

# Why Growing Fruit Trees in the Backyard May Not Be for Everyone

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## START HERE

Oh Yes! Fruit trees can be beautiful at flower bloom and again at harvest. Just drive through the Columbia Basin in the spring and enjoy the view. Nothing can be more satisfying than supplying family and friends with the fruits of your labor. But please consider the following concerns before you plant a fruit tree in your backyard.



Follow these blue arrows!

Apples, pears and cherries (tart & sweet) have serious insect pests that directly infest the fruit. Proper pest management requires lots of labor AND often requires pesticide applications to keep your fruit pest-free year after year.  
**If you grow these tree fruits, these fruit pests will eventually come—I guarantee it!**



Apples & pears attract **codling moth** or the “worm of the apple.” Apples & hawthorns attract the **apple maggot**, and Cherries attract **western cherry fruit fly**.  
And what could be worse than finding a worm or maggot in your fruit?  
**Well, maybe finding only half of one!!**

The adult fly is 1/4 inch long. The female can lay dozens of eggs under the surface of apple fruit. Eggs hatch into hungry maggots that tunnel and feed within the fruit. Once inside the apple, pesticides can't reach the maggots (mature maggot is about 1/4 inch long).  
Top 3 control strategies include:  
➢ pesticide sprays starting early July and continuing every 10-14 days until harvest (3 to 4 sprays / year)  
➢ Periodically scouting & picking of all infested fruit on the tree and destroying them  
➢ Adult fly trap out with sticky traps or red spheres.



The codling moth is 1/2 inch long. The female lays dozens of eggs that hatch into hungry worms looking for an apple to feed in. Once inside the apple, the worm is home sweet home & pesticides can't reach them (mature worms are 3/4 inch long).

## Top 3 control strategies include:

- pesticide sprays starting 10 days after petal fall and continuing every 10-14 days until harvest (at least 3-5 sprays per season are necessary)
- Periodically scouting & picking of all infested fruit on the tree and destroying them
- Early in the season, bag all fruit on the tree.



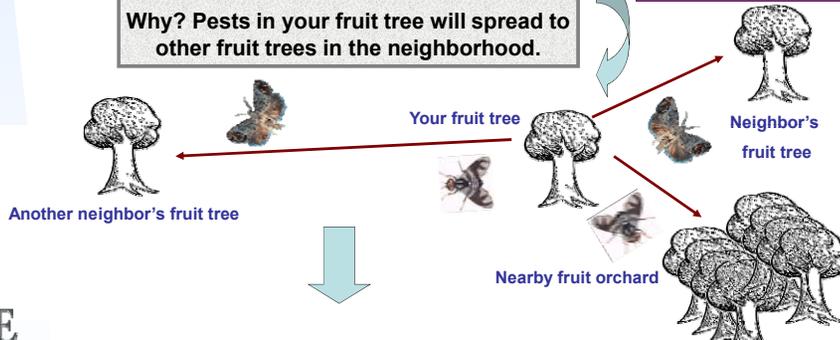
**WARNING**  
Washington State Law (RCW 15.09.060) states that property owners must control horticultural pests on their property.  
Why? Pests in your fruit tree will spread to other fruit trees in the neighborhood.



The adult fly is less than 1/4 inch long. The female fly can lay dozens of eggs just under the surface of a cherry fruit that hatch into hungry maggots that tunnel and feed within the fruit. Once inside the cherry, pesticides can't reach the maggots (5/16" long).

## Top control strategies include:

- Pesticide sprays targeting adult flies starting late May and continuing every 10 days until harvest (3 to 4 sprays per year)
- Adult fly trap out with sticky traps.



**CONCLUSION**  
Do not plant apples, pears or cherries in your backyard. Insect pest management necessitates multiple pesticide sprays.

Consider planting plums, peaches or apricots. Insect and disease occurrence in plums, peaches and apricots are less severe and do not pose a threat to the fruit industry.

**CONTACT WSU EXTENSION OR WSU MASTER GARDENERS FOR PEST MANAGEMENT & HORTICULTURAL INFORMATION.**

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## REMEMBER

The Grant-Adams Area is a leading producer of apples, and sweet cherries. The tree fruit industry is vital to our local economy. Support your economy, let the “pros” grow your apples and cherries!