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Growing Pear Trees

Steps for Success!

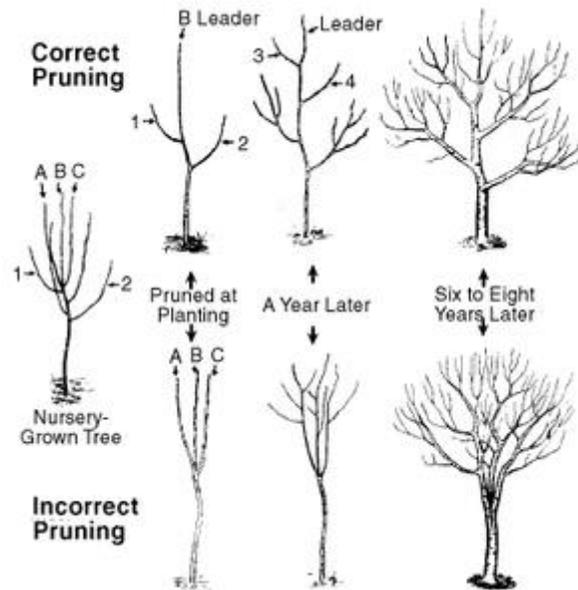
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Pollination Pears are self-sterile and need more than one variety planted within 40 or 50 feet of each other in order to cross-pollinate.

Fertilizing Pear trees growing too vigorously are more susceptible to fireblight infection than those making moderate growth. Fertilize young pear trees with up to a pound of a general garden fertilizer such as 10-10-10 or its equivalent. Older trees that are growing well (more than 10 inches of new growth each year) need no fertilizer.

Harvesting Pears should be harvested when they reach a mature size and still feel hard. They should be light green in color and separate easily from the fruit spur (point of attachment). Let them continue to ripen at room temperature for 5 to 7 days before eating them. Depending on the variety, pears will keep in the refrigerator for 2 weeks and even longer at slightly colder temperatures (31° to 32° F.)



Pruning

1. Prune late in the dormant season to minimize cold injury.
2. Prune heavily on neglected trees or vigorous cultivars, less so on less vigorous cultivars.
3. Make all heading back cuts just beyond a bud or branch.
4. Make all thinning cuts just beyond the base of the branch being removed.
5. Avoid pruning too close
6. Don't prune a "shade tree" back to a fruit tree in one year. Spread the thinning over several years.
7. Wound dressings are unnecessary for trees pruned in dormant season.
8. Match pruning tools to the size wood being removed. Use hand shears for small twigs, lopping shears for medium branches, and a saw for larger limbs.

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, mites, pear psylla and pear leaf blister, spray tree with **#1 Dormant Oil** early in the spring before the buds swell.

To control Brown Rot, spray with **#2 Daconil** or Fung-onil just before blooms open and when blooms are 90% open.

To control scab, black rot, codling moth and plum curculio, spray with **#3 Orchard Spray** after petals have dropped and then every 10-14 days after that. Stop spraying 2 weeks before harvest. Apply one last **#1 Dormant Oil** spray to the tree in late fall after most leaves have dropped.

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.