



APPLE TREE CARE

Decorative and delicious, every sunny yard deserves an Apple tree. Covered with fragrant blossoms that attract bees in spring, and loaded with tasty treats in the fall, these easy-care fruited trees are a valued addition in Northwest landscapes. Nothing is as satisfying as a sun-warmed Apple from your very own tree!

Planting, fertilizing and pruning specifics can vary with variety, but here are a few of the basics:

PLANTING:

January through June are the best months to plant Apple trees and you can add anytime during the year, just make sure you water them deeply and regularly.

Apple trees need full sun to insure fruiting, and good air circulation to resist disease. Find a warm, well drained spot, and you are good to grow!

When choosing an Apple tree, if space is an issue, buy a self-pollinating tree, or one that has 3-4 varieties grafted on one trunk for easy cross-pollination. Many varieties of Apples are not self-pollinating, and need to be planted near other apples trees to set fruit. Before deciding on a tree, be sure to find out the best pollinators for your variety of Apple.

Water your trees well before transplanting. Dig a hole that is twice as wide and only as deep as the plant's root ball or container. Place the plant so that the top of the root ball is at the same height as the surrounding soil.

Bare root: The roots of bare root trees must be kept moist. Soak your tree for one to two hours before planting. Gently spread out the roots. Most trees have a bud or graft union at the base of their trunks. This union must remain 2-4 inches above soil and mulch level.

Containers: Gently slip your tree out of its container and loosen the root ball. If the root ball is tight and crowded, slash the root ball or spread or cut roots, so they branch into the soil.

FEEDING/WATERING: Do not feed your Apple tree during its first season of growth. After the first year, feed once a year with a light application of granular organic tree fertilizer in March or April.

Water using a soaker hose to reduce evaporation and prevent disease. Water new trees deeply and regularly. Once established, water regularly, taking care to water deeply during the drier summer months of July through September. This will insure good fruit quality and size.

PRUNING:

The best time to prune your Apple trees is mid- to late winter, before they start to push new growth. Remove any dead, diseased or crossing branches and trim to maintain good light exposure throughout the tree. Prune for height lightly, drastic pruning can lead to decay, or prolific sprouting that can decrease light and air to lower branches.

Wait until August, when your trees start to go dormant, to prune off any suckers or sprouts. Refer to a reliable pruning guide for further tips.

HARVESTING:

There is a variety of ripening times for Apples, from early to late season. Because every growing season is different, color is often a good guide in determining if your Apples are ready for picking. A green background, changing to yellow is a sign that your Apples are reaching maturity. Remember that Apples don't ripen after they are picked, so only harvest only ripe fruit.