

S l o a t



# Planting Fruit Trees

Sloat Garden Center carries pre-planted fruit trees! These freshly dug trees are planted in a complete potting soil with a slow-release fertilizer. We don't consider these plants bareroot, as their roots are not exposed, nor are they packaged in sawdust or "heeled" into sand.

## **The most important thing to remember:**

Never pick up or move the tree by its trunk!

Moving your fruit tree by its trunk will damage its young root system. Always support or carry the tree by the container it's in.

Your fruit tree can be planted in-ground immediately. Or, if you prefer to wait, the container and soil will support your plant through July. The size of the container is not sufficient to support the tree through more than one season.

We recommend planting your tree before the buds "swell" and leaves begin to appear (late February or early March). At this time, fresh, young roots are emerging that can easily break or can be injured while re-planting, which can have an affect on a successful planting. If young roots have already emerged, you'd be better off waiting until late April to plant. By that time, there should be sufficient roots to hold the soil together.

Fruit trees do best in full sun and want well-draining soil. Dig a hole that is as deep as the rootball and twice as wide. Amend the backfill soil with Sloat Planting Mix. Use Sure Start at the bottom of the planting hole as per the directions on the package. It is best to plant your tree "high" so that it doesn't settle too deeply after watering it in. After the first season, fruit trees do best with infrequent but deep watering.

Our fruit trees are not "topped", the central leader is intact so that you can make your own decision as to the ultimate form the tree will take as well the placement of the lower scaffold branches. (Historically, bareroot trees were cut in half to force very low scaffold limbs.) The side limbs have been cut to promote vigorous growth. It is not advisable to remove any of the existing side branches immediately, since these branches protect the young trunk from sunburn and also provides nutrition to the trunk while developing. You'll want to cut new growth back by ½ in late summer.

In the tree's second year, cut back new growth by ½ in spring and again in late summer. In the third year, choose a height for your tree and don't let the tree get any taller. When there are vigorous shoots above the chosen height, cut back or remove them. In late spring or early summer, pinch back all new growth. Size control and development of low fruiting wood begins now. Fruit production is best if the tree is trained with an open centered canopy, which allows for maximum sun penetration.

**We'll help you grow the plants you love!**

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