

Growing Apple Trees

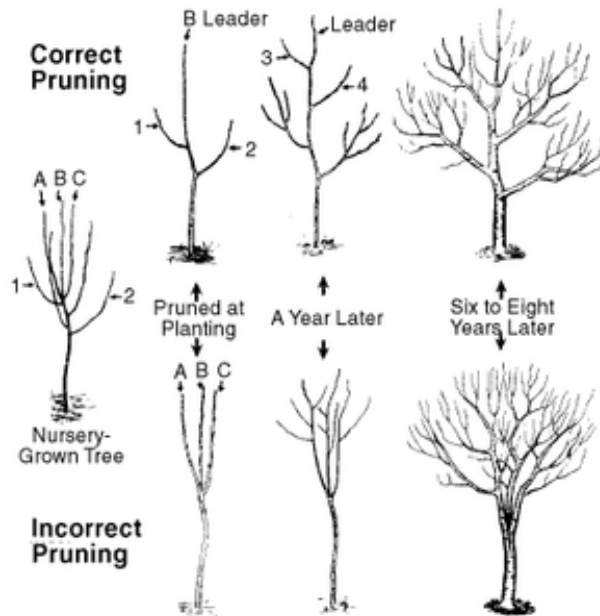
Growing apple trees can be a fun and rewarding experience for the home gardener. Growing apple trees is a relatively easy process, and yields delicious fruit that can be enjoyed by everybody.

A second consideration before growing apple trees is that nearly all apple trees do not self-pollinate. This means that to grow apple trees that bear fruit, more than one tree needs to be planted. The two or more trees used should also be of different species with similar bloom times. This will provide healthier and more abundant fruit. Some varieties of apple tree will pollinate better than others, and selection should take this into consideration.

Apple trees will tolerate a wide range of soils, so long as water and nutrients are not limited and the pH level is adequate. The soil used for growing apple trees should be well draining, as standing water in the roots can kill the trees. The location should also be in a higher level, as cold air in the spring will settle in lower areas and possibly damage the tree.

Training and Pruning Central Leader Trees

Proper training and pruning of fruit trees is essential to the development of a strong tree framework that will support fruit production. Properly shaped trees will yield high-quality fruit much sooner and will live significantly longer. Regular pruning and training will also maximize light penetration to the developing flower buds and fruit. Additionally, a well-shaped tree canopy permits adequate air movement through the tree, which promotes rapid drying to minimize pest problems.



Pollination

All apple varieties should be considered self-incompatible, meaning that they cannot pollinate themselves or any flowers of the same apple variety. The highest quality fruit is harvested when cross-pollination occurs with a suitable pollinizer variety. You will need to plant at least two varieties of apple trees together in order to maximize fruit production and quality. Make sure that the varieties you choose have overlapping bloom dates, so that both varieties bloom at the same time. Remember, two trees of the same apple variety cannot be used for cross-pollination. Since the pollen from apple blossoms is transferred primarily by bees, be careful not to spray insecticides during bloom when honeybees are present.

Fertility

Adequate tree nutrition is essential for quality apple production. Determine the nutrient status of your soil by taking a soil sample prior to planting and each year thereafter at the same time of year.

If you are unable to take a soil test, a useful rule is to apply 1 pound of 10-10-10 fertilizer to each tree the first year, 2 pounds the second year, and 3 pounds the third year up to a maximum of 5 to 6 pounds for a mature tree. Apply fertilizer in late winter or early spring before growth begins. Fertilizer should be broadcast on the soil surface around the drip line of the tree. The "drip line" is the circular line at the outer ends of the branches. Avoid getting fertilizer within 6 inches of the trunk as it could burn the tree.

Disease and Insect Control

Diseases and insects can cause serious damage to apple trees and fruit. Good sanitation practices are necessary to control pest problems. Cut out all dead or diseased wood; remove dried apples, and clear leaves and fallen debris away from trees. Disinfect pruning tools with a 10% solution of a household disinfectant (Lysol) or bleach, before and after use and between trees. A regular spray program is essential for high fruit quality and healthy trees. Use a multipurpose fungicide and insecticide labeled for apples. These can be obtained from a garden center and will include application instructions. A spray to control fungus problems should be applied when the first sign of green tissue appears. Horticultural oil should also be sprayed on apple trees at the first sign of green growth in the spring to suffocate scale insects and reduce overwintering mite and aphid eggs. For homeowners with only a few trees, premixed orchard sprays are available from many garden centers. Begin applications after full bloom is over and spray every 10 to 14 days throughout the summer.

Apple Tree Varieties At Deneweth's Garden Center

1. **Malus Anna** - A large red blushed low chill apple with just enough tartness for fresh eating as well as cooking.
2. **Malus Fuji** - Medium size fruit has a red color over yellow striping. Flesh is firm and crunchy. Excellent storage life. Ripens mid Oct.
3. **Malus Golden Delicious** – (Pollinator) Large yellow apple is your all-around apple - great for fresh eating, cooking, sauce, juice and cider. Ripens Sept.
4. **Malus Granny Smith** - (Pollinator) Medium to large green apple. Flesh is white with a tart flavor. Use for fresh eating, juice and pies. Ripens late Oct.
5. **Malus Red Delicious** - Large shaped solid red fruit produced on spurs that set a heavy crop. The flesh is white, crisp, and sweet. Ripens mid-late Sept.