

light, Trumpeter. For south Atlantic and south central: Apollo, Atlas, Albritton, Blakemore, Pocahontas, Sunrise, Tennessee Beauty, Titan. For Gulf Coast and deep south: Dabreak, Florida 90, Headliner, Tioga. For western: Fresno, Hood, Northwest, Sequoia, Shuksan, Tioga, Tufts.

What is so good as strawberries and cream—it could be a blueberry pie made from garden fresh berries! Not only can most of the berry crops be eaten fresh, but they can be converted into most delectable cooked products.

Delicious jams, jellies, juices, wines, pies, preserves, tarts, and muffins made from the fruits start the taste buds salivating just to think of them.

Strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries are easily processed by freezing, to be used later in pies, jams, and jellies at the cook's leisure.

Grapes are often used to make wines. Homemade grape wines can range in quality from worse than mediocre to excellent, depending to a considerable extent upon the varieties of grapes used. Again be guided by the recommendations of specialists at your State experiment station.

All home gardeners should grow some, if not all, of the berry crops. The space dividends are high. The taste treats are unexcelled. And the satisfaction from growing bounteous crops is unsurpassable.

#### FOR FURTHER READING:

U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Growing Blackberries*, F 2160, Office of Communication, Washington, D.C. 20250.

———. *Growing American Bunch Grapes*, F 2123, Office of Communication, Washington, D.C. 20250.

———. *Control of Grape Diseases and Insects in the Eastern United States*, F 1893, Office of Communication, Washington, D.C. 20250.

———. *Controlling Diseases of Raspberries and Blackberries*, F 2208, Office of Communication, Washington, D.C. 20250.

———. *Strawberry Varieties in the United States*, F 1043, for sale by Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. 20402.

## Apples, Cherries Pears, Plums and Other Fruit Trees

**M**ANY KINDS of tree fruits can be grown in the backyard of both urban and rural homes. This can be turned into a family project to be enjoyed by all. The growing of fruit trees is relatively easy, but controlling diseases and insects to assure good quality fruit is more difficult. This fact should not discourage the average family from growing their own fruits and enjoying some of the labor involved and the taste of the fruit produced.

Since fruit pests can and should be controlled, the backyard enthusiast should be familiar with control measures, as well as tree management practices, before planting many of these trees.

Apples are the easiest to grow. The trees respond readily to pruning, training, and fertilizer. The only apple trees to grow in the backyard are the dwarf ones. The desired variety should be budded on one of the following rootstocks: Malling 9, M.26 or M.7. When these rootstocks are used, the trees are smaller at maturity and more easily cared for, in addition to fruiting earlier and more regularly than trees on standard rootstocks.

Many favorite apple varieties grafted on dwarfing rootstocks are listed, described, and handled by nurseries dealing with fruit trees.

Here are a few varieties suitable for the home garden which are most likely to be available: 'Delicious' (spur types or strains of 'Delicious' are preferred because they are slightly dwarfing and usually more productive), Yellow (Golden) Delicious, McIntosh (spur type), Jonathan, Spartan, Cortland, Idared, Prima, Macoun, Gravenstein, Jerseymac\*, Paulared\*, Red Tydeman\*,

Lodi\*, and Quinte\*. (An asterisk indicates early apples).

Apricot trees are not as hardy or long-lived as apple trees, but can be grown in more protected areas of the backyard. The fruit is excellent for eating out-of-hand and for home canning. Available varieties are 'Goldcot', 'Tilton', 'Curtis', and 'Early Orange'. These are not dwarf, but can be kept within 10 feet in spread and height by annual pruning.

Both sweet and tart cherries should be included in the home orchard. Sweet cherries are delicious to eat in June and July. Tart cherries are easily canned or frozen for year-round use.

The most popular tart cherry varieties are Montmorency, which has a light juice, and English Morrello, a dark juice cherry. Both varieties are usually listed and available from local nurseries. Although both sweet and tart cherries can have problems, they may be grown successfully by following the recommendations outlined in pest control bulletins.

Sweet cherries come in various fruit colors: black, red, deep red, yellow, and shades in between. Fruit of early varieties begin to ripen in June and late maturing varieties in July. Here are a few varieties in order of maturity: Vista (b), Vega (y), Napoleon (y), Emperor Francis (y), Hedelfingen (b), Vic (b), and Hudson (b). (b indicates black fruit color; y indicates yellow).

