FRUIT TREES
The Urban Farmers Project

GOOD FOR YOU & THE WORLD

For a unique experience, go beyond the supermarket shelf. Bite into an heirloom fruit that explodes with a complexity of sweetness chased with a dash of tartness.

T H E  B I G  P I C T U R E

Why Plant a Fruit Tree?
There are a lot of reason to plant fruit trees. With your own fruit trees you know exactly what you’re getting: no sprays, no wax and no chemicals. A fruit tree filters the air, conditions the soil, provides shade, and attracts pollinators to your garden. A single fruit tree can produce over a hundred pounds of fruit, enough for your family, friends and the needy. On top of that fruit trees are easy to plant and, once established, easy to manage.

What Grows Well in Our Area?
It all depends on how much you know about fruit trees, how much work you are willing to do, your tolerance for losing a tree during transplantation and most importantly what fruit your family enjoys to eat. In the past few weeks I have seen apple, cherry, chestnuts, citrus, figs, grapes, pears (lots of pears) peaches, persimmons, plums, and quince to name a few.

Where Should I Start?
Try the trees that are easy to plant, easy to look after and when grow commercially are heavy sprayed with pesticides. These are:
- Apples (2)
- Plums
- Pears (12)
- Peaches (1)

Juicy Bits

Need Sun
Fruit, nut trees and vines require a minimum of 6 hours of sun per day during the growing season; stone fruits do better with even more. In the hottest climates, partial shade during the warmest part of the day can improve texture of apples; pruning for a denser canopy can achieve the same result.

Soil Amendments
Experts advise not to add any amendments (other than gypsum) to the native soil in the planting hole. This will avoid creating a “clay pot” in heavy soil that will impede root growth into the surrounding soil. If your soil is poor, fertilize on the soil surface. High quality compost is recommended. Chemical fertilizers or fresh manure in the hole can burn the roots. Apply a moderate amount of fertilizer such as fish meal or blood meal to the soil surface and water in before the growing season. Another light application in late June is desirable if growth is not vigorous. Fertilizing late in the season can delay dormancy.

Planting in the Ground
Dig a hole slightly larger than the root system of the tree. For maximum growth, do not prune the roots. Plant the trees so that the graft line sits 2” or 3” above the soil surface. It is best to plant on a slight mound in high rainfall areas. This will prevent water standing around the trunk.
Fruit Trees in San Francisco Suburbs

If feel a little adventurous, then include:
Figs
Persimmons
Pomegranates
Quince

If you know what you are doing, or would like to learn, then try:
Cherries (7)
Apricot

*The number in parenthesis indicates the fruits ranking on the Dirty Dozen list of fruit and vegetables. For example peach, ranks number one, and can have as many as 53 residues on it. Visit What’s on My Food?

How Much Room Does a Tree Need?
You can grow a fruit tree in a 4ft by 4ft space. If you have more space, you can let the tree get bigger. However we will show you how to keep your trees down to size (no more than 8ft tall). If you have to use a ladder to get to the fruit, the trees is too big for a backyard. The size of the tree is totally under your control.

What’s the Advantage of Close Planting?
Variety. Most fruit like peaches and pears mature on the tree in a few days. Take the peach as an example. All the peaches typically ripen in a two to three week period.

This means you will have a feast for a short while with nothing before and after. By planting trees close to each other you will have room to plant an early peach, a mid-season peach and a late peach. This way you will have your favorite fruit for most of the season.

Where Do I Buy Fruit Trees?
You can buy fruit trees at any good nursery. Please make sure your trees are certified organic. Most of the fruit trees that you will find in nurseries are common supermarket varieties. These trees appeal to commercial growers because the fruit ripens all at once, doesn’t bruise easily, grows high yields, ships and stores for extended lengths of time, and sits on the shelf without a blemish. These qualities matter little to a home gardener.

Instead I would encourage you to consider heirloom fruit trees which gives your family, especially the children, a unique experience. These trees go back several centuries and are in existence today mostly because of home growers are willing to explore beyond the store shelves.

We buy all the trees for the project from Trees of Antiquity (805) 467-9909.
I have contacted Neil, the owner of the nursery and they are very excited to work with us. Browse their website and if you are familiar with fruit trees choose as you wish. If you have questions please feel free to contact us.

What’s My Best Bet?
If you are new to growing fruit trees, Neil and I have selected the following ten varieties primarily because of their amazing taste but also because they are organic, and easy to transplant, manage and grow.

Control the Size
Look to the past and the ancient art of Espalier and Bonsai. These are two examples of utilizing summer pruning to control the shape and size of the tree. Simply choose a size and don’t let the tree get any bigger. Leave the winter pruning to corrective measures and summer prune for size control. Head back the new growth that has exceeded your preferred shape or size. That’s it!

Want Variety?
Plant three or four trees in one hole. This allows you to have fruit throughout the season without surrendering the whole garden to fruit trees. The method is straightforward: Plant the trees approximately 18" apart, leaning slightly outward with the inside limbs pruned away. It’s that simple.
# Fruit Trees in San Francisco Suburbs

## Apples
- **White Pearmain** - 1200 AD
- **Grimes Golden** - 1832
- **Cox’s Orange Pippin** - 1830
- **St Edmund’s Pippin** - 1870

## Plums
- **Bavay’s Green Gage** - 1832 AD
- **French Prune**
- **Early Laxton** - 1902
- **Santa Rosa**

## Pears
- **Seckel (Sugar Pear)**
- **Warren**

### What Else Can I Grow?
The ten trees above are the easiest fruit to grow in Lafayette. If you are willing to do a little extra work you can also grow:

- **PEACHES** - need a simple annual spray to prevent peach leaf curl
- **FIGS** - transplanting must be done carefully
- **POMEGRANATES** - transplanting must be done carefully
- **PERSIMMONS** - transplanting must be done carefully and they are slow to bear

### When Do I order the Trees?
The fruit trees are harvested in late December and are shipped in dormant state from January to mid-April. However it is important to reserve your trees now. We will collect all orders by January 25th so we can place the order on November 1st.

### How Do I Plant a Tree?
Basically you dig a 2ft by 2ft hole. Place the bare root tree in the center of the hole and fill it back with the same dirt (without any conditioning.) Tamp down the soil in the hole, spread a layer of Gypsum, add some fertilizer and cover with mulch. Then water thoroughly and you are done.

When the trees arrive, we will hold a demonstration meeting and make a “how to” video tape and will post it to our site.

### What About Water?
It is critical that you water the trees regularly during the growing season. This means you start watering in spring after the leaves appear until mid September when the tree needs to slow down for the dormancy period.

Each tree needs about 10 gallons of water per week (that’s half of a shower) and I strongly recommend you consider a water timer and drip irrigation. The cost of such a system is minimal and the benefits are significant.

### What to learn more?
Visit [What Is Backyard Orchard Culture?](#)

### Any Questions?
If you have any questions, please feel free to call me. If I have been to your home and have pictures of your site, I might be able to answer your questions on the phone.
Fruit Trees in San Francisco Suburbs

The height of these fruit trees is controlled with summer pruning. Ideally the fruit in a backyard orchard should be accessible by the owner while standing on the ground.