
FRUITING PLUM

PLUM CARE

There are three main types of plums, Japanese, European, and hybrids. Plums prefer a site with full sun and well draining soil. Like most trees, plums do well with an annually dose of fertilization in the fall or spring. While plum trees are quite frost hardy, their blooms are not, and Japanese plums tend to bloom quite early which can be problematic for fruit development if it freezes while in bloom. Trees can be protected from frost with row cover if they start blooming when the weather is still foul. Plums do best when they are pruned in the spring, as they are more susceptible to silver leaf disease and bacterial canker if pruned in winter.

PLUM POLLINATION

In order for plums to set fruit they need to be pollinated. Plums are most commonly pollinated by honey bees. While some plums are considered self pollinating, all will benefit from cross pollination and give much more consistent yields when planted with one or more compatible varieties. Cross pollination will occur when two or more differing varieties of plums are planted within the same vicinity and bloom at the same or overlapping times. Japanese and European plums are not cross compatible, a European plum should be planted with another variety of European plum, and the same goes for Japanese plums.

PLUM USES

Plums can be eaten fresh, canned, and dried. Japanese plums are typically best eaten fresh. European plums are often called prunes, because they are the type that are good for drying, they are also good to eat fresh though.

ROOTSTOCK

Plums can grow larger or smaller depending on the rootstock they are grafted onto. Most nurseries offer semi-dwarf and dwarf plums, so there is a size perfect to fit most yards.

European:

Dwarf- A dwarf European plum tree will grow 8-10' tall and wide. They are usually the earliest to mature and bear fruit, and typically produce 1-2 bushel a tree. They usually benefit from staking.

Semi Dwarf- A semi-dwarf European plum tree will grow 12-15' tall and wide. They are slower to bear fruit then dwarf, but will produce a larger amount, typically 2-4 bushels a tree. They commonly do not require staking.

Standard- A standard European plum tree will grow 18' x 20' or larger. They often take longer to bear fruit, but bear the most fruit, typically 3-6 bushels a tree. They are very sturdy and require no staking.

Japanese:

Dwarf- A dwarf Japanese plum tree will grow 8-10' tall and wide. They are usually the earliest to mature and bear fruit, and typically produce 1/2-2 bushel a tree. They usually benefit from staking.

Semi Dwarf- A semi-dwarf Japanese plum tree will grow 12-15' tall and wide. They are slower to bear fruit then dwarf, but will produce a larger amount, typically 1-3 bushels a tree. They commonly do not require staking.

Standard- A standard Japanese plum tree will grow 18' x 20' or larger. They often take longer to bear fruit, but bear the most fruit, typically 2-4 bushels a tree. They are very sturdy and require no staking.

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PLUMS (JAPANESE AND AMERICAN)

SF=Self-Fertile

Variety	Fruit size/shape	Color	Taste/uses/etc	Recommended Pollenizer
Emerald Beauty	Large, round-oval	Light green skin	Yellow, freestone flesh, exceptionally sweet, crisp & crunchy	Santa Rosa, Flavor King Pluot
Santa Rosa	Large, round-oval	Purplish red	Purple flesh, High Quality	Partly SF, Recommend Pollenizer
Satsuma	Medium-large round	Dark red	Red flesh firm, sweet, good for many uses	Partly SF; Shiro, Santa Rosa
Shiro	Medium-large round	Yellow, pink blush	Mild, sweet, translucent flesh	Santa Rosa, Satsuma (A good pollenizer)
Superior	Large	Golden, pink blush	Bears heavily, great fruit, great all around tree	SF

***Japanese and American Plums are usually semi self-fertile, but a pollenizer is almost always recommended. Japanese Plums bloom earlier and usually won't pollinize European varieties.**

PRUNES (EUROPEAN PLUMS)

Variety	Fruit size/shape	Color	Taste/uses/etc	Recommended Pollenizer
Italian	Medium-large oval	Purplish-black	Sweet yellow flesh, good for canning/drying	SF, but pollenizer recommended

***Most European Plums are self-fertile, but a pollenizer is useful in increasing fruit yields. European Plums bloom later than Japanese varieties, so cross-pollination is usually not possible.**