a south or west facing location where they will get lots of sun. Ripen late July-August.