

Growing Fruit in the Home Garden

www.truwestfarm.com

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Grow Your Favorites at Home



Plums and Pear

Many fruit trees and berry bushes are adapted to growing in Texas, however it is not reasonable to simply plunk one into the ground and expect it to go crazy producing fruit. In order to have consistent success, it is important to put careful thought into the pre-planting stages, and to expect to spend a little time on maintenance.

Evaluating your site and your soil will help you avoid frustration. Most fruit plants have an average PH requirement of 6.0-7.0. In our part of Grayson County we average more into the alkaline range, but that is not an issue unless you want to grow acid loving plants such as blueberries.

Analyze your microclimate. A minimum of 6-8 hours of sunlight is required for bud and fruit production. Avoid low lying areas that will retain cold and frost. A northern exposure may experience more freeze loss than a sunny southern site. Direct exposure to the wind will also affect temperature and moisture. Drainage is of the utmost importance. Do not plant where you may have standing water. Without sufficient oxygen in the soil, your plants will not thrive.

Plan to water for at least two years to establish new plantings. These plants will continue to have minimum water requirements in order to produce quality fruit, which is largely made up of water.

Pick the best varieties for your area and you will not be disappointed. Fruit trees require a specific number of chilling hours. We average 1000 annually in North Texas. Varieties requiring much more or less will either lose buds to late frost, or not have sufficient time for their buds to develop. Also be aware that we are in USDA zone 7 with our lowest temperatures between 0 and 10F, and choose plants that can tolerate those temperatures.

Some of your ongoing maintenance concerns will include **pruning and insect and disease management**. In a nutshell, a tree is pruned to open the interior to sunlight in order to ripen the fruit. Certain cane and vine plants have specific pruning requirements and you will want to be aware of these to maximize your production. Bug damage can be minimized with good sanitation and a dormant oil spray. This is especially true with the soft stone fruits such as peaches, plums, and apricots.

NEXT TIME:

Market Talk

“Chickens in Your Backyard”

Saturday, Oct. 3rd 10am

Historic Elmont Farmers Market
3.5 miles west of Van Alstyne
FM121 and FM3356

RESOURCES :

- The Backyard Orchardist by Stella Otto
- Growing Fruits and Nuts in the South by W. Adams and T. Leroy
- “Apricot Advances” Texas Gardener Magazine September/October 2009

HELPFUL WEBSITES :

- www.davesgarden.com
Home of Garden Watchdog and many garden specific forums.
- <http://soiltesting.tamu.edu>
Information on how to do a soil test and where to send it.
- <http://aggie-hort.tamu.edu>
Information on varieties for your area, as well as pruning and pest and disease management.

For more information on growing fruit, please visit:

www.TRUWESTFARM.com

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