



CHOOSING FRUIT TREES
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CHOOSING THE RIGHT VARIETY

Many fruit trees like apples, peaches, pears, plums, etc., need a certain amount of winter dormancy (resting phase) to develop their leaves and fruit buds for the coming year. This dormancy period is triggered by colder weather and shorter days, and the tree will stay at rest until it has just the amount of cold weather it needs. Chill hours are a measurement of this period. Here in North Florida our chill hour range is 400 to 600 hours.



Choosing the right variety of fruit for your yard is important to successfully getting a crop. In apples, for instance, some high chill varieties like Red Delicious require up to 1400 hours of chill, so they do well only north of the Carolinas. Anna and Dorsett Golden need only 250-300 hours, so are perfect for growers in north and central Florida, in zones 8B-9. So read carefully the zones listed at the end of each fruit description in our website www.justfruitsandexotics.com and make sure you are buying a plant that likes the weather where you live.

TO POLLINATE OR NOT TO POLLINATE? THAT IS THE QUESTION

Good pollination is the one of the key factors to good fruit set. Fruit falls into three pollinating categories:

- SELF-FERTILE (or SELF-POLLINATING)** - this means the variety needs no help or pollen from another variety to set a crop of fruit.
- NEEDS CROSS POLLINATION** - These are two varieties that need each other's pollen to order for each of them to set a crop of fruit.
- FEMALE and MALE** - Well, you probably don't need any help figuring this out, so I will just note that the male doesn't bear any fruit -- only the female does.

Now beyond this, you only need to know a couple more things. If a plant needs cross pollination, or is a female-male pollinating group, it needs to be planted close enough for the bees to do their work. Tree crops should be 20 feet apart, nuts 40-60 feet, berries 6-10 feet and grapes 20-30 feet.

Also, they can't do this alone. You need a good honeybee or other pollinating insect in the orchard at bloom time. If the weather is cold or wet, honey bees won't fly. If you are consistently having trouble with fruit set, look into keeping bees or building better habitat for the native bees in your area.

FRUIT TREE POLLINATION CHART		
SELF FERTILE	NEEDS CROSS POLLINATION	MALE/FEMALE
-Banana	-Apple	-Kiwi
-Blackberry	-Blueberry	-Papaya
-Boysenberry	-Blackberry	-Persimmon Native
-Citrus (most varieties)	-Chestnut	
-Elderberry	-Citrus (some varieties)	
-Fig	-Crabapple	
-Goumi	-Grapes (some Varieties)	
-Grapes (some varieties)	-Mayhaw	
-Jujube	-Olives	
-Loquat	-Paw Paw	
-Mulberry	-Pears	
-Nectarine	-Pecan	
-Olive (some varieties)	-Persimmon (some varieties)	
-Papaya	-Pineapple Guava	
-Peach	-Plum	
-Persimmon (most varieties)	Quince	
-Pineapple		
-Pomegranate		
-Raisin Tree		

ROOTSTOCK AND THE PART IT PLAYS...

Most fruit trees are grafted, and it's important to pay attention to what your trees are grafted on. The rootstock plays the part of how well your tree will be able to fend off soil insects like nematodes and various fungi. It controls the size of the tree, making it smaller, easier to pick fruit and to cover if a freeze is predicted. It determines how well the tree stays dormant in winter which will help your tree with stand freezing weather. Avoid the dwarfing rootstocks on apple, pear, peach, plum and nectarines in the Deep South. Most of these rootstocks are designed for colder winters and they just don't stand a chance against our wide assortment of bugs and fungi. If you have a small yard and need smaller trees, do a couple of summer pruning's to control the height and spread of your trees.

IMPORTANT ROOT STOCK FOR THE SOUTH		
FRUIT TYPE	CORRECT ROOT STOCK	REASON
Apple	MM111	Wooly Aphid semi Dwarf
Citrus	Trifoliolate	Keeps tree dormant in winter
Peach, Plum, Nectarine	Nemaguard or Guardian	Nematodes
Pears	Pyrus Calleryana	Fire Blight
Persimmon	Native American	Establish on a wide range of soil

EXTEND YOUR SEASON

Living and gardening in the Lower South, we can come about as close to making this happen as anybody in the U.S. The trick is to learn to stretch your fruit season. By choosing varieties that ripen at different times, you can achieve the ultimate length of fruit season for each type of fruit you grow.

The year goes thus: early spring brings strawberry and mulberry. The summer is loaded with peaches, plums, apples and pears. The berry patch is in full swing with blackberry and blueberry. Late summer and fall are the time for jujube, pineapple guava and persimmon. The winter store is citrus, chestnuts and pecans.

FRUIT TYPE	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Apples						■	■					
Banana									■	■		
Blackberry					■	■						
Blueberry					■	■	■					
Boysenberry						■						
Chestnut									■	■		
Citrus	■	■	■						■	■	■	■
Crabapple									■	■		
Elderberry							■	■				
Figs							■	■	■	■		
Goumi					■	■						
Grapes Bunch							■					
Grapes Muscadine								■	■	■		
Jujube									■	■		
Kiwi									■	■		
Loquat			■	■								
Mayhaw					■							
Mulberry					■	■	■					
Nectarine					■	■						
Olives									■	■		
Papaya								■	■	■		
Paw Paw									■	■		
Peach					■	■	■					
Pears							■	■	■			
Pecans										■	■	
Persimmon									■	■	■	■
Pineapple									■	■		
Pineapple Guava									■	■	■	
Plum					■	■	■					
Pomegranate									■	■		
Quince									■	■		
Raisin Tree									■	■		
Strawberry				■		■						
Walnut									■	■		