

# FRUIT TREES FOR THE LANDSCAPE

by Ray Rothenberger

Rising food costs have not only increased interest in home vegetable gardening but have stirred an added desire for planting fruit trees in the home landscape.

Fruit trees may be a pleasure with proper selection, care, and planting. As part of an ornamental planting, they provide attractive flowers in spring along with the summer fruit crop.

Do not use fruit trees close to patios, drives, or walks. Falling fruit during the growing season can create messy conditions on a hard surface. Rooting fruit attracts bees and other insects that may be a nuisance close to an outdoor living area. For best production and growth, locate trees in a sunny location where soil has excellent drainage and plants have ample room to grow.

Remember that a tree's purpose for producing fruit is for seed production and thereby the preservation of its own species. Healthy seed for this purpose can be contained in fruit of poor quality, deformed by diseases, or riddled by insects. It is only a result of human needs that fruit of excellent size, color, and quality has developed along with techniques to discourage the injury from insects and diseases. Therefore, if a tree is to produce clean fruit, it needs the help of modern production methods.

Failure to provide good insect and disease control is the most common cause of disappointment with a home fruit planting. A regular control program is important to the development of healthy trees with good quality fruit. Suggestions for the control of insects and diseases are available from your local University Extension center.

Proper pollination is also important in the home planting where few trees are used. Many

fruit trees are not self-fruitful, and therefore at least two different varieties (not two or more trees of the same variety) must be present if good fruit set is expected. Even varieties that are self-fruitful often set more fruit when several varieties are present.

Most apples, pears, sweet cherries, and plums require more than one variety for fruit set. An exception is the Golden Delicious apple which can pollinate its own flowers and is also an excellent pollinator for other apple varieties that flower at the same time. Therefore, if there is only room for one apple tree, Golden Delicious would be a good choice.

Most peaches, apricots, and sour cherries are self-fruitful and do not require another variety. When ordering from catalogs or from your nurseryman, be sure to pay special attention to the pollination needs of the varieties you select.

Dwarf trees are an excellent selection for the home planting. Since they grow low, they are more easily pruned and sprayed without special equipment. Most dwarf trees fruit sooner than standard trees. Picking fruit is easier, and small spaces can be used for fruit production. Dwarf apples with the "spur" type of fruiting habit are especially suitable for the home garden. Pears are also available in dwarf forms. It is not as necessary to plant dwarf forms of peaches and plums. These trees can be kept in bounds with yearly pruning.

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