

## Fruit Tree Catalog Choices

With spring still several months away, gardening catalogs being sent. Many interested in gardening receive these catalogs with excitement and start making plans for the yard and garden. Of all of the items featured, fruit and nut trees are especially popular. Many of these perform well in Utah but care must be taken when ordering.

An example includes the pecan tree. Many varieties and species are cold hardy in areas of Northern Utah. However, very few will actually produce ripe nuts, because the nuts mature in November. By November, we have almost always experienced several hard frosts.

To prevent making mistakes such as this, research is needed before ordering. USU Extension has many great resources. County Extension horticulture or agriculture agents can offer advice on what varieties may perform well. Many fact sheets and bulletins additionally exist. You may also consider talking to neighboring gardeners or qualified employees at garden centers.

Of the nut trees available in catalogs, filberts, hazel nuts and Carpathian type English walnuts are adapted to our climate. Pinion pines (which produce pine nuts) are very adapted and can be found at local garden centers occasionally. They may take several years to come into production, though. In warmer areas of the Wasatch front and Utah, almonds and even pistachios can do well if sited correctly.

Of the fruit trees, apples are especially popular. Some aspects to consider include when a particular variety blooms, if it needs a cross pollinator and when the fruit ripens. Similarly to pecans, many varieties of apple do not ripen until sometime in November. Numerous catalogs specific to fruit and nut trees provide this type of information. Most fruit trees are grafted onto a rootstock. In apples the type of rootstock especially influences how early a tree starts producing fruit, how large the tree eventually grows and resistance to certain diseases and pests.

Peaches are marginal in colder areas of Utah. Avoid varieties such as Elberta, Early Elberta and the Hale series peaches due to a lack of cold hardiness in Utah's colder mountain valleys. Other varieties are somewhat better adapted. They include Reliance, Intrepid, Canadian Harmony, Harken, PF24-C 'Cold Hardy', Lucky 13 and Ranger. Of these, Canadian Harmony is popular for canning and eating, Ranger is another good canner and Reliance reportedly is the most cold-hardy. However, the fruit from Reliance, although still good, lacks the quality of other peaches.

Apricots, plums and cherries are adapted to many areas of Northern Utah, especially along the Wasatch front. Apricots often bloom before the last frost and must be situated in areas less prone to harboring cold temperatures. These areas include the bottoms of slopes and gullies. Apricot varieties such as Chinese and Moorpark are especially common but many others exist. In addition to apricots, most stone fruits are more likely to produce greater amounts of fruit when situated similarly.

The Master Gardener training classes will start February 11. If you want to learn more about gardening and landscaping, they are very informative classes. The class last for approximately 14 weeks. Registration is \$95.