Quick Guide Fruit Trees

Where to plant:

- moist, well-drained, soil, that is rich in organic matter
- Full Sun; early flowering fruit trees might be susceptible to frost. If you can, plant fruit trees at the highest point on your property (frost will settle in lower areas)
- Soil pH should be around 6.8 (the ideal pH for fruit trees).Therefore, have a soil test done and make the recommended adjustments before planting.
- The graft union should be 2-4" above the soil level.
- When planting into the lawn, make sure to remove sod from within 2-3' of the tree. Keep this area weed and grass free for several years (minimize competition for water and nutrients)

Pollination:

- Trees can be grouped into 2 categories: those that bear fruit through self-pollination and those that must be pollinated by another variety; the bloom periods must overlap and the tree needs to be genetically compatible
- Some trees are genetically compatible with themselves. These trees are "self-fertile" or self pollinating. However planting 2 of this variety will increase your crop.
- Plant pollen-compatible trees within 50ft to 100ft to ensure adequate pollination
- Pollination is mainly carried out by bees. Do not spray your garden with insecticides that are harmful to bees.
- **Apple:**
    - A crab apple tree will pollinate fruiting Apple trees.
    - A handful of varieties are incompatible with certain other varieties because they are too closely related. For example, Golden Delicious cannot be used as a pollen partner with Gala, or Jonagold, as these are offspring of Golden Delicious.
    - A handful of apple varieties belong to the genetic category "triploid." This means that these apple varieties have three sets of chromosomes, rather than the more normal two sets found in diploid apples. Trees that are triploid produce pollen that is unable to pollinate other apple trees. One example is Roxbury Russet, a delicious heirloom apple. You will need 2 other apple varieties in order to get pollination.
- **European Pear:**
    - Majority of European pears require another pear of a different variety to cross -pollinate
    - Be aware that 'Seckel' does not partner well with Bartlett
    - If you have room for just 1 Pear tree consider: Anjou, Bartlett or Kieffer.
- **Asian Pear:**
    - Some are self-fertile and some are partially self-fertile. We recommend planting another Asian pear variety to improve the fruit set.
- **Other Fruit Trees:**
    - Peach and Nectarine**:** all are self- fertile and do not require a pollination partner
    - Apricot: self-fertile, but with all self fertile trees, another variety will increase the crop, especially because they bloom very early and some flowers might be lost due to frost
    - Sweet Cherry: majority require a pollinator, a universal pollenizer we sell is 'Black Gold', but there are also self fertile varieties available
    - Tart Cherry: self- fertile
    - European Plum: most are self-fertile; crop more abundantly in the presence of another variety

        - European plums **do not** pollinate Japanese plums and vice versa
    - Japanese Plum: most require a pollinator (any other Japanese plum variety)

Watering:

- The amount of water needed depends on the rainfall and soil type.
- Remember, young trees have a very undeveloped root system, and cannot absorb much water at one time
- Drip irrigation is preferred because the foliage, flowers and fruit remain dry

Fertilizing:

- Before fertilizing a soil test should be done to determine what sort of fertilizer to use, in respect to what the plant needs. The soil test will also determine if the pH is correct for that tree and whether or not it will be able to take up fertilizer.
- Bio-Tone can be applied at the time of planting. It is organic and helps the plant grow strong roots and help new plants get maximum water and nutrients from the soil.
- Please see our Garden Shop Info Desk for more information and the best recommendations.

Pruning:

- All our fruit trees come pre pruned and will not need pruning at the time of planting
    - In the **first year** after planting, young trees need to concentrate on establishment and crown development rather than fruiting. So remove any young fruit that forms.
    - In the **second year**, if the tree is establishing and growing well, you may let one or two fruits develop.
- Dead, Damaged and Diseased branches can be pruned out at any time
- Apples, pears, cherries, and plums produce their best fruit on 2-3 year old wood. Peaches bear their fruit on last year's vegetative growth. One of the prime reasons for annual pruning is to encourage lots of productive fruiting wood—1 year old wood on peaches and 2-3 year old wood on the others
- Prune to improve air-circulation which helps reduce pests and diseases
- Prune to let more sunlight reach the fruit so they grow healthy and large
- Sweet cherries should be pruned in mid summer. This is the optimal time since they are more susceptible to getting fungal and bacterial diseases on the cut limbs.
- Always prune during a dry day with sterilized equipment to minimize the risk of the tree getting a disease.
- Thin out the fruiting buds. If there are too many fruiting buds, then the fruit may not develop their high sugar levels. Remove all but one fruit where there are several in a single cluster, leaving the largest of the fruit.
- Fruit thinning is especially important with apples. Excessive fruit set reduces flower bud formation for the next season and results in alternate bearing—a heavy crop of small-sized fruit one year and little or no crop the next. Thinning within a month after bloom helps prevent alternate bearing.
- When pruning, keep in mind that horizontal branches produce more fruit.

Protect from animals:

- Voles feed on bark and roots of young trees in the winter
- Deer and rabbits are another nuisance
- To protect young trees you can enclose them with a tree guard (available in Garden Shop)
- Fencing or repellent can keep deer at bay, depending on how hungry they are.

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