



## Site Selection

*Please be sure to have your underground services located before planting by Ontario One Call 1-800-400-2255. This service is free.*

### Siting Do's and Don'ts

- Take note of mature size and choose your site accordingly; allow for full width and height of mature tree
- Fallen fruit can be messy, keep away from driveways and sidewalks
- Do not plant large trees under overhead wires unless they will not grow tall enough to interfere with wires
- Keep trees away from underground services such as gas and water
- Keep larger trees at least 15' away from buildings & gutters
- If your garden is too small for 2 fruit trees (those that require cross-pollination), perhaps your neighbour can plant one also and you can share the bounty. Watch for similar trees in your area that can serve as pollinators.

### Sunlight and other practicalities

- Full sun gives best yield and the sweetest fruit
- Spring blossoms, though fleeting, are beautiful; try to keep the tree visible from your windows.
- If your site is sloped, the middle of the hill is best; the valley collects frost, while the top can be too exposed. A south facing slope is ideal for fruit trees.

### Soil

- The best soil for fruit trees is rich in organic matter and well-drained.
- If your soil is very compacted due to recent construction, your fruit tree will not perform very well. Aerate your soil this year, enrich it with organic matter, and you should be ready for planting next year.
- A pH of 6.5 is ideal, but not essential

### Moisture

- Most fruit trees do not do well in wet soil conditions; a well drained site is important to root and tree health.
- If your yard has a tendency to pool or retain water, you may be able to improve drainage by planting on a mound or on the edge of a slope.
- If your site is dry, you can direct rainwater from your gutters to a shallow swale near your fruit trees, with an overflow diversion in case of heavy rains.



## Maintenance Suggestions

### Water

- Water your new plants twice a week (5 gallons each time) for the first year. Soil should dry out a bit between waterings
- In subsequent years, once a week is fine until the tree reaches a larger size; then water only in dry periods; be especially watchful during drought conditions

### Pruning

*An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of, well, fruit.*

- Pruning of fruit trees is usually done in late winter while the tree is still dormant; research best practices for your tree variety
- Prune to allow good air flow, easy harvesting, and strong, out-swept (as opposed to upward-reaching) branches. There are many excellent books and websites on the subject.
- Dead, diseased and damaged branches can be cut anytime, as well as branches that cross or interfere with each other. Sterilize tools with rubbing alcohol before and after pruning
- You will still get fruit without pruning, though results may not be as good

### Feeding your fruit

- Use organic sprays such as neem or compost tea to keep your tree healthy
- Do not spray when tree is blossoming
- Rake up fallen fruit and leaves and discard, these can harbour diseases
- Apply a good layer of manure or compost in late fall to feed the tree and smother spores and pests. Keep mulches and manures away from touching the trunk, or it may rot
- Underplant if desired with daffodils and other alliums (said to control rodents), comfrey (non-spreading type ie Boking 4), pollinator flowers, and/or leguminous plants such as beans or clover. Grass is not ideal under fruit trees, as it competes with feeder roots

### Increasing Yield

- Native pollinators - early flowers especially – planted nearby will increase pollination as well as helping pollinators. Include later flowers as well to feed them all season
- Consider installing pollinator homes to provide nesting zones
- In years of high fruit set, thinning your fruit (especially pome fruits) allows the tree to put more energy into a few big fruits rather than lots of small ones
- Orchard socks tied to each fruit can help to deter codling moths from apples – some of us just recycle old panty hose!

Fruitfully Yours, the TreeMobile Team