Growing Fruit in the Home Garden in Central Ohio

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Objectives for Today

• Considerations & Challenges with Growing Fruit
• Tree Fruits
• Small Fruits
• Resources on Fruits
• Questions
Tree Fruits in Ohio

- Apple
- Pear
- Peach
- Nectarine
- Plum
- Cherry
Small Fruits in Ohio

- Raspberries
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Grapes
- Strawberries
- Currents & Gooseberries
Considerations with Fruit

- Perennial
- Varieties
- Pests
- Hardiness
- Size
- Pollination
- Maturity
- Cultural practices
- Equipment
Considerations with Fruit

• Perennial in Nature

• What implications are there for a perennial crop?
Tree Planting

To ensure healthy trees, start with Right Tree/Right Location. Once you select a tree suited for your site and its microclimate, be sure to plant the tree correctly!

Incorrect

- Leader has been pruned
- Buds have been pruned
- Damaged branches pruned or removed
- No necessary tree wrap
- Tree label not removed
- Tree planted too deep
- Stringing ropes left around trunk
- Black plastic mulch smothering roots
- Tree basket not removed
- Soil pedestal, water accumulates in bottom
  planting hole, not enough oxygen for roots

Correct

- Leader left unpruned
- Light pruning: rubbing, crossed or damaged branches are removed
- Branch with narrow crotch angle not removed
- Trunk protected by loose tree guard, taken off after one year
- Highly amended soil has settled, sinking root ball, water collected
- Only existing soil used as backfill
- Hole not wide enough
- Stake driven through root ball
- Treated burlap not removed or slit for root extension
- 2” - 3” organic mulch applied well away from trunk, no black plastic or plastic gusset
- All ropes removed, top half of burlap wire basket removed, burlap slit for root extension
- Stake (if needed) driven into soil outside root ball, removed after one year

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Considerations with Fruit

Varieties

• In what ways are varieties different?
Considerations with Fruit

• Maturity

• How long can the fruit season be extended?
Challenges with Fruit

- Pests
- Insects
- Diseases
- Weeds
- Wildlife
Considerations with Fruit

- **Equipment**

- What equipment is needed to raise fruit?
Considerations with Fruit

- Cold Hardiness and Weather
  - What zone are we located in?
  - Late spring frosts also damage flowers
Considerations with Fruit

- Least Hardy
  - Nectarines
  - Peaches
  - Plums
  - Cherries

- Most Hardy
  - Pears
  - Apples
  - Apricots
Considerations with Fruit

• Size of Plant

• What advantages do dwarf tree provide?
Site Selection of Fruits

• Soil
  – Drainage
  – Fertility
  – pH-Acidity of soil
  – Water-holding capacity
  – Depth of Topsoil
  – Water Penetration-Access to Water
  – Addition of Organic Matter
Site Selection of Fruits

• Air Drainage
  – 5-15 percent slope
  – Face southeast and below ridge
• Full Sunlight-minimum of 6-8 hours of sun daily
• Location in Landscape
Fruit Trees

• Seeded Fruit
  – Apple
  – Pear

• Stone Fruit
  – Peach
  – Plum
  – Cherry
  – Nectarine
Types of Rootstocks

- Rootstock influences:
  - Size of plant
  - Hardiness
  - When fruit is produced
  - How well plant is anchored in soil
Considerations with Fruit

• Pollination

• Which types of fruit plants require two varieties near each other in order to be pollinated?
Pollination

- Which require two varieties? (Self-sterile)
- Which don’t require another plant? (Self-fertile)
Important Cultural Practices

- Planting
- Fertilizing
- Watering
- Mulching
- Thinning
- Pruning
Pruning Fruit Trees

• Done in February or early March
Correct Pruning

1. Nursery-Grown Tree
2. Pruned at Planting
3. A Year Later
4. Six to Eight Years Later

Incorrect Pruning
Stone Fruit Tree Pruning

- Cut back to 1"
- Scaffold branches
- Prune back to trunk

Before pruning
At planting
First summer (June)

26"

Before pruning
After pruning
At one year
Pests of Fruit Trees

- Insects
- Diseases
- Weeds
- Wildlife
Small Fruits

• Grapes
• Brambles
  – Raspberries
  – Blackberries
• Strawberries
• Blueberries
• Superberries – Goji berries, Elderberries
• Currents & Gooseberries
Grapes

Challenges

• Site Selection
• Pruning
• Diseases
Brambles

– Raspberries
– Blackberries

Challenges
– Pruning
– Winter Injury
– Diseases
Strawberries

Challenges
- Site Selection
- Weeds
- Varieties
- Diseases
Blueberries

Challenges
  – Site Selection
  – Soils
  – Wildlife and Birds
Fruit Resources

- Franklin County Horticulture Hotline
- Ask a Master Gardener
- OSU Extension Workshops
- Free OSU Extension Publications at http://ohioline.osu.edu
- OSU Extension For-Sale Publications
Summary

- Select a sunny, well-drained site
- Research selection of varieties
- Map your plans on paper first
- Start small
- Study and control pests
- Learn how to prune
- Enjoy the fruits of your labor