

The Challenges of Growing Great Fruit in the Pacific Northwest

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Thirty years ago, some of the most serious diseases we were dealing with were scab and mildew on apples and pears. WSU trials (with WWFRF support) resulted in selecting some of the best and most disease resistant varieties to grow here. But we now have many additional diseases affecting fruit growing in our region, with more pests and diseases arriving every year. Mitigating fruit disease may mean having “homeowners” grow the smallest trees possible (using the most dwarfing rootstock), and pruning them in ways that allow for unobstructed access to each piece of fruit, leaf, and section of bark.

Eventually the fruit grower might have to totally wrap the trees with fine screening during the late spring and summer as the best form of pest control. We can also cut out diseased areas, bag individual fruits, and apply sticky traps. Chemical sprays are often limited for backyard uses.

Many times I have been asked: “What is a good-tasting cultivar that a beginner can successfully grow that will produce a good crop most years?” On the flip side of this handout is a chart of **Reliable Fruit Varieties** to help increase the success for “average homeowners” who grow their own fruit. These varieties should do well if given normal care: some watering, thinning, and pruning. Below is a list of the many pests and diseases that are besieging our local fruits & some solutions. The underlined are more recent problems.

- **Apples:** apple maggot, codling moth, apple anthracnose (seems more virulent now than before), apple scab, powdery mildew, apple ermine moth. Solutions: footies, screening, select for scab and mildew resistant varieties.
- **Pears:** pear trellis rust, codling moth, pear scab, powdery mildew. Solutions: footies, for controlling pear trellis rust consider removing certain local junipers as an alternate host, select for scab and mildew resistant varieties.
- **Asian Pears:** pear trellis rust, codling moth. Very susceptible to bacterial canker (*Pseudomonas* infection), so avoid pruning during rainy periods, consider removing alternate hosts for pear trellis rust.
- **Plums:** SWD, birds. Solutions: Methley plum is unusual in that it can be picked “green” and then allowed to ripen in a protected environment.
- **Cherries:** SWD, cherry bark tortrix, birds, brown rot. Solutions: Earlier ripening sweet cherries seem to be less affected by SWD and very fine screening may be effective. For cherry bark tortrix control avoid large pruning cuts, as this provides easy access into the tree, and repeatedly spray a common “Safer” soap solution onto the infestation. Cherry trees grafted on highly dwarfing rootstocks such as Gisela 5 are small (about 40% of standard) and can be kept below 10’ in height. This allows trees to be netted for more effective bird protection, or even fitted with rain shelter to prevent cracking. Tart (pie) cherries are much less susceptible to rain cracking and rot than sweet cherries, and are the tart cherry trees are generally more resistant to diseases such as bacterial canker.
- **Peaches:** Leaf curl. Solutions: select peach-leaf-curl resistant varieties, keep rain off tree in January & February.



Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation

Come to our Winter Field Day on March 3, 2018 to learn more about growing fruit trees in Western Washington.

*For more information see **NWFruit.org**.*

Reliable Fruit Varieties

P=Productive, F=Good flavor, S=Scab resistant, K=Keeper, C=Cooking, L=Large, O=Ornamental,
R=Resists Cracking, D=Canker Resistant, E=Early, SF=Self Fertile, T=Triploid

Apples:		Cherries:		Quince:	
<i>Akane</i>	P,F,S	<i>Early Burlat</i>	P,R,D, E	<i>Aromatnaya</i>	F,C,R, SF
<i>Ashmead's Kernel</i>	F,S,K, C,T	<i>Hartland</i>	P,F,L,R	<i>Limon</i>	F,K,C, R,E,SF
<i>Belle de Boskoop</i>	P,F,S, K,C,T	<i>Lapins</i>	P,F,L,R, SF	Persimmons:	
<i>Belmac</i>	P,F,S, K	<i>Vandalay</i>	P,F,S,E, SF	<i>Saijo Asian</i>	F,C,SF
<i>Bramley</i>	P,S,K, C,L,T	<i>White Gold</i>	P,F,L,R, D,SF	<i>Great Wall Asian</i>	P,F,C, SF
<i>Brown Russet</i>	S,F,K	Tart Cherries:		Plums:	
<i>Cherry Cox</i>	P,F	<i>Montmorency</i>	P,F,R,D, SF	<i>Early Laxton</i>	P,C,E
<i>Dayton</i>	P,F,S, K,L	<i>Surefire</i>	P,F,R, SF	<i>Mirabelle</i>	P,F
<i>Enterprise</i>	P,S,K	Pears:		<i>Mt. Royal</i>	P,SF
<i>Gravenstein</i>	F,C,L, T	<i>Conference</i>	P,F,K,C	<i>Purple Gage</i>	P,F,SF
<i>Liberty</i>	P,F,S,	<i>Comice</i>	F,K,SF	<i>Schoolhouse</i>	P,F,L
<i>Pristine</i>	P,F,S, C,O,E	<i>Highland</i>	P,F,K	<i>Sehome Italian</i>	P,F,C, SF
<i>Spartan</i>	P,F,S,L	<i>Orcas</i>	P,S,L	<i>Victoria</i>	P,F,SF
<i>Williams Pride</i>	P,F	<i>Rescue</i>	P,S,C,L	Asian Plums:	
Columnar Apples:		<i>Stutgarter Gishirtle</i>	P,F,E	<i>Beauty</i>	F,O,R, E,SF
<i>North Pole</i>	O	Asian Pears:		<i>Methley (hybrid)</i>	P,F,SF
Cider Apples:		<i>Chojuro</i>	P,F,K	<i>Hollywood</i>	F,O,SF
<i>Ashmead's Kernel</i>	F,S,K, C,T	<i>Kikisui</i>	P,F,L	<i>Shiro</i>	P,F,L, SF
<i>Kingston Black</i>	P	<i>Mishirasu</i>	P,F,L	Fig:	
Crab Apples:		<i>Shinseki</i>	P,F,E	<i>Desert king</i>	P,SF
<i>Centennial</i>	F,S,C, L	<i>Yoinashi</i>	P,F	Peach:	
<i>Puget Spice</i>	P,F,S			<i>Frost</i>	SF