There are several considerations to make when choosing apple tree varieties including apple type, ripening date, tree size and what is available in garden centers. In areas with commercial orchards, the growing of backyard trees is discouraged. In these areas, controlling infestations, such as apple maggots, is crucial to the success of the local apple industry. In Washington State, homeowners have a legal responsibility to manage insect pests that may reside on their backyard fruit trees. Homeowners not willing to protect their fruit trees from apple maggots and other pests should not consider planting fruit trees on their residential property. Check for local, county and state regulations and restrictions.

**Rootstock:**
Apple trees grown on dwarf or semi-dwarf rootstocks are recommended for home orchards. They are smaller in size than standard trees and therefore easier to spray, prune and harvest. They begin bearing fruit two to three years earlier than standard trees and bear about the same amount of fruit as standard trees.

**Cross Pollination:**
All apple trees need to be cross-pollinated to produce fruit. This means that pollen from a different variety that blooms at the same time must be nearby. (Nearby is not an exact distance...closer is better but a neighbor’s tree can do the trick). Spokane County Extension publication C105, “Pollination of Fruit Trees”, lists cross-pollinators for local apple varieties. Some trees for home gardens come grafted with a pollinating variety on them. You can also bring cut branches from a pollinator tree that is in bloom and place them in amongst your tree branches.

**Maintenance:**
Apple trees will bear quality fruit only when they are maintained properly.
- Prune annually to maximize light and air circulation throughout the tree. Spokane County Extension can help with pruning tips and techniques.
- Washington State Law (RCW 15.09.060) states that property owners must control horticultural pests on their property. Spokane County Extension publication C041, “Spray Schedule for Apples”, lists when and how to spray for diseases of apple trees. Avoid pesticide application during bloom to protect the honey bees!
Local Varieties:
This list of suggested varieties is grouped according to fruit ripening.

- **Early** ripening apples are picked in August or early September.
- **Mid-season** apples are picked mid-September to early October.
- **Late** varieties are picked mid-October or later.

Ripening dates may vary a bit from region to region and from one year to the next. Use this list as a guideline, but remember that these varieties may not be available in all places and there may be others that may be suitable in your area.

**Early ripening apple varieties:**

**Yellow Transparent:** Pale greenish yellow skin, medium sized fruit. Strong flavor, good as cooking apple. Matures late July.

**Lodi:** Green in color, medium sized fruit. Matures early August.

**Earligold:** Yellow apple, good flavor, stores longer than other early types. Ripens early September.

**Gingergold:** Yellow apple, crisp and slightly tart flavor, stores well. Ripens late August.

**Akane (also called Tokyo Rose):** Red, firm apple of medium size. Good flavor. Some scab resistance. Ripens early September.

**Tydemans Early:** Red skin, medium size. Ripens late August, early September.

**Paula Red:** Red skin, medium size. Susceptible to scab and mildew. Ripens late August.

**Prime Red:** Disease resistant apple of fair fruit quality. Ripens late August.

**Gravenstein:** Can be yellow, red striped or full red. Large, crisp, tart apple. Versatile for eating fresh and cooking. Store well for several months. Late August or early September ripening.

**Mid-season ripening apple varieties:**

**Crab:** Small, rosy red. Very tart. Good for jelly or jam. Ripens late September.

**Gala:** Yellow background with red stripes or red blush apple. Other strains, such as Royal Gala are redder. Medium sized, crisp, sweet and juicy apple. Ripens late September.

**Jonathan:** Can be green with red stripes. Tart, sweet flavor good for eating or cooking

**McIntosh:** Large, red apple. Sweet and tart excellent dessert apple but soft and doesn’t store well. Susceptible to scab and mildew. Ripens mid-September.

**Priscilla:** Red, disease resistant. Spicy flavor. Ripens mid September.
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**Chehalis**: Greenish, yellow apple, medium large in size. Slightly more tart then yellow Delicious. Ripens mid-September.


**Liberty**: Yellow apple with red stripes. Crisp. Resistant to scab, fireblight and mildew. Ripens early October.

**Empire**: Red, medium sized apple. Firm, stores well. Cross between McIntosh and Red Delicious. Mid to late season, ripens in early October.

**Cortland**: Red, large, soft fruit. Susceptible to scab. Mid to late season, ripens early October.

**Late ripening apple varieties:**

**Jonagold**: Orange, yellow fruit, firm, juicy. Ripens mid October.

**Idared**: Red, large, tart apple. Stores well. Ripens mid-October.

**Sir Prize**: Large, yellow, soft, disease resistant apple. Best for immediate use. Ripens mid-October.


**Rome Beauty**: Large red apple, mild flavor. Good baking apple. Ripens late October

**Too late for Northeast Washington:**

Winesap, Mutsu, Fuji, Braeburn, Newton Pippin and Northern Sky apples ripen after Rome Beauty and may not mature in this growing season, at least for consistent production.

**References:**

Revised Code of Washington - [RCW Title 15 Agriculture and Marketing - Section 15.09.060](https://app.leg.wa.gov/statutes/codified/?code=15&section=15.09.060) Owner's duty to control pests and diseases

WSU [EB1928E](https://wsu.edu) “Protecting Backyard Apple Trees from Apple Maggot”

WSU [FS120E](https://wsu.edu) “Coddling Moth and Your Backyard Fruit Tree”