Most of the stone fruits—cherries, peaches, plums, and nectarines—are subject to brown rot disease, with nectarines the most susceptible. A sanitation practice of pruning out brown rot branch cankers and careful spraying at regular intervals should result in excellent fruit.

Although similar to peaches, nectarines are quality fruits for eating out-of-hand. A few of the most readily available nectarine varieties are: Independence, Mericrest, Flavortop, Stark Sunglow, and Fantasia.

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The peach is truly a dual purpose fruit for the home dweller because it is good to eat fresh and frozen or out of the can. There are many varieties to choose from. Peaches can be grown in the backyard from Florida to Michigan, but before ordering trees it is best to find out which varieties will be best for your area. Local nurseries usually list varieties adapted to their areas, and those are the ones to consider.

A few of the best available peach varieties are: Garnet Beauty, Sunhaven, Redhaven, Velvet, Sunhigh, Madison, Cresthaven, Redskin, Jersey Queen, and Rio-Oso-Gem. Descriptions of these as to color, firmness and maturity are included in most catalogs. While the early ripening sorts are good to eat out-of-hand, the mid-season to late maturing varieties are the best for home canning and freezing.

Pear varieties grafted on dwarfing quince rootstocks are available from some nurseries. Standard trees of pear will live longer because they are hardier and, although vigorous, can be held small by pruning.

Bartlett is the pear variety usually grown and should be considered as one of two or more varieties to plant. Other varieties suitable to plant in the backyard are: Bosc, Anjou, Moonglow, and Seckel.

Spartlet, a new variety which matures 10 days after Bartlett, is larger, keeps longer, and is good both fresh and canned.

The plum is another dual purpose fruit which is excellent eaten fresh at harvest time, and also as a canned product. Plums require about the same care as peaches. For eating fresh, the Japanese types are favorites, among them Formosa, Frontier, Santa Rosa, and Burbank. European type plums are good for both canning and fresh, and some of these are Stanley, Bluefre, Seneca, and President.

Although most peach and tart cherry trees are self-fertile and do not need pollen from another variety, most other fruit varieties need cross pollination. Therefore, to insure good fruit set, at least two varieties of each fruit should

be planted. For example, for good fruit set, plant two sweet cherry varieties such as Vega and Emperor Francis; for plums Abundance and Methley; and for apples Macspur and Cortland. Since certain varieties are not good pollen sources, you should check into this matter carefully.

For best results and success in growing tree fruits, the soil should be a well drained sandy loam. Heavy clay and muck soils are to be avoided. Spring is the usual time for planting trees. However, if trees are available, they can be planted in the fall, especially in the southern temperate zone.

A large hole should be dug, one that will allow for spreading of the roots in all directions. Place the top soil to one side when digging the hole, then use this soil around the roots. It is best to water the tree from the top after planting rather than to mix water with the soil during planting. Fertilizers should never be placed in the hole.

If fruit is wanted a year or two after planting, order older trees from nurseries which have 2-year-old trees available. Older trees cost more, but they often are more rewarding when only a few trees are needed. One-year-old trees are more plentiful, cost less, and when on dwarfing rootstock will fruit in the second year—especially apple trees. To insure getting the desired variety and rootstock, trees should be ordered from the nursery at least six months before planting.

Because of root competition and shading, fruit trees should not be planted near large shade trees or ornamental border plants or shrubs. They need sunshine for quality and colorful fruit. For best results the trees should be spaced at least 6' from each other, or if planted in rows 8' between trees and 12' between rows. Apple trees should be grouped in one section and stone fruits in another section of the garden.

Each fruit crop and variety needs special care in training and pruning. Generally, pruning consists of selecting strong main branches which are spaced on the central leader so that they point in different directions. For

example, a 5-year-old apple tree should have four to six main branches. Upright growing varieties such as 'Delicious' need to have their branches spread outward away from the central leader.

The information service of most agricultural experiment stations and extension service offices can provide information and descriptions on how to plant, prune, and care for fruit trees and how to fertilize and spray, and harvest the fruit. Furthermore, most recognized fruit tree nurseries have excellent catalogs describing varieties, ripening dates, cost, and so on.

#### FOR FURTHER READING:

U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Establishing and Managing Young Apple Orchards*, F 1897, Office of Communication, Washington, D.C. 20250, 1971.

———. *Why Fruit Trees Fail to Bear*, L 172, Office of Communication, Washington, D.C. 20250, 1971.

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Michigan State University. *Developing Dwarf Apple Trees*, Research Report No. 17, Agricultural Experiment Station, East Lansing, Mich. 48823, 1971.

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