



established 1938

# National Arborist Association

Dedicated to the Advancement of Commercial Tree Care Businesses

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## *For immediate release*

### Fruit Trees for the Landscape

Fruit trees add visually stunning, beautifully fragrant flowers to a homeowner's landscape. Professional arborists, who know how to plant and maintain a landscape that includes fruit trees, can enhance the value and visual appeal of a landscape. Homeowners can integrate fruit trees in their landscape installations as accent plants, screens, a fence or a living wall to create garden rooms. Espaliered trees along a fence line break up a long row of fence.

**Selection of trees:** Careful planning—paying attention to location of the lot, climatic conditions, soil conditions, lot size, selection of trees, time, energy and money required for maintenance—will make landscaping with fruit trees a success. Homeowners should choose trees that require minimum maintenance with respect to watering, fertilizing, pruning, spraying for pests and diseases.

**Soil preparation:** Get the soil ready several months before planting. A soil should provide the tree a sufficient supply of the nine essential macro-nutrients (carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus, sulfur, potassium, calcium, and magnesium) and the micronutrients or trace elements of chlorine, iron, manganese, molybdenum, boron, zinc and copper in easily absorbable form. A professional arborist can test the soil for pH, organic and mineral contents prior to planting. Low pH (less than 6.5) or high pH (more than 8) affects availability and absorption of nutrients essential for healthy tree growth. Based on the results, the soil can be tailored to meet the nutrient requirements of trees by adding organic or inorganic fertilizers.

**Planting and establishment:** Trees should only be planted on good sites, with excellent air circulation, water drainage, exposure to sunlight and with protection from high winds. Give the trees plenty of space so they don't have to compete with other trees for nutrients and water. Air circulation decreases pest- and disease-related problems and also enhances photosynthesis. Plant them in a sunny location where they can receive six to eight hours of direct sunlight for efficient photosynthesis. Experienced arborists know how to plant trees properly and care for them afterwards. After planting, trees should be watered infrequently but deeply. The frequency will vary with climate and weather, but the soil should be moist but not soaked. In arid regions during summer, water once every two to four weeks. Too much or too little water can cause fruit drop. Deep watering encourages the development of a healthy root system. Mulch with compost or straw to maintain even soil moisture and inhibit weed growth. Do not mulch the base of the trunk as it may lead to infection and trunk rot. In early spring, consult a professional arborist for a proper fertilization program.

**Pruning:** Most fruit trees need regular pruning, and on these types of trees pruning is an art as well as a science. The primary objectives of pruning fruit trees are to create a strong tree form and maximize the harvest. The science of pruning requires a thorough knowledge of trees, growth habits, flowering or fruiting characteristics and the mastery of a few important skills. A trained professional can keep fruit trees productive for decades.

**Pest and disease management:** Fruit trees are vulnerable to pest attacks and diseases. To protect them, a strict spray schedule involves a thorough understanding of the life cycle of pests and diseases, their vulnerability to your treatment program, and effectiveness of the chemicals. An integrated pest management plan, which may include biological controls such as beneficial predators, can protect growing fruit. Keep in mind that most pesticides and fungicides are toxic and should be used with caution at the appropriate time. Excessive, indiscriminate uses of chemical agents will harm the trees. Always read, understand and follow label instructions on pesticide and fungicide containers.

Tender loving care a few times a year brings a huge reward—an abundance of nutritious delicious fruits that your clients can share with friends and family. Fruit trees invite birds, bees and butterflies into a property, turning the landscape in to garden paradise. What more could a homeowner ask for in a landscape?

**Homeowners who are looking for someone to assess their landscape and make recommendations should consult a professional arborist.** Contact the National Arborist Association (NAA), a 65-year-old public and professional resource on trees and arboriculture. It has more than 2,800 members who recognize stringent safety and performance standards, and are required to carry liability insurance. An easy way to find a tree care service provider in your area is to use the "Locate Your Local NAA Member Companies" program. You can use this service by calling 1-800-733-2622 or by doing a zip code search on their Web site, [www.natlarb.com](http://www.natlarb.com).

*If you would like additional information or pictures, please contact [Garvin@natlarb.com](mailto:Garvin@natlarb.com)*