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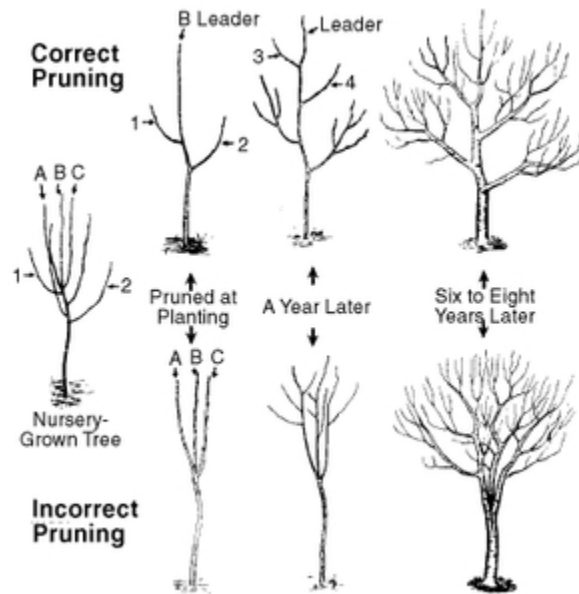
Growing Cherry Trees

Cherry tree requirements

Cherry trees prefer a protected site and rich, well drained soil - they loathe wet feet. When the tree is about to fruit (around late spring) it's best if there isn't any rain around that time as you get better cherries with fewer subject to rotting.

How to prune cherry trees

Cherries are borne on fruiting spurs on branches that are at least 2 years old. So if you prune off the spurs by accident, you will have to wait another 2 years for any fruit. Pruning essentially is done to ensure that the cherry trees assume an open vase shape, taking out any dead twigs and removing any branches that cross over each other. Pruning is best done when conditions are dry - avoid pruning in wet and damp conditions as cherry trees are prone to fungal diseases.



Fertilize

Apply a fertilizer that is high in nutrients during the early spring. Apply 1 lb. of 10-10-10 ratio fertilizer for each square foot surrounding your cherry trees. Spread the fertilizer at least ½ inch thick around the base of your tree.

Continue applying the fertilizer to your cherry tree every spring until it fruits or flowers. It typically takes between two and four years for cherry trees to bear fruit.

Apply half of the amount of fertilizer the year your tree bears fruit. Apply the fertilizer only until the fruit appears. Fertilizer after that can hinder the production of fruit and only aid leaf growth.

Spraying Cherry Trees

Each spring, before buds open, apply a dormant oil fruit tree spray. This will kill a variety of insects. Apply a fruit tree spray frequently during the season, if you have problems with insects or disease. We strongly recommend you avoid spraying near harvest time. In all cases, follow the directions on the label for application and use.

Harvesting Cherries

Birds love cherries. Because of this, you will either have to share your cherries with the birds, or cover your tree with netting to prevent the birds from getting at your crop. Sometimes you can alleviate the birds from taking as much as they can by hanging scare devices like aluminum pie pans from the limbs of the tree.

When harvesting your growing cherry trees, taste the cherries before picking them. Sour cherries are soft and juicy when they are ripe. Sweet cherries are ready when their color is uniform and they have a sweet flavor in a meaty fruit.

Harvest your cherries with the stem attached. This helps retain their freshness after you pick them. They keep better and longer if the stem is still attached after harvest.

Cherry Tree Varieties at Deneweth's Garden Center

Prunus Stella Cherry - The Compact Stella breaks all the rules and is a must for the home gardener with limited space. This semi-dwarf (10-12 ft) cherry tree produces large, dark-red fruit that is firm and sweet. The Compact Stella has delicious fruit that is more resistant to cracking. The tree is small and compact, bears at a young age, and is self-fertile. What more do you want? Fruit ripens in late July.