



What to Expect in Your First Year of Growing a Fruit Tree

Planning to add a fruit tree to your garden but not sure what's involved in the care plan? We've got a breakdown of the year ahead for you below. Follow these steps for healthy growth and a fruitful harvest.

1. Winter: Pick Your Fruit Tree

Bare root fruit trees are young, dormant trees sold without soil around their roots, making them lightweight, affordable, and easy to plant. Available from fall to early spring, they establish quickly and are an excellent choice for creating a backyard orchard. When selecting a tree, it's important to choose one that thrives in your growing zone. Consider the fruits you love and will enjoy harvesting, as well as the available space in your garden. For example semi-dwarf trees are a great option for those looking to grow fruit in a more compact area while still enjoying a bountiful harvest.

2. Late Winter - Early Spring: Planting

Growing a fruit tree is easier than you might think! Choose a sunny, well-draining spot, and soak the roots in water for a few hours before planting. Position the tree so the graft union (if applicable) sits above the soil, then backfill with soil, tamp gently to remove air pockets, and water thoroughly. With proper planting, your tree will establish quickly and provide years of homegrown fruit.

3. Staking for Strong Growth at Planting

Young trees often benefit from staking, especially in areas with strong winds or loose soil. Staking provides support as the tree grows, helping it maintain an upright structure and develop a sturdy trunk. Over time, gradually loosen the stake to allow the tree to sway slightly in the wind. This natural movement strengthens the trunk and builds resilience.

4. Fall - Winter: Protecting Your Tree with Dormant Sprays

Dormant sprays play a crucial role in protecting fruit trees from pests and diseases. In warmer climates, where mild winters prevent full dormancy, proper timing is essential. Apply dormant sprays after significant leaf drop in late fall or early winter to target overwintering pests and pathogens. A second application just before buds open in late winter or early spring provides added protection as the tree enters its growing season. A helpful guideline is to apply dormant sprays around Thanksgiving, New Year's, and Valentine's Day for optimal tree health.

5. Year 2: Fertilizing After the First Year

During its first year, your tree focuses on developing strong roots and establishing a solid foundation, so fertilizing is usually not necessary. After the first year, start feeding your tree with organic compost or a balanced fertilizer to support healthy growth. Be cautious not to over-fertilize, as young roots can be sensitive. A slow-release fertilizer is a great choice, as it provides steady nourishment without overwhelming the tree.

By following these simple steps, you'll give your tree the best possible start. If you haven't chosen a tree yet, be sure to select one suited to your climate and USDA zone to ensure its success.

Here's to your growing success! Happy gardening!

For more detailed guidance, visit our [Resource Center](#) for instructional videos, articles, and tips for tree care in the first year.

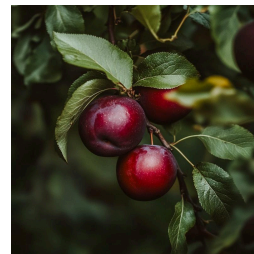
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