

NORTHERN

Gardener

CREATING & CARING FOR YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Selecting Fruit Trees for Minnesota

Pollination

Perhaps the most confusing issue to a gardener is that of proper pollination. Apples, pears, and apricots need at least two different varieties of each to ensure good cross pollination. To ensure good cross pollination, it is recommended that you plant pollinator trees within 200 feet of each other. If there are flowering crabs in the vicinity of your apple trees, they also serve as pollinators.

Hybrid plums, as well as cherry plums, require special pollinators. Sour cherries and European plums are self-fertile, meaning they need no pollinators.

DWARF FRUIT TREES: A dwarf tree is simply a standard variety that has been grafted on a dwarfing rootstock. The rootstock restricts the growth of the tree, creating a smaller,

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- ✓ Beside adding flowers and edible crops to your yard, fruit trees will also attract pollinating insects.

dwarf tree. The fruit size remains the same. It generally takes 2-4 years for an apple tree to bear fruit, and 5-10 years for a pear to fruit.

Dwarf rootstocks tend not to be as hardy as a standard and do need some winter protection, which may consist of a mulch around the base of the tree to protect from loss of moisture as well as heat and cold. Dwarf fruit trees are the best choice for a home gardener because they tend to bear at an early age, produce heavy yields and take up less space.

When selecting apple trees for your yard, don't be surprised to find that many common grocery store varieties are not available as they are not hardy for our area. If you are not sure, ask us which are the best for your yard.

HYBRID PLUMS: These plums are excellent for jams, jellies and fresh eating. Hybrid plums are very hardy and also are of excellent quality. Many reach 2" in diameter and range in color from red to yellow and blue.

CHERRY PLUMS: Excellent plums for canning, jams, and preserves, cherry plums are about 1" in diameter and grow on small bush-like trees. They do need a pollinator (Compass) and can be grown in all Minnesota fruit zones.

PIE CHERRIES: There are three varieties for Minnesota; all are excellent for canning and pies. Mesabi is excellent for eating as well. Meteor and Northstar were developed by the University of Minnesota Horticultural Research Center. Mesabi is a natural selection made in the Duluth area. It has a sweeter flavor coming from a nat-

ural cross of a sweet and sour cherry.

Protection from Rodents

Wrapping fruit trees while they are young is important to protect them from girdling by rabbits and mice. Wrap with a cylinder 6 to 8 inches in diameter of 1/4 inch hardware cloth that extends from 1 inch below the ground to a height of 18 inches to 2 feet. Plastic drain field pipe works well also. Cut to length and slit one side with a knife and place around the tree making sure it extends 1 inch below ground.

Winter Injury

Apple and pear trees in Minnesota should be wrapped in the winter until the tree has a least a 5 to 8 inch diameter. Wrap the trunk with a tree wrap available at most garden centers; burlap will work well also. This is to prevent sunscald, a common winter injury caused by the freezing and thawing of the cells in the trunk of the tree, causing the bark to split. Or, painting the south side of the tree with a white latex paint, rather than wrapping it, will also help.

Spraying

Since controls for disease and pests are constantly changing, consult us or the county extension agent, for the latest recommendation.



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Pruning

Pruning should be done before mid-April. For pruning a young tree, all that is required in the way of tools is a sharp hand pruner. For larger branches on an older tree, a small pruning saw may be needed. Pruning helps develop and shape a tree to give it a strong form that will support fruit in later years. A nursery grown tree generally has more than one leader. Prune the tree so you have only one central leader remaining. Make all cuts approximately 1/8 to 1/4 inch away from the trunk so that the branched collar is not damaged. Remove any dead or diseased branches. Light pruning is generally advised, as pruning too heavily will stop the tree from bearing in its early years.

Plums, Cherries, Pears, Apricots for Minnesota

Variety — **Zone**

— PEARS —

Need to plant at least two varieties

Luscious (not a pollinator)	1-3
Parker	1-2
Patten	1-2
Gourmet (not a pollinator)	1-4
Summer Crisp	1-2

— CHERRY PLUMS —

These are mostly sterile and need a pollinator to insure good pollination

Compass (pollinator)	1-4
Red Diamond	1-3
Sapalta	1-4

— HYBRID PLUMS —

These are mostly sterile and need a pollinator to insure good pollination

Alderman	1-3
LaCrescent	1-3
Pembina	1-3
Pipestone	1-3
Superior	1-3
Toka (pollinator)	1-4
Underwood	1-4
Waneta	1-3

— EUROPEAN PLUM —

Self-fertile and requires no pollinator

Mount Royal	1-2
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— APRICOTS —

Need to plant two varieties to ensure pollination

Moongold	1-2
Sungold	1-2
Scout	1-4

— PIE CHERRIES —

These are self-fertile and require no pollinator

Meteor	1-4
Northstar	1-4
Mesabi	1-3

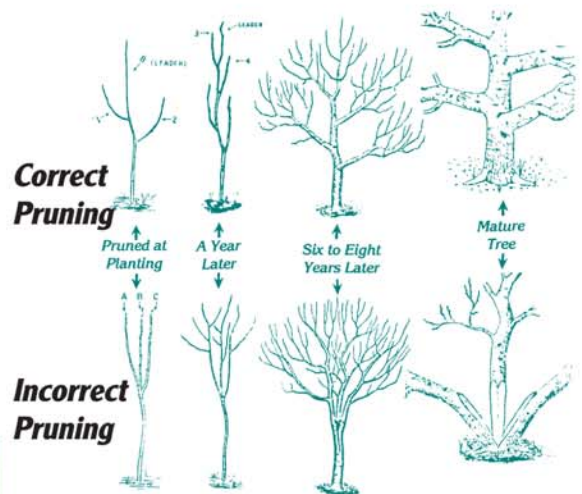


Minnesota Fruit Zones

The fruit varieties listed here are recommended on the basis of suitability for the four fruit zones in the accompanying map. Suitability is based on hardiness, adaptability, and usefulness. A very hardy variety with poor quality may not be recommended in a zone if varieties are available that have better quality and sufficient hardiness. Varieties are arranged according to approximate time of harvest.

Apples for Minnesota

VARIETY	TYPE	ZONE	VARIETY	TYPE	ZONE
Beacon	Summer	1-4	Norland	Summer	1-4
Connell red	Winter	1.3	Northwest Greening	Winter	1-2
Cortland	Fall-winter	1-3	Red Baron	Fall	1-4
Golden Delicious	Winter	1	Red Prairie Spy	Fall-Winter	1-3
Red Delicious	Winter	1	Red Regent	Winter	1-2
Fireside	Winter	1-3	State Fair	Summer	1-4
Haralson	Winter	1-4	Sweet Sixteen	Fall	1-4
Haralred	Winter	1-4	Wealthy	Fall	1-4
<i>(red selection of Haralson)</i>			Westland	Summer	1-4
Hazen	Summer	1-4	Wolf River	Fall	1-4
Honeycrisp	Fall-Winter	1-2	Yellow Transparent	Summer	1-2
Honeygold	Winter	1-2			
Keepsake	Winter	1-3	Centennial Crabapple	Fall	1-4
Mantet	Summer	1-4	Chestnut Crabapple	Fall	1-4
McIntosh	Fall	1-2	Whitney Crabapple	Summer	1-4
Macoun	Winter	1-4	Zesta	Summer	1-2



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