



Shopping List

- Healthy mini dwarf or dwarf fruit tree
- Large container
- Potting soil
- Compost
- Slow release fertilizer
- Wooden dowel
- Stake
- Raffia or twine

To enjoy growing fruit trees in limited garden space, why not grow them in containers? Most are available in dwarf and mini-dwarf form, either of which will grow handily in a medium (minimum 20 in.) container. A word of warning: not all trees will survive in containers when winter weather is severe.

The best selection of fruit trees is available as bare root plants in fall or winter, depending on your location. Plants may also be available in the early spring; check with your local garden center or mail order sources. Make sure that the tree you are selecting is hardy in your area.

Select a container of at least 20 in. diameter for a mini-dwarf, 24 in. for a regular dwarf. Plastic, ceramic, and wood containers are suitable, as are half whiskey barrels. Check for drainage holes and drill them yourself or have a nursery professional do it for you if necessary. Pot up your tree right where you plan to site it.



Once the pot is full of soil it will be heavy and hard to reposition. Place the container in a sunny spot; all fruit trees need 6 - 8 hours of direct sunlight to thrive.

Make sure the tree is reachable by a hose. Half fill the pot with commercial potting soil, not garden soil. Even good garden soil may not drain well enough for a containerized plant.

Add about 4 in. of organic material such as commercially prepared compost or manure and 2 - 3 small handfuls of a slow release fertilizer. Your local garden center can recommend the proper amendments to use based on the type of tree you're planting. Mix the amendments in well.

Form a mound of potting soil in the center of the pot and place the tree, draping the roots over the mound. Position the graft union 2 - 3 in. above the soil line (a stake laid across the pot helps gauge the proper planting depth). If the area above the union is allowed to take root, the dwarfing characteristics of the rootstock will be lost.

Fill in soil around the roots. Tamp the soil down firmly and water thoroughly.