

Selecting fruit tree varieties for Central Oregon landscaping and home orchards

A.J. Detweiler

Are you interested in growing fruit trees in your landscape? There are several kinds of fruit trees that can be grown successfully in Central Oregon—the challenge lies in selecting varieties that are most likely to bear fruit in this region.

A typical growing season in Central Oregon ranges from 70 to 100 days, depending on where you live (see *Central Oregon Climate and How it Relates to Gardening*, page 4 in “For more information.” Frost can occur at any time of the year, including when fruit trees are flowering or setting fruit—with possible damage to fruit. Although a tree may grow well, fruit production may vary each growing season. At lower elevations, the milder climate generally increases the chance of producing a successful fruit crop.

Fruit tree varieties

The apple tree is the most reliable fruiting tree in Central Oregon, followed by hardy Asian pear, European pear, plum, and sour cherry. You can also try peach, apricot, sweet cherry, hardy kiwi, and some kinds of nuts, but these trees may not bear consistently.

Tips for successful fruit production

The following may increase your chance of fruit production.

- Select cold-hardy, short-season varieties.
- Choose a site with full sun and well-drained soil, as most fruit trees prefer this type of environment. Western or southern exposures may cause trees to bloom earlier, increasing the chance for frost damage.
- Select high spots with good air flow to prevent frost damage.
- Consider pollination requirements of plants before purchasing.
- To prevent killing bees or other pollinators, do not spray insecticides during bloom.
- Select dwarfing rootstock and semidwarf trees because they produce apples sooner than their standard counterpart. They also take up less space in the landscape and are easier to maintain due to their smaller size.
- Protect plants from the elements in mid- to late-spring and early summer; use frost cloth to protect blossoms and young fruit after blossom drop.
- Manage your fruit trees to minimize insect and disease problems. This will help maintain plant health and is critical to prevent the spread of diseases to commercial fruit growers in your area.

Pome fruits

Apples

Semidwarf and dwarf apple tree varieties produce fruit in 2 to 3 years. Semidwarf varieties usually are 12 to 15 feet tall. Cross-pollination is recommended for all apple varieties to produce fruit. Crabapples planted within a quarter mile of your apple tree may serve as a pollinizer if bloom times align.



Table 1. Apple varieties for Central Oregon

Variety	Harvest time	Pollinizer	Characteristics	Common uses	Size
Gala	Fall	Cortland, Honeycrisp, Liberty	Red-yellow; good flavor, sweet; heat-tolerant	Eating	Semidwarf
Haralred	Late fall	Yellow Delicious	Red; firm, juicy, tart	All-purpose	Semidwarf
Honeycrisp	Fall	Red Baron, McIntosh	Pale red; sweet, very crisp, juicy	Eating, cooking	Dwarf (6–8 ft tall and wide)
Liberty	Fall	Freedom, Golden Delicious, McIntosh	Red; great flavor, crunchy, mildly tart; resistant to rust, scab, and fireblight	Eating, juice, sauce	Semidwarf
Lodi	Summer	Yellow transparent, Crabapple varieties	Yellow; tart, juicy; very early	Pie, sauces	Semidwarf
McIntosh, Red	Late fall	Cortland, Yellow Delicious, Jonathan, Red Baron	Bright red, white flesh; tart; heavy bearer	Eating, cooking, cider	Semidwarf



Asian pear

Asian pears often are referred to as “apple pears” because of their crisp, juicy texture. Asian pear trees are considered partially self-fruitful. However, in cold climate areas such as Central Oregon, cross-pollination with another Asian or European pear variety is recommended for improved crop set. Asian pears are ripened on the tree.

Table 2. Asian pear varieties for Central Oregon.

Variety	Harvest time	Characteristics
Atago	Late fall	Sweet, juicy
Kosui	Late summer	Best tasting
Seuri	Late fall	Brown skin; crisp, sweet, aromatic
Shinseiki	Late summer	Yellow skin, white flesh
Shinsui	Late summer	Orange; very sweet; reliable
Yoinashi	Fall	Brown skin; crisp with butterscotch flavor

European pear

European pear trees generally require cross-pollination to set a good crop. The varieties listed here are usually suitable as pollinizers for each other, with the exception of Bartlett (which may bloom too early to effectively pollinize others). European pears are ripened off the tree—they may require a period of cold storage to ripen to best eating quality.

Stone fruits

Apricots

Apricot trees bloom early in the spring, and their blossoms or young fruit often are damaged by frost. Fruit set in Central Oregon is not reliable.

Sour cherries

Most sour cherries are used for baking in pastries and pies. All of the varieties listed in Table 4 are self-fertile and do not require cross-pollination. Sour cherry trees are more cold-hardy than sweet cherry trees in Central Oregon.

Sweet cherries

All of the sweet cherry varieties listed in Table 4 are self-fertile and do not require cross-pollination.

Peaches and nectarines

Peach and nectarine are two of the fruit trees least likely to bear fruit in Central Oregon. Their early spring blooms (nectarines bloom even earlier than peaches) are very susceptible to frost damage. Although the trees may grow well, fruit set is unreliable. Peach trees require heavy fertilization, pruning, and a site with good air movement. Plant peach trees in a protected area.

Plums

Plums are among the more hardy fruit trees in Central Oregon. All of the varieties in Table 4 are European-type plums and are more reliable than Japanese-type plums in a cold climate.

Table 3. European pear varieties for Central Oregon.

Variety	Harvest time	Characteristics	Common uses
Bartlett	Late summer	Sweet, juicy; pick when fruit is green—it will change to yellow when ripe	Eating, canning, baking, drying
Bosc (russeted or standard)	Fall	Standard types: green skin with some russetting. Russeted types: golden skin. Sweet, juicy; long neck	Eating, baking, drying
Conference	Late fall	Green skin can become russeted depending on the weather after bloom; juicy, sweet	Eating, storage
Rescue	Fall	Reddish-orange; sweet, smooth, juicy	Eating, canning, drying
Orcas	Fall	Large, yellow; juicy, flavorful	Eating, canning, drying

Table 4. Stone fruit varieties for Central Oregon.

Fruit	Recommended varieties for Central Oregon
Apricots	Self-fertile: Chinese Sweet Pit Cross-pollination required: Moongold (by either Sungold or Scout), Sungold (by Moongold)
Cherries	Sour (all self-fertile): Danube, Montmorency, Northstar, Surefire Sweet (all self-fertile): Benton, Index, Lapins, Stella, Sweetheart
Nectarines	None recommended
Peaches	Self-pollinated: Reliance
Plums/Prunes	Self-fertile: Green Gage (Yellow-green), Italian Prune (blue), Mt. Royal (blue), Stanley (blue)



For more information

OSU Extension publications

Many OSU Extension Service publications may be viewed or downloaded from the Web. Visit the online Publications and Videos catalog at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/>

Copies of our publications and videos also are available from OSU Extension and Experiment Station Communications. For prices and ordering information, visit our online catalog or contact us by fax (541-737-0817), e-mail (puborders@oregonstate.edu), or phone (541-737-2513).

EC 819	<i>Growing Tree Fruits and Nuts in the Home Orchard</i>
EC 773	<i>Growing Prunes</i>
PNW 400	<i>Training and Pruning your Home Orchard</i>
EC 1005	<i>Pruning to Restore an Old, Neglected Apple Tree</i>
FS 147	<i>Picking and Storing Apples and Pears</i>

For more detailed information on selection and cultivation of the fruits listed in this publication, see the OSU Extension Service gardening publications list at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog> (Select “Gardening” and then “Fruits and Nuts.”)

Other resources

Central Oregon Climate and How it Relates to Gardening. Provides climate information, including precipitation, elevation, growing season, hardiness zones, and other factors. <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/deschutes/Horticulture/documents/GN1COClimate.pdf>

Fruit and Nut Orchard Network for Commercial Growers. Oregon State University’s comprehensive site for commercial growers. <http://hort.oregonstate.edu/orchardnet/index.htm>

Good Fruit Grower. Information about this magazine is available online at <http://www.goodfruit.com/about.php>

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Fruit tree suppliers

Inclusion of suppliers on this list does not mean that the Oregon State University Extension Service either endorses these companies or intends to discriminate against companies not mentioned.

C & O Nursery, Wenatchee, WA. Phone 1-800-232-2636; online at <http://www.c-onursery.com/othervarieties.html>

Columbia Basin Nursery, Quincy, WA. Phone 1-800-333-8589; online at <http://www.cbnllc.com/index.html>

Indiana Berry & Plant Company, Huntingburg, IN. Phone 1-800-295-2226; online at <http://www.indianaberry.com/index.html>

One Green World, Mollala, OR. Phone 1-877-353-4028; online at <http://www.onegreenworld.com/>

Raintree Nursery, Morton, WA. Phone 1-360-496-6400; online at www.raintreenursery.com

Van Well Nursery, Wenatchee, WA. Phone 1-800-572-1553; online at <http://www.vanwell.net/>

Willow Drive Nursery, Ephrata, WA (commercial orchard sales only). Phone 1-888-548-7337; online at <http://www.willowdrive.com/>

Nursery directories

Central Oregon’s Plant Resource Guide. Lists local nurseries that sell plant materials. <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/deschutes/Horticulture/documents/COPlantResourceLstV1.pdf>

Oregon Association of Nurseries Directory and Buyers Guide. Lists wholesale and retail outlets and garden centers. Available online at <http://www.nurseryguide.com/> (Select “Browse”; under “Browse Plants,” select “Fruit and Nut Trees.”)