

"It's Fruit Tree Season!"

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by Annie Plowman

I don't know about you, but I am chomping at the bit for spring. I delight each time I spy newly popping buds. I meander through my garden at home and try to find places to put the upcoming season's new discoveries. I consider what part of my lawn might have to be sacrificed for this year's treasures. Are you doing the same? If so, I have good news for you. It's fruit tree season!

There are many, many to choose from but I am going to try and help you narrow your selections. Some varieties of the fruit trees you like may be more suitable for our area than others. Perhaps it responds better to our milder winter, hot summer or perhaps it is simply an improved variety or scores high on taste tests.

There are many fruit tree choices out there. If I had to narrow choice to a selection for my own garden, the fruit trees listed below would be some of my top picks for their respective species. I base this on the factors described above, my personal preferences and their relative availability at better garden centers.

- **Pink Lady Apple** – hot climate apple, crisp/sweet-tart, self-fruitful
- **Craig's Crimson Cherry** – self fruitful dark, sweet, taste test winner
- **Stella Cherry** – self fruitful, dark sweet large
- **Arctic Rose Nectarine**- white, sweet, high scoring, self-fruitful
- **Double Delight** – yellow freestone, high scoring, self-fruitful
- **Strawberry Free White Peach** – freestone self-fruitful
- **Elberta Peach** – yellow freestone, classic self-fruitful
- **Burgundy Plum** – maroon skin, semi freestone, self-fruitful
- **Santa Rosa Plum** – Reddish Purple skin, amber flesh, self-fruitful
- **Dapple Dandy Pluot** – taste test winner *
- **Flavor Supreme Pluot** – Large, dark purple skin, yellow flesh **

* Requires a Flavor Supreme or Dapple Dandy Pluot, Santa Rosa or Burgundy Plum to Pollinate.

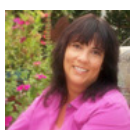
** Requires a Santa Rosa, Late Santa Rosa Plum or another Pluot to Pollinate.

Where you see the note "self-fruitful", this means that the tree will produce fruit without the help of a companion tree planted near it. When a tree requires a pollinator, it is important to plant the appropriate companion tree near it or your tree will not produce. Often you can find multiple graft trees that have several varieties of fruit on a single tree, including the pollinator.

Your garden center should be able to provide you with good information about the selection, care, planting and pruning of your new fruit tree. I also have found the UC Davis website <http://homeorchard.ucdavis.edu/cropinfo.html> to be a very good resource for information regarding the selection and care of fruit trees. Dormant Spraying and Pruning will be an important part of caring for your tree if you want a tree that is productive and resistant to disease. Here's another great link that tells you when to do what. <http://homeorchard.ucdavis.edu/calendar.pdf>

A fun consideration when selecting fruit trees is the bloom. Fruit trees produce blooms before producing fruit. Some of these blooms are rather attractive. Bonus!

Happy Planting!



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