



Backyard Fruit Trees: *More Trouble Than They Are Worth?*

Most people who plant fruit trees in their backyard find the planting to be an enjoyable experience, and look forward to the time when they can pick fresh fruit to eat and to share with friends. ***Most of these people do not realize the work or responsibility that goes with that little tree when it is planted.***

Q: In what way am I responsible for my fruit trees?

A: Local laws specify that YOU, the owner are responsible for controlling destructive pests and diseases of fruit trees on your property. This is true whether you plant the tree yourself, or buy property with fruit trees already on it.

Q: What harm can my fruit tree do?

A: The tree can harbor insects and diseases. If not properly controlled, these pests can move to a neighbor's backyard tree or travel great distances to infest commercial orchards where they can cause serious economic damage.

Q: What are some pests of tree fruits?

A: Many pests and diseases attack fruit trees, but the main concerns for homeowners are codling moth, San Jose scale for apple; codling moth, San Jose scale and pear psylla for pear; and cherry fruit fly for cherry.

Q: Why are these pests so harmful?

The *female codling moth* can lay over 100 eggs in her lifetime. The eggs are individually laid on foliage near apples/pears or directly on apples/pears as the moth travels through the orchard. The worms that hatch eat into the fruit, destroying it.

Con't: *San Jose scale* is a serious parasite of apple and pear attacking both the fruit and wood of the tree. *Cherry fruit fly* inserts eggs under fruit skin. Eggs hatch into maggots that feed on fruit and remain in fruit through harvest.

IMPORTANT: *Fruit from infested apple, pear and cherry orchards is denied access to foreign markets due to a concern of pest introduction to that country. Additional cover sprays cost growers and backyard tree fruit owner's time and money. These additional sprays also eliminate growers from more lucrative markets because the marketplace is very concerned about sprays used on fruit. When the fruit is eliminated from markets, lower prices for fruit impacts the industry, affecting the economic well-being of our communities. Commercial apple, pear and cherry fruit growers have fewer control products due to pest resistance and the high cost of pesticide re-registration.*

Q: What must I do to control codling moth, San Jose scale and cherry fruit fly?

A. The only sure way to control codling moth, San Jose scale and cherry fruit fly on your backyard fruit tree is to spray with insecticides. This is what conventional and organic commercial growers do. A homeowner will have to apply 1 early spray for scale; codling moth late spring and summer 4-8+ applications, depending on control product; cherry fruit fly late spring – summer every week from yellow fruit through the harvest of all fruit. Remember, a full-grown fruit tree takes special equipment - high pressure sprayers - to thoroughly cover the canopy.

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Q: What might happen if I don't control my fruit tree pests?

A: If a commercial grower suspects that your tree is infested with a pest, the grower can file a complaint with the local Horticultural Pest and Disease Board. These Boards, set up in each county in Washington, are responsible for handling complaints and eliminating infestations.

Q: What should I do if I already have a fruit tree on my property and it has not been sprayed for pests?

A: There are two options. One is to start spraying apples and pears for San Jose scale and codling moth, and/or cherry's for cherry fruit fly on a regular basis. The second option is to cut the fruit tree down and buy your fruit from local sources.

Information on pesticides and timing of sprays to control pests are available at WSU Chelan County Extension and Chelan County Pest Board

Q: What should I consider before I plant a backyard fruit tree?

A: Decide whether you want to accept the responsibility for taking care of the fruit tree(s) every year.

- Are you ready to do the pruning, spraying and harvesting?
- Are you willing to buy special spray equipment, or to have a commercial pesticide applicator spray several times per season?
- Do you want to have pesticides sprayed regularly around your home?
- Are you prepared to control pests, or have the tree removed?

Q: Can I grow a fruit tree from a sprout growing on my property?

A: No, fruit trees are grafted onto a rootstock which is a different cultivar than the top, fruit producing part of the tree. The sprouts coming up from the rootstock will not produce desirable fruit.

MORE THOUGHTS

There is continual concern about our environment. An infested fruit tree that spreads pests through an area forces all the growers to apply additional sprays to protect their orchards from damage. That single infested tree can also cause growers to spray more acreage, upsetting the balance of natural predators and beneficial insects that modern growers rely on.

Tree fruits are an important industry here in Washington. We take pride in the quality of the fruit we grow. Be a good neighbor: CONTROL TREE FRUIT PESTS. Otherwise, do not plant a fruit tree. If there is a fruit tree on your property and you cannot maintain it, please consider cutting it down.

USING PESTICIDES SAFELY

Always read the label and follow all label precautions and directions.

- ◆ It is a violation of the law to disregard label directions.
- ◆ Use pesticides with care. Apply them only to plants, animals, or sites listed on the label. When mixing and applying pesticides, follow all label precautions to protect yourself and other around you.
- ◆ If pesticides are spilled on skin or clