Plant a Fruit Tree

Why we care

Fruit trees are easy to grow in our climate, only need the tiniest of spaces, and can produce 50-75 pounds of fruit per year. Trees reduce the greenhouse effect by absorbing pollutants and CO2, cool our city by providing shade and releasing water vapor into the air, and connect us to the changing seasons.

Simple, positive steps

What Fruit Trees Need

- Direct sun, 6-8 hours or more every day, all year long.
- Space: from 6’ to 30’ in diameter, depending on the variety.
- Another variety to cross-pollinate with.
- The best time for planting is October/November; however, not as many varieties are available as in February/March. Most trees bear fruit in 3-5 years.

Purchasing

- Choose the size that fits your space (for example: dwarf, semi-dwarf, or standard).
- Choose disease-resistant varieties.
- Buy from a reputable grower that specializes in fruit trees, such as One Green World or Raintree Nursery.

Planting

- Dig a hole no deeper than the potting soil in which the tree was originally grown, and three times the diameter of the root ball. Backfill with native soil.
- Mulch with several inches of sawdust or bark dust.
- Prune the top immediately to restore the normal ratio of roots to top.
- Stake dwarf trees.
- Irrigate the first three years with about 3-5 gallons of water per tree every week during the dry season.

Ongoing Care

- Fruit trees need pruning and training each year in late winter. Classes are available through the Home Orchard Society.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.