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# Growing Apple Trees

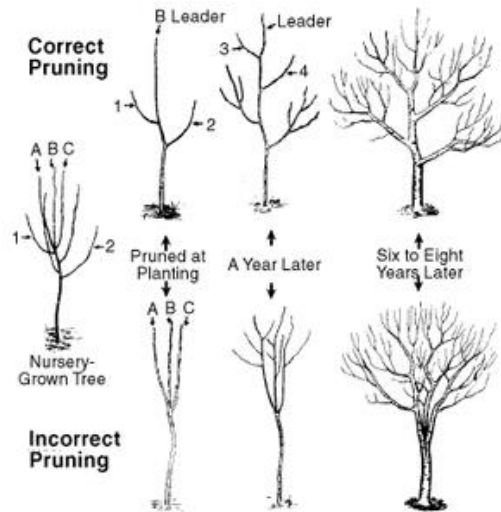
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## Steps for Success!



Growing apple trees can be a fun and rewarding experience for the home gardener. Growing apple trees is a relatively easy process, and yields delicious fruit that can be enjoyed by everybody. A second consideration before growing apple trees is that nearly all apple trees do not self-pollinate. This means that to grow apple trees that bear fruit, more than one tree needs to be planted. The two or more trees used should also be of different species with similar bloom times. This will provide healthier and more abundant fruit. Some varieties of apple tree will pollinate better than others, and selection should take this into consideration. Apple trees will tolerate a wide range of soils, so long as water and nutrients are not limited and the pH level is adequate. The soil used for growing apple trees should be well draining, as standing water in the roots can kill the trees. The location should also be in a higher level, as cold air in the spring will settle in lower areas and possibly damage the tree.

**Training and Pruning Central Leader Trees** Proper training and pruning of fruit trees is essential to the development of a strong tree framework that will support fruit production. Properly shaped trees will yield high-quality fruit much sooner and will live significantly longer. Regular pruning and training will also maximize light penetration to the developing flower buds and fruit. Additionally, a well-shaped tree canopy permits adequate air movement through the tree, which promotes rapid drying to minimize pest problems.



**Pollination** All apple varieties should be considered self-incompatible, meaning that they cannot pollinate themselves or any flowers of the same apple variety. The highest quality fruit is harvested when cross-pollination occurs with a suitable pollinizer variety. You will need to plant at least two varieties of apple trees together in order to maximize fruit production and quality. Make sure that the varieties you choose have overlapping bloom dates, so that both varieties bloom at the same time. Remember, two trees of the same apple variety cannot be used for cross-pollination. Since the pollen from apple blossoms is transferred primarily by bees, be careful not to spray insecticides during bloom when honeybees are present.

**Fertility** Adequate tree nutrition is essential for quality apple production. Determine the nutrient status of your soil by taking a soil sample prior to planting and each year thereafter at the same time of year. If you are unable to take a soil test, a useful rule is to apply 1 pound of 10-10-10 fertilizer to each tree the first year, 2 pounds the second year, and 3 pounds the third year up to a maximum of 5 to 6 pounds for a mature tree. Apply fertilizer in late winter or early spring before growth begins. Fertilizer should be broadcast on the soil surface around the drip line of the tree. The "drip line" is the circular line at the outer ends of the branches. Avoid getting fertilizer within 6 inches of the trunk as it could burn the tree.

**Disease and Insect Control (VERY IMPORTANT)** – *always read chemical labels and follow manufacturer's directions carefully to avoid injury to your tree, the environment or yourself.* To control scale insects and mites, spray with **#1 Dormant Oil** in early spring before buds swell. Do not spray when freezing or near freezing temperatures are expected or have just occurred. To control Brown Rot, spray with **#2 Daconil** or Fung-onil just before blooms open and when blooms are 90% open. Use ¼ to ½ gal per tree. Continue spraying with **#3 Orchard Tree Spray** after petal-fall every 14 days. Stop spraying 2 weeks before harvest or Aug. 30 whichever comes first. Apply one last **#1 Dormant Oil** spray to the tree in late fall after most leaves have dropped. Avoid spraying during freezing temps.

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.