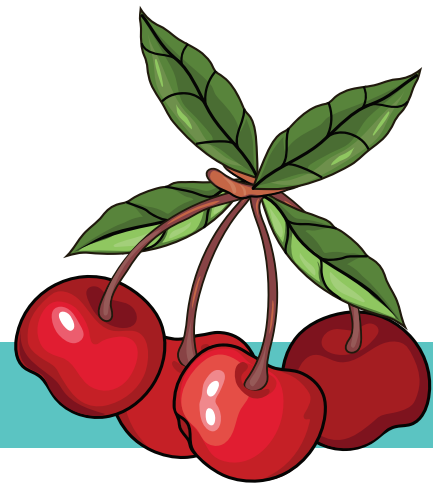


# ZAMZOWS

## Backyard Berry & Fruit Fest

### Basic Cherry Care



#### Feeding

Three feedings of Dr. JimZ Chicken Soup for The Soil will assure your trees are healthy and productive. Begin feeding in March per the label instructions. Another feeding in May for the developing and ripening fruit is recommended. Avoid fertilizers with high amounts of nitrogen, which lead to excessive growth, poor fruit quality, and increased insects and diseases.

#### Water

Newly planted and younger trees will need more frequent watering than established trees because their roots will be shallower when they are young. But as they mature, trees should be watered longer and less frequently because watering deeply promotes root growth, giving your trees access to a greater variety of nutrients. Established fruit trees' roots reach up to two feet deep.

#### Fruit Buds

Cherry trees will develop more fruiting buds after their 2nd or 3rd year. Fruiting buds can be distinguished from leaf buds by their shape. Leafing buds will come to a sharp point, while fruiting buds are more rounded. Fruit and leaf buds will develop along older branches and at the base of year-old shoots. The branches should never bend because of excessive weight from fruit. If your branches bend, thin the fruit along the branch. You can maintain fruit quality by:

- Pruning the tips of one-year-old limbs by about 25%.
- Removing any buds that develop on the underside of branches on dry days only. (Buds removed in rainy or wet conditions could increase the spread of disease.)
- Removing excess upright shoots.
- Maintaining 3-4 leaves per fruit is the ideal ratio for a larger, sweeter fruit.

#### Pruning

Pruning your cherries is required yearly in late winter or early spring for sour varieties and late summer for sweet varieties. Sweet cherries are more susceptible to bacterial and fungal diseases so pruning when it is dryer will reduce spreading. Remove all limbs that have died or been damaged. Then remove any limbs that are crossing over other limbs. Remove any branches that open the tree's canopy for more sun and more consistent spray coverage. Cherries tend to produce a lot of "suckers" or "water sprouts." These branches shoot up quickly, often growing above the canopy in a single season. These suckers will not produce fruit and should be removed every year. Keep these factors in mind when choosing which branches to remove.

1. Is it fruit-bearing or not?
2. Will future growth cause crowding?

After pruning in spring, it's recommended to spray dormant oil. Dormant oil will suffocate overwintering bugs, eggs, larvae, and reduce incidences of diseases. Spray your sweet cherries at this same time, not after pruning in summer. Pruning paints and sealers are not needed.

#### Harvesting

Cherries will not ripen once they are picked so give them plenty of time on the tree. Additionally, they may not ripen at the same time, so expect to harvest daily. You'll know your sour cherries are ready when they pull easily from the stem. Give your sweet cherries a taste test to determine when they are ready. When possible, leave the stem on your cherries. Especially, if you are not going to eat or use them right away. Take care while harvesting to not damage the fruit spurs which will continue to produce cherries for up to five years.