

A close-up photograph of a black wire mesh basket filled with ripe, yellow-orange apricots. The basket sits on a light-colored wooden tray. Several apricots are scattered around the basket on a white, textured surface. One apricot is cut in half, showing its pit. A single apricot pit lies on the surface to the left. A green leaf is visible in the top left corner.

APRICOTS

FROM THE
ANDERSON'S
FRUIT GROWING GUIDE
BY MARK ANDERSON

APRICOTS

Apricots originate from China, but have been adapted to be grown in many climates. Known for their explosions of early white or light pink blossoms (also colloquially called popcorn in Utah & Southern Idaho), apricots make beautiful landscape trees with the added bonus of bushels of tasty fruits in mid-summer. Their glossy, spade shaped leaves add to their attractive appearance spring through fall.

Because apricots flower so early, their tender buds and blossoms are especially susceptible to frost damage in areas where late frosts are common. Most apricots are self-fruitful, but there are a few common varieties that require a second tree for pollinating (must be a different variety). Whether you want beautiful early blossoms, a handsome summertime tree, fruit, or attractive fall color, apricots will provide them all.

Location: Open site in full sun, with good air circulation. Apricots do best in landscape or garden locations and not in lawn, which needs a different water and fertilizer regimen. Since they produce very early blossoms, they perform best if given some protection from cold late-winter and early-spring winds.

Soil: Deep garden, loamy soil works best - well drained, not soggy. Avoid heavy clay or overly sandy soils.

Planting: See attached bare root and container planting guide.

Water: To ensure steady fruit development from bloom to harvest, make sure to provide regular water throughout the growing season - usually a deep watering every 5-10 days depending on heat and sun exposure. As the fruit begins to ripen and approach harvest, cut back on watering to prevent fruit splitting.

Fertilizer: Use a balanced fertilizer in early spring with micronutrients to maintain consistent growth and fruit production. We recommend Anderson's Best, That's All It Takes, Fertlome Fruit, Nut and Pecan food, or Natural Guard Organic Fruit and Citrus Fertilizer. A good rule of thumb is to use 1/2 to 1 pound of fertilizer per inch of trunk diameter (2 cups generally equals 1 pound). Spread fertilizer evenly around the drip line of the tree.

Pruning: Once the trees have matured and have been trained into an open vase shape, they require some pruning each season. Each year remove any damaged or diseased branches. This can be done any time after bloom or during dormant season. Each spring take out select amounts of old wood to encourage new wood development. When pruning, keep in mind that apricots bear fruit on short spurs that form on the previous year's growth and remain fruitful for up to 4 years. Too much pruning can significantly decrease the tree's productivity. Also, see our pruning guide for more pruning instructions for stone fruits.

Harvest & Yield: When harvesting, pick the fruit when it has colored up and when it has softened slightly. Apricots mature at irregular intervals and fall easily from the tree when they ripen too much, so plan on picking multiple times a week during harvest season. Most apricots ripen mid-summer. Each tree will usually produce 60-100 pounds of fruit depending on location, fertilizer, variety and rootstock.

Pests: Aphids are the most common insect to attack apricot trees each summer. To best control the aphids, use a dormant spray/fungicide combo during the late dormant season or even just as the buds start to swell in early spring. During the growing season, even right up until harvest, apply a general-purpose insecticide as needed. Fertlome Fruit Tree Spray (organic), Sevin, or Malathion are all excellent insecticides for the job. Lady Bugs will also do a great job at controlling aphid outbreaks.



Blossom blight, shot-hole fungus, and brown rot are some of the most common diseases that affect apricots. Prevent disease by starting the season with a dormant spray/fungicide combination. Next, apply a general-purpose fungicide right after blossom drop. To prevent shot-hole fungus and blossom blight, continue to apply fungicide every 2 weeks during the cool, wet season of spring. It is essential to spray again in the fall, at about 25% leaf drop to stop these harmful diseases from permanently damaging your trees. For a good general-purpose fungicide, we recommend Copper Soap, F-Stop by Fertilome or Complete Disease Control from Monterey.

BLenheim

The Blenheim is prized for eating fresh, canning, and drying. The apricot ripens from the inside out causing fruit pickers to develop specific harvesting habits for the apricot that included picking fruits that still had a faint green tinge. It is considered to be the most succulent and flavorful of the apricots. These are very durable trees.

Mature Height: 12'-18'

Mature Spread: 6'-10'

Sun Exposure: Full/Partial

Bloom Period: Early

Harvest Period: Early July

Zones: 5a-9

Flavor: Sweet, tart (early on), aromatic.

Cooking/Storage: Very good for both.

Pollinator Required: No. Self-fertile.



CHINESE (MORMON)

This is a tough apricot that is a fairly late bloomer making it a good one for Northern climates where spring frosts can be unpredictable. This late-bearing variety produces good quality, medium to small sized fruit with a yellow-orange color. Thinning will ensure maximum size in the fruit.

Mature Height: 10' – 15'

Mature Spread: 10' – 15'

Sun Exposure: Full/Partial

Bloom Period: Late spring

Flavor: Sweet, mild

Zones: 5a-8

Cooking/Storage: Good for both.

Pollinator Required: No, self-fertile. Good pollinator.

Harvest Period: Late June to early July



MOORPARK

This is a variety with a juicy, sweet flesh that is fantastic fresh or can be used for cooking, canning, or drying. It is a self-pollinating tree, but produces even better when another variety of apricots, peaches, or nectarines is nearby. The fruit are freestone and are larger than your typical variety. They are fast growing trees that require little or no maintenance, and they're tolerant of most soils and growing conditions. A more reliable producer than others.

Mature Height: 15'-20'

Mature Spread: 15'-20'

Sun Exposure: Sun

Flavor: Sweet

Cooking/storage: Both.

Bloom Period: Early to mid-spring

Pollinator Required: No; Self-fertile

Harvest Period: Late-June into August

Zones: 4-8



TILTON

Tilton is the leading variety for freezing, drying, and canning. It retains its color even after drying. It is different looking from most other apricots in that it is slightly flat in shape. This long-time favorite is one of the most flavorful with juicy, sweet-tart flavor. It has a light orange skin with a red blush. It is vigorous and bears heavy crops.

Mature Height: 12'-15'

Mature Spread: 10'-15'

Sun Exposure: Full/Partial

Flavor: Sweet/tart

Cooking/storage: Great for storage.

Also good for cooking.

Bloom Period: Early April

Pollinator Required: No

Harvest Period: Early July

Zones: 5-9



WENATCHEE MOORPARK

Wenatchee produces beautiful, large, light yellow apricots. It is a good annual producer and its flavorful fruit is widely used for drying and home canning. The blooms of a Wenatchee apricot tree are very early, so this is sometimes a difficult tree to grow in areas of late frost. Best production is made in well drained and moderately fertile soils.

Mature Height: 12'-15'

Mature Spread: 12'-15'

Sun Exposure: Full/Partial

Flavor: Sweet

Cooking/storage: Great for storage.

Good for cooking.

Bloom Period: Early April

Pollinator Required: No.

Harvest Period: Early July

Zones: 5-9



PERFECTION

Perfection bears moderately early and produces large, sweet, and juicy fruit. The flesh and skin are a bright orange-yellow and the fruit has a firm texture. It is cold hardy and has an excellent taste. It is freestone. Good for canning, drying, freezing, cooking, and baking.

Mature Height: 12'-15'

Mature Spread: 12'-15'

Sun Exposure: Full Sun

Flavor: Sweet

Cooking/storage: Great for canning.

Bloom Period: Early

Pollinator Required: Yes

Harvest Period: Early July

Zones: 4-8





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