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## Growing Apricot Trees

Apricot trees are one of the earlier producing fruit trees and, because they are self-pollinating, meaning they do not need more than one tree to bear fruit, they can be grown in a small yard. Pink or white flowers bloom in early spring, followed by fruit in May, with a standard size tree producing three to four bushels of fruit yearly. Apricot trees do not begin producing fruit until the third to fourth year after planting, but you can get started with a few relatively [easy](#) steps for growing your tree.

### Insect and disease control

VERY IMPORTANT – always read chemical labels and follow manufacturers directions carefully to avoid injury to your tree, the environment or yourself.

Apricot trees are highly susceptible to disease and insect infestations, so spraying is extremely important. Many fruit trees die from pests that could have been controlled with proper spraying.

To control brown rot, scab, fruit spot and black spot, apricot trees should be sprayed with Copper Fungicide in the dormant season (early spring) before leaf buds open. Always follow manufacturers directions. Use  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  gal. per tree. If these insects or diseases are not present, do not spray at this time.

To control Brown Rot, spray with Daconil or Fung-onil just before blooms open and when blooms are 90% open. These products are fungicides and will not harm pollinating bees.

To control fruit flies, mites, worms, scab and brown rot, spray with Fruit Tree Spray.

1. When petals have fallen.
2. 7 days later.
3. Every 10-14 days after that. Stop 1 week before harvest (early Aug.).

Never spray pesticides when trees are in bloom as this will kill the pollinating honeybees.

Always spray when the temperature is above freezing and there is no wind. Early in the morning is best.

Good sanitation practices are necessary to control pest problems. Cut out all dead or diseased wood and disinfect pruning tools with a household disinfectant (Lysol or bleach). Pick up all fruit that has fallen to reduce insects.

## Pruning Apricot Trees

First year pruning sets the eventual shape of the tree. If your tree is taller than 4-5' above ground, after its planted, trim it down to that height removing the central leader. Thin out the inward growing branches and any branches which are crossing over each other. Trim off the tips of the larger branches to encourage growth.

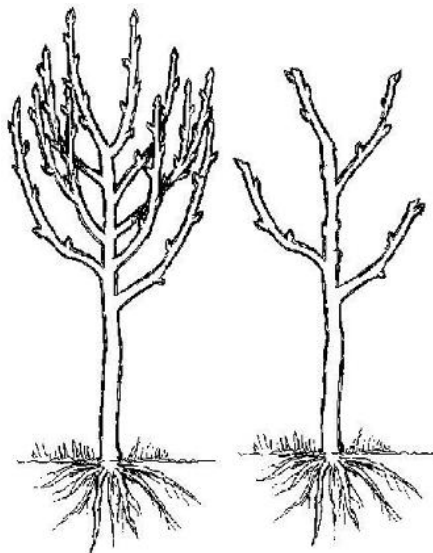
Unlike apples and pears, you are not trying to create a central leader (dominant vertical branch). **Apricots are trained to an open, spreading, vase-like shape.** See the illustration below for a before and after look at the branches of a young apricot tree.

Take out at least half of the new, lateral shoots to do this. The remainder of those shoots will produce your fruit for this year.

Apricots are small and they do not fill the tree, so fruit thinning is unnecessary. Besides, late frosts may do the job for you.

In later years, you should continue "shape" your tree. Apricot trees are best trained to a spreading, open, vase-like shape. It does not want to grow straight up like an apple or a pear, so the central leader will become much less dominant. It will want to spread and try to take over your orchard. This is the natural way your apricot tree will want to grow. Pruning will keep your tree vigorous, encourage the establishment of fruit buds and enable you to keep your tree down to a manageable size.

The best time to prune apricots is in the early spring. Try pruning after the last frost date for your area. At this time, most of the winter damage can be trimmed off and you will minimize the effect of late frost damage to your buds and blooms.



## Spraying Apricot Trees

Apricot trees, like all other fruit trees, need to be properly treated for pests so that you can enjoy a bountiful fruit harvest. Trees that are not treated may have some or all of the fruit crop lost to insects and other pests. Fruit tree pests are best treated in the winter, during the dormant season. Getting rid of the pests when the weather is cooler is a much [easier](#) process than when they are rapidly multiplying in the warm summer months.

**Step 1** - Mix up a dormant oil and [water](#) mixture in your pump-up sprayer according to the instructions on the dormant oil bottle.

**Step 2** - Spray the dormant oil mixture over your entire apricot tree in the winter months after the leaves have fallen. Coat all branches, twigs and trunk with the mixture. Apply in the morning when the temperature is expected to rise during the day.

**Step 3** - Spray copper sprays on your apricot tree at the bottle's indicated rate before the fall rains begin. Copper will reduce the chance of your apricot tree developing canker.

**Step 4** - Apply an insecticide to your tree beginning once blossoms drop in the spring and continuing until harvest. Apply at the recommended rate over the entire tree with your pump-up sprayer at seven- to 14-day intervals.

#### **Apricot Variety Available at Deneweth's Garden Center**

**Prunus Tilton Apricot** - Small to medium sized fruit. Yellow skin with red blush, good flavor, excellent for canning and drying. Ripens mid-August. Moderately frost tender.