Fruit Tree Basics

By Sarah Browning, Extension Educator

What grows well in Nebraska?

WELL ADAPTED
- Apple
- Blackberry & raspberry
- Chokeberry
- Currant
- Gooseberry
- Grape

NOT RECOMMENDED
- Apricot
- Blueberry
- Nectarine
- Peach
- Strawberry
- Tart Cherry

Hardiness Zones

Average Annual Minimum Temperature

Zone 4

Zone 5

2012 North Central U.S.
Look for disease resistance!

Midwest Fruit Pest Management Guide
Managing Pests In Home Fruit Plantings
Fruit Spray Schedule for the Homeowner, University of Missouri Extension

Pay attention to mature tree size.

Attributes of rootstocks
- Mature tree size
- Precocious fruit bearing
- Disease resistance – fireblight, apple scab, cedar-apple rust, ect.
- Insect resistance, i.e. woolly-apple aphid
- Cold tolerance of the root system
- Vigor of the root system and the need for staking

Dwarfing Apple Rootstocks

Apple cultivars for Nebraska

Empire ★
Enterprise ★
Fireside (Connell Red)
Fuji
Gala
Golden (Yellow)
Delicious
Haralson

Honeycrisp
Honeygold
Jonathan (and Jonathan types)
Liberty ★
Lodi
Northwestern
Greening

Red Delicious – NO!
Rome
Spartan
Wealthy
Winesap
Zestar

Tree size comparisons using different rootstocks based on percent size of standard apple seedling.
Fruit cultivars for Nebraska

- **Strawberries Cultivars for Nebraska**
  - https://go.unl.edu/strawberry

- **Grape Growing for the Home Garden**
  - https://go.unl.edu/grape

- **Blackberry Cultivars**
  - https://go.unl.edu/blackberries

- **Everbearing Raspberries**
  - Fallgold
  - Heritage
  - Redwing

- **Red Raspberry**
  - Taylor
  - Latham

- **Black Raspberry**
  - Bristol
  - Allen

- **Purple Raspberry**
  - Brandy wine
  - Royalty
  - Sodus

Plan for good pollination

**REQUIRE CROSS-POLLINATION**
- Apple
- Black currant
- Pear
- Plum
- Sweet Cherry

**SELF-POLLINATING**
- Apricot (with a few exceptions)
- Gooseberry
- Grape
- Nectarine
- Peach
- Plum, European (blue)
- Raspberry & blackberry
- Red currant
- Strawberry
- Tart cherry

Bare root or Potted plants

- Image from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Purchasing

- Adams County Nursery
- Burnt Ridge Nursery
- Burpee
- C & O Nursery
- Daisy Farms
- Edible Landscaping
- Grandpa’s Orchard
- Gurney’s Seed & Nursery Co.
- Hartmann’s Plant Company
- Indiana Berry and Plant Co.
- Ison’s Nursery
- Northwoods Nursery/One Green World
- Nourse Farms
- Park Seed
- Raintree Nursery
- Southmeadow Fruit Gardens
- Stark Brothers
- Van Well Nursery
- White Flower Farms
- Willis Orchard Co.
Training/Pruning Systems

Central leader
- Apple, pear
Modified leader
- All fruit trees
Open center
- Apricot, cherry, peach, plum

Open Center | Central Leader | Modified Central Leader

Pruning Fruit Trees, Ohio State University - https://u.osu.edu/gelley.2/2018/03/02/pruning-fruit-trees/

Central Leader Branch Selection

Retain branches with crotch angles greater than 45°
Scaffold branches should be spaced evenly on the tree
- Vertically
- Horizontally
Maintain dominance of the leader
- Should be 2x as tall as any side branch

Early Pruning

TREE WHIPS
Training & Pruning Fruit Trees, Colorado State University Extension.

OLDER TREES

Fertilization

Base fertilization on tree's growth.
May not be necessary every year.
Nonbearing Trees
- Apple – 12 to 36 inches per year
Bearing Trees
- Apple - 6 to 18 inches
- Pear – 12 to 16 inches
- Tart cherry – about 8 inches
- Plum and sweet cherry – about 8 inches
- Peach & nectarine - 12 to 18 inches

Poor tree growth, based on distance between each year's bundle scars.
Fertilization

Rates based on trunk diameter measured at 1’ about ground level
- Apples & pears – 1/10th lb N per 1” trunk diameter, maximum
- Stone fruits - 1/8th lb N per 1” trunk diameter, maximum

Spring application – before or at bud break

Poor tree growth, based on distance between each year’s bundle scars.

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