

Potted Fruit Tree-Non-Dormant

Planting & Growing Guide

Questions? Contact us at (888) 784-1722 or helpdesk@groworganic.com



RECEIVING YOUR TREES

When you receive your trees, they will be boxed securely. Open up the box and remove from the plastic bag. Acclimate your tree by putting it outside in an area that only gets indirect sun. Slowly increase the amount of sun your tree is exposed to and after about a week, it will be ready to plant.

PLANTING LOCATION

Fruit trees are a long-term investment and caring for them properly, right from the start, will ensure years of enjoyment and productivity. Maintenance will be greatly minimized as the tree matures, if you provided adequate early care. Carefully choose the planting location. Even an hour or two of extra shade a day can noticeably reduce growth and productivity. Fruit trees should also be planted in a location where air circulation (wind or breezes) is not impeded by natural or man-made windbreaks. If the tree requires a pollinator for fruit production, it is necessary for that pollinator to be established or planted in the same area, within 50 feet is recommended.

Drainage: Choosing a location with good soil drainage is very important, as poorly drained soil will stunt and may even kill trees by suffocating their root systems or harboring anaerobic soil pathogens. To test for proper drainage, the planting hole should be filled twice with water and allowed to drain; 12–14 hours is the maximum amount of time it should take for all of the water to drain out.

Soil Analysis: A soil analysis is also recommended to determine any soil deficiencies, but this can be delayed until the tree has begun to establish itself. A gradual application of proper soil amendments will suffice if proper sunlight and drainage are available from the start. However, in the long-term, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium along with sufficient nitrogen will significantly enhance tree health and fruit quality. The tree's root system will reach out from the trunk at a distance at least equal to the leafy canopy above and, to a depth of 4–6', so it is very important that the soil around the tree be worked and amended in as large an area as possible. Do not amend the planting hole when planting figs and pomegranates. If amendment is necessary try to do it before the tree is planted and only around the planting site, not in the hole.

PLANTING

Dig a hole the same depth as the root system and two to three times as wide as the root system. Current research indicates that a saucer shaped hole with sides that slope gently upward, the same depth and three times the width of the root system stimulates the most root growth. Do not plant your trees too deeply, it is usually best to plant the tree to the same level it was planted in the nursery.

It is not recommended that you fertilize your tree at the time of planting. There are some regional exceptions, contact your local master gardeners to see if there are any recommended amendments for your area. Make sure that the sides of the hole have not been "glazed" while digging. If this has occurred, break through the "glaze," roughing up the soil with a trowel or hand-held cultivating fork.

If gophers are a problem in your area, a wire gopher basket should be placed in the hole. This is especially important for fig trees, which are a favorite of gophers. Gophers are less of a threat to mature trees, but this protection could mean the difference between life and death for a young tree.

Two more factors must be considered before planting: wind and sun. If high winds will be a factor in your planting location, then the tree should be tilted slightly towards the wind's prevailing direction. Do not overdo it, a slight tilt will suffice. To prevent sun damage to your new tree consider painting the trunk with a half and half mix of water and white latex paint or a white tree guard. Tree guards are preferred for fig trees to protect them from rabbit damage. Backfill with the soil.

Lightly compact the backfill with your hand, adjusting the tree gently so that the backfill reaches to the level the tree was planted to in the container for pomegranates and two to four inches above in the case of fig trees. The back fill should slope gently up so the crown of the tree is slightly higher than the surrounding soil, this will help prevent crown rot. Water the tree thoroughly and watch for settling. If undue settling occurs, elevate the tree very slightly to raise its height and release any subsoil air pockets. Figs and pomegranates like to be mulched, mulch them well and make sure the mulch starts four to six inches away from the trunk of the tree and extends a couple of feet past the canopy.

FERTILITY

Nitrogen fertilizers should be applied only after the first year. It should be applied in early spring, mixed into the top 6" of the soil in a broad ring approximately the diameter of the trees canopy (the "drip line" of the tree). In the long-term, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium, along with sufficient nitrogen, will significantly enhance tree health and fruit quality. High quality composts are also recommended as they contain a naturally balanced blend of nutrients, minerals, and probiotics. Natural kelp compounds are a great addition to fertilization regimes, whether added to irrigation water or used as a foliar spray between bud coloration and 1" fruit size. Avoid synthetic fertilizers as these can destroy many of the naturally occurring beneficial soil organisms that nurture healthy root systems. Synthetic fertilizers also tend to produce overly lush and unnatural top growth that attracts common insect pests and micro-pathogens.

ONGOING TREE CARE

Staking may be necessary but should be done carefully. A young tree that struggles a little against the wind, without being blown over, develops tissue in its trunk that will strengthen the tree as it matures. Tightly staked trees that do not develop this tissue are at greater risk of wind damage as they grow older. Staking should provide emergency assistance to a young tree, but should not interfere with its natural capacity to resist wind. To properly stake your tree, drive two sturdy poles deeply into the ground on opposite sides of the tree from each other. The two poles and the tree should demarcate a straight line directly into the prevailing wind. Using a plastic tie or cord attached securely to each pole, create a loose harness that will allow the tree sufficient movement in the wind at least a few inches in all directions. If rain is not timely, then occasional watering will be necessary.

Over-watering can kill young trees. Moist, workable soil is sufficient; soggy soil is dangerous and often fatal. As the tree matures, you will want to water deeply but infrequently; commercial orchardists water for more than 12 hours at a time, but sometimes only two or three times during a season. As your tree matures, pruning will become the most critical factor in its proper growth and development. Do not prune fig trees heavily. For pomegranates only removal of dead wood or of suckers is necessary. If you do not desire a tree shape for your pomegranate let the suckers grow and the pomegranate will develop a bush shape.

Spraying fruit trees during the dormant season is an important preventative to many diseases and pest problems. Traditionally fruit trees are sprayed three times a year: at leaf drop (Thanksgiving), during full dormancy (New Year's) and at bud swell (Valentine's Day). Log on to GrowOrganic.com or check out our catalog for more information and a selection of natural and organic dormant sprays.

Organic Gardening Resource Center



Check Out Our How-to Videos & Articles

Videos

[How to Plant a Tree](#)
[Fruit Tree Spraying](#)
[How to Prune a Fruit Tree](#)
[Fertilizing Fruit Trees](#)

Articles

[Summertime Fruit Tree Care](#)
[Pruning Science: How Trees Heal](#)
[How to Choose the Right Pruning Tool](#)
[The Best Pollination for Your Fruit Trees](#)
[Debunking Bare Root Fruit Tree Myths](#)

Visit Our Fruit Tree Central

*for tons of information and videos
about tree planting & care!*

groworganic.com/organic-gardening/articles/fruit-trees

200+ HOW-TO VIDEOS • 300+ ARTICLES • PLANTING CALCULATOR
TIP OF THE WEEK • GROWING GUIDES • RECIPES & MORE!

groworganic.com/pages/resource-center