



Fruit Trees

For East Idaho



Growing fruit trees in East Idaho can be fun and rewarding. Fruit trees provide beautiful blossoms in the spring, welcome shade in the summer, and bountiful harvests of flavorful fruit. The following information should help you grow fruit successfully in our difficult east Idaho climate.

Pollination - Fruit results from pollination of blossoms. Some trees can set an abundant crop with their own pollen, so they are called self-pollinating. Other trees need pollination from another variety. Two trees of the same variety will not pollinate each other, and an apple will not pollinate a peach, etc. You must have two different varieties of the same type of fruit. Bees usually carry out this transfer of pollen. Bees will travel up to 1/4 mile between trees, but it's best to plant cross-pollinating varieties within 100 feet of each other. Many neighbors have enough fruit trees to assure plenty of cross-pollination - but if you're not sure, you should plant your own "pollination partners." Different sizes of trees can pollinate each other, so a dwarf tree can pollinate with a standard tree and vice versa.

Spacing - Dwarf trees should be spaced about 10 feet apart, semi-dwarf 15 feet apart, and standard about 20 feet apart.

Tree Height - Approximate height of trees: Dwarf trees: 8-10 ft., Semi-dwarf: 12-18 ft., Standard size: 15-25 ft. (Apricots, Peaches and Plums tend to be a bit smaller.)

Hardiness - For a successful backyard orchard, take care to select only the hardiest varieties, or be willing to take a little risk if you want to plant some of the more tender varieties.

Probably the only completely reliable fruit trees for some of the colder areas of East Idaho are the hardier apples and pie cherries. All other varieties are subject to occasional winter damage or even winterkill during extremely severe winters. Many can be grown successfully, however, with a little extra care... and a little luck. These marginally hardy trees are listed as "Gardening Adventures" (GA) and are not guaranteed over winter. Zone 4 trees are generally hardy in the Idaho Falls area. Some Zone 5 trees do well in Pocatello. Choose Zone 3 trees for colder areas.

Fruit trees listed in order of general hardiness are: Apples, Pie Cherries, American and European Plums, Pears, Sweet Cherries, Apricots, Peaches, Nectarines, and Japanese Plums.

How long until they will produce fruit? Most trees will begin producing fruit in about 2 to 6 years. Dwarf and semi-dwarf apples usually produce sooner than standard varieties. Cherries and peaches often produce the 2nd year.

A tree that is not blossoming can usually be induced to bloom by cutting completely around the trunk with a sharp knife. (Don't remove anything, just perforate all the way through the bark). This is best done in late spring to encourage fruit production the following year.

Spring Frosts

To help avoid blossom-killing spring frosts, you can spread mulch approximately 6 inches deep around the base of the tree during the winter. This will hold the cold in the ground and can often delay blooming by as much as one week. This is especially effective for peaches and apricots.

Sunscald

Many fruit trees have tender bark that is susceptible to sunscald. This is a very damaging condition that occurs in the wintertime. One side of the bark is killed because of alternating night/day freezing and thawing. Protecting trees with **Tree Saver** tree wrap can prevent this damage. **Tree Saver** is made of a white plastic material that allows the tree to breathe while reflecting away heat and insulating from the cold. Apple trees only need to be protected for their first few winters, after which they will develop a tougher bark. All other fruit trees should be protected every winter.

Fall Frosts

Apples will generally tolerate frosts into the low 20's before damage occurs in the fall. Upper teens can even be tolerated for a couple of hours. However, temperatures this cold can reduce the length of time the fruit can be stored in cold storage.

Apples - Apples are generally the hardiest fruit trees for East Idaho. However, Granny Smith, Braeburn, Fuji, Winesap, and Rome Beauty are not recommended for our area due to their late ripening. Apples are generally not self-pollinating. Use two varieties to be productive. Cross-pollination is possible only when varieties bloom at approximately the same time. Length of bloom is usually 7-15 days. Early bloomers should be planted with early or midseason bloomers and late bloomers with late or midseason bloomers. Dwarf trees can produce up to 5 bushels each year. Semi-dwarf and Standard can produce up to 10 bushels.

SP= Self-pollinating GA = Gardening Adventure Plant (Not guaranteed over winter)
 *= Best Sellers

<u>Variety</u>	<u>Hardiness Zone</u>	<u>Blooming Season</u>	<u>Harvest Season</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Honeycrisp*	4	Mid	Late Sept.	Sweet, crisp, and juicy. Excellent storage, eating and cooking. One of the Best!
Honeygold	4	Mid	Mid Oct.	Crisp, juicy, yellow fruit similar to Golden Delicious, but with Superior storage qualities. Dessert and cooking.
McIntosh	4	Mid	Mid Sept.	Crisp, tart flavor for cooking, dessert, storage, applesauce.
Sweet 16*	3	Mid	Late Sept.	Fireblight resistant. Sweet, crisp, juicy. Cooking, dessert, storage.
Lodi	4	Early	Early Aug.	Early apple that is great for applesauce and pies. Fruit is similar to yellow transparent but larger in size. No storage life.
Zestar!	3	Early	Late Aug.	A sweet early apple that is crisp and juicy. Excellent for fresh eating and cooking. Short storage life.

Apricots – Apricots are generally self-pollinating.

SP Chinese (GA)* Most popular variety in east Idaho. Medium-size fruit. Good quality. Yellow to orange color. **Zone 4-5.**

SP Scout Freestone. Sweet, tart flavor. Good for canning, fair for eating. Developed in Morden, Manitoba. Blooms in early May. Ripens Early August. Bronze-gold color blushed with red. **Zone 3.**

Cherries - Pie cherries are self-pollinating. Most sweet cherries are not. Pie cherries may not pollinate with sweet cherries, because they usually don't bloom at the same time.

<u>Variety</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Bing (GA)	Sweet	Black cherry. High quality flavor. Ripens late June. Zone 5.
SP Evans Bali	Pie	Deep, dark red fruit. Excellent for baking and fresh eating. Fruit much sweeter than other pie cherries. Extremely hardy buds. Zone 3
SP Montmorency*	Pie	Large, tart, juicy red fruit. Popular pie cherry. Good for preserves. Ripens late June. Zone 4.
SP Stella* (GA)	Sweet	Black skin and flesh. Sweet, juicy fruit. Ripens early July. Good pollinator. Zone 5.
Nanking cherry	Shrub	Ornamental shrub (8'x10') with tasty red fruits Used for jams, jellies or eating fresh. Zone 2.

Peaches - All are self-pollinating. If you decide to try peaches and apricots in east Idaho, please be sure to spray regularly because they are a host for the Green Peach Aphid, which can spread disease in the potato crop. The hardiest varieties are listed below.

SP Red Haven* (GA)	Red blushed, medium-sized, golden fruit. Excellent fresh, frozen, or canning. Freestone. Yellow flesh is firm, smooth and fine flavored. Disease resistant. Ripens in early Aug. Zone 5.
SP Contender* (GA)	Very cold tolerant and blooms late, avoiding spring frosts better than most. Red-orange skin with sweet yellow flesh. Extra-juicy freestone fruit. Reportedly the hardiest peach. Ripens in late Aug. Zone 4
SP Early Elberta (GA)	An early ripening version of the Elberta peach. Rich, sweet, yellow flesh and golden yellow blushed red skin. Ripens in July. Zone 5
SP Reliance (GA)	Medium size golden fruit with a red blush. Not as sweet as Red Haven or contender. Freestone. Ripens mid to late July. Zone 5.

Pears - Generally not self-pollinating. Plant two varieties for best production. Fire blight can sometimes be severe enough to kill pears, so it may be wise to choose a resistant variety.

Bartlett (GA)	Well-known. Large, golden yellow. Smooth, creamy and flavorful. Excellent for fresh eating or canning. Bears young. Ripens late August. Zone 5.
Golden Spice	Very hardy. Fruit is 1 3/4" and medium yellow, blushed with a dull red. Ripens mid-season. Good for canning and spicing, fair for eating. Zone 3.
Parker	Large, yellow fruit with a red blush. White, fine grained flesh. Tender and juicy fruit. Very productive. Zone 4
Summercrisp*	From Minnesota. Very hardy. Blight resistant. Harvest in mid August when fruit is sweet, crisp and still green with a red blush. Fruit is 2 1/2-3" in diameter and 3-3 1/2" long. Will store up to 2 months. Zone 4.

Plums - Blue plums are usually self-pollinating. Most others are not. Japanese plums are not reliably hardy in our area. However, the American and European types listed below generally do quite well.

SP Mt. Royal European Plum. Blue. Freestone. Excellent fresh, dessert, jam and preserves. Tender, juicy flesh. Ripens late August. **Zone 4.**

Superior- American/Japanese cross. One of the best plums on the market. Good for fresh eating, jam, and jelly. Flesh is yellow, sweet and juicy. Heavy bearing. Often sets fruit the first year. Clingstone. Pollinate with Toka. Ripens late August. **Zone 4.**

Toka Red medium size fruit with richly flavored orange flesh. Excellent pollinator for other American plums. Ripens mid August. Clingstone. **Zone 3.**

SP Stanley Large, prune shaped, bluish purple, very attractive. Flesh yellow, juicy, sweet, richly flavored. One of the best prunes for home use. Ripens early September. Freestone. An Italian type prune. **Zone 5.**



Revised 1-03-2014

Town & Country Gardens, Inc.

5800 S. Yellowstone Hwy. ▪ Idaho Falls, ID 83402 ▪ 522-5247

1300 East Oak ▪ Pocatello, ID 83201 ▪ 232-7985

www.tcgardens.com