

Fruit Tree Planting & Care Guide for Boise and Treasure Valley Gardens

*A local gardening guide from Five Mile Farm & Greenhouses
Boise, Idaho*

Fruit trees grow well in Boise and throughout the Treasure Valley when planted in full sun and well-drained soil. Proper planting, watering, and pruning are essential for establishing healthy trees that will produce fruit for many years.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR TREES POTTED THIS SPRING

To ensure their health, Five Mile Farm pots bare root fruit trees in containers right before bud break. Some fruit trees sold in containers may have been potted this spring. **Please inquire with the staff at Five Mile Farm to know if your fruit tree was planted in a pot this season!** Extra care needs to be taken if planting fruit trees within the first few months after they've been potted as the new roots will be fragile. Follow the planting and watering instructions as indicated below but make sure to be very gentle when removing the tree from the pot **so the new root growth is disturbed as little as possible.**

PLANTING

Dig a hole twice as wide and as deep as the root system. Fruit trees must not be planted too deeply. **The root flare (the area where the trunk's main roots attach) should remain slightly above the soil surface. The graft union should remain a few inches above the surface of the ground** so that it doesn't rot or send up shoots from the rootstock that are different from the desired qualities of the fruiting stock.

When backfilling around the roots, it is advisable to only use the native soil that you removed after digging the hole. Although not necessary, prior to backfilling, sprinkling in a bit of fertilizer that includes mycorrhizae such as Down to Earth Bio-Live will enhance the root structure of the tree. Gently tamp down the soil around the roots and ensure the tree is straight. Staking the tree for the first year can be beneficial to ensure it remains straight. Finally, adding a couple inches of compost to the top of the soil at time of planting and then every subsequent year is a good idea to keep the soil well fed and happy. Just make sure that your compost doesn't touch the trunk to prevent crown rot. Avoid adding large amounts of amendments directly into the planting hole, as this can discourage roots from growing outward into the surrounding soil.

Five Mile Farm & Greenhouses
Boise's Local Garden Center Since 1983
2940 S Five Mile Rd | Boise, Idaho



www.5milefarm.com

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WATERING

Immediately after planting, slowly and thoroughly soak the soil deeply, allow the water to fully absorb, and repeat once more.

It is very important to always water your fruit tree thoroughly and deeply less often, rather than simply sprinkling the surface frequently. This will encourage all of your new tree's roots to search for water more deeply, therefore needing less supplemental water in the long run. However, as your new bare root tree doesn't have a large established root system yet, it's important to water more frequently in the first year. Slowly applying roughly 5 gallons of water once a week is a good rule of thumb but adjust based on the weather. The soil around the tree should be moist, but not wet. Applying a layer of mulch around the base of the tree can help retain soil moisture and regulate soil temperature. Keep mulch a few inches away from the trunk.

PRUNING

Fruit trees should be pruned while dormant in late January, February or early March. When pruning, keep the following in mind:

- Remove dead, diseased and damaged branches.
- Remove branches that are pointing upwards or towards the center of the tree.
- Remove any branches that are crossing or rubbing against others.
- "Heading" cuts should be performed to shorten the branches from last year's growth. This will ensure heavy fruit does not weigh down and break branches.
- You can "top" the tree to control the height to whatever suits your situation best.

FERTILIZING

Right before bud break is the perfect time to fertilize fruit trees. If you miss the opportunity, you can still fertilize any time through June. Do not fertilize in late summer or fall as new growth stimulated by the fertilizer can be damaged by frost. A fertilizer such as Down to Earth Fruit Tree is recommended.

PEST MANAGEMENT

Applying a dormant oil prior to the tree breaking dormancy (aka bud break) is a good way to kill overwintering insects or eggs that could become a nuisance during the growing season. Copper fungicide can also be an effective means of preventing bacterial and fungal issues such as leaf curl on peaches. Apply copper fungicide at least 24 hours prior to applying a dormant oil.

Additional Questions?

You can always give Five Mile Farm a call and we will do our best to answer any questions you may have. Or for additional fruit tree care information, visit the Dave Wilson Nursery website or the University of Idaho Extension office.

<https://www.davewilson.com/home-garden/>

University of Idaho Extension Office

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