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FRUIT TREES

Utah supports many agricultural endeavors, including fruit trees. Fruit trees were brought to the area by Mormons and other early settlers. According to the University of Utah, three of the more popular fruit trees grown in Utah include apples, cherries and peaches. While fruit trees can be a flavorful addition to any garden, you'll likely have to wait a few years before the tree will yield a harvest.

Peaches

According to the Utah State University Cooperative Extension, the most common variety of early-season peach grown in Utah is the Redhaven. The Redhaven is harvested in August. Peaches should be grown in full sunlight. Well-draining, sandy soil, as well as a higher elevation, are ideal conditions for this tree. Prune diseased or damaged branches and thin the fruit for optimum fruit growing.

Cherries

Cherry trees should be planted at least 18 feet apart, as they can grow to be quite large. Plant them in a rich soil that drains well. If your soil is poor, add compost. Water new trees deeply to encourage root growth. According to the Gardener's Network, estab-

lished cherry trees may need fertilizer for at least the first three years. Every year, before the buds open, use a fruit tree spray to help prevent insect or disease problems. Avoid spraying anything on the tree close to harvest time. Prune your cherry tree annually, removing dead or diseased branches.

Apples

Apple trees should be selected from the nursery when they are one-year-old. If it has a good root system, it should handle transplanting well. Apple trees need to be planted in areas of full sun. Fertilize your trees with 10-10-10 fertilizer: 1 lb. the first year, 2 lbs. the second and 3 lbs. in the third. However, do not fertilize immediately after transplanting the tree, as this could damage the roots.

Planting Fruit Trees

Select the location of your fruit tree by imagining it at its full size. Take into account its width and understand that the roots of your tree will reach out as far as the length of the branches. This means that you don't want it too close to a building or driveway. You should also make sure that you read the directions for your tree to determine where

you should plant it in accordance to the sunny spots.

Dig a wide hole that is broader than that width of the roots and deep enough to cover the roots. You want the roots to stretch out comfortably. Make sure that the root is surrounded by loose soil so that they are not challenged by compressed earth.

Read the directions for amending the soil during the fruit tree planting process. Ideally you want to add organic nutrients to your soil, assuming amending is even necessary. In some cases, all that is needed is a sprinkle of compost on the base of the hole. Check with the nursery regarding amending soil and what they suggest. In some cases you may not even have to amend the soil because the existing soil contains enough nutrition. You don't want to add too much to your soil because you need it to live and thrive on the existing soil in your ground.

Throw in some of your loose soil into the hole about a finger length high to create a mound, and position the root ball of your fruit tree on top of the center of the mound. Spread out the roots and make sure the graft line situated at the base of the trunk is higher than the level of the ground. Add or remove soil from the mound accordingly. Just ensure that no roots are exposed.

And, the most important thing that you want to remember when you're planting apples, pears, and cherries is that they need another tree that blooms at the same time, so that the bees can cross pollinate. That's how you're going to have your best fruit production. And, the way that you're going to know what to plant, is that you'll find a chart when you go to buy your fruit trees. It'll show which trees are blooming at the same time, and that's what you're going to want to target. Now, some trees, like peaches, are self pollinating. You don't need another tree in order to get fruit. Another good tip is to just have a lot of your fruit bearing trees and shrubs in an area near each other. That al-

lows a lot of activity, a lot of pollinators will be visiting.

The other thing that you want to do is consider when you want to put in your trees. Now, in most parts of the country, spring and later winter are the best times to plant fruit trees. This one was put in last spring, and as you can see, it's kind of getting established. You can plant them in the fall if you can find them, but usually what happens is, right around February or March, you'll find bare root fruit trees, and there's a couple of good reasons for that. One is that they are far less expensive. If you buy them that way, you'll find them with a burlap bag around them. And, what you'll want to do is, you want to bring them home, and you want to put them right into the soil, or right into some water, and then get them planted. The biggest drawback is wet soil. If it's too wet in your area, then you might want to wait a little bit longer. Just make sure that you keep them moist, and don't let the roots dry out at all until it's planting time. In the spring, there's usually be best selection, and you'll be able to find your trees. This tree is probably pretty close to bearing fruit. Three years is usually the time that it takes for a new tree to bear fruit.

And, what you're going to want to do is watch for the first flowers the first year, and you want to pinch those off. The best fruit production comes from a healthy tree that's had time to establish. Now, once you've decided to let your fruit go ahead and mature, you want to thin it out, so that you don't overbear the tree. Now, I haven't staked this tree, because it's way too sturdy. But, if it's a smaller tree, and it's kind of flimsy, you might want to put a stake, but don't leave it too long, because the roots need to get themselves anchored in. And, that's what you need to know about planting fruit trees.

Additional information:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Plant-Fruit-Trees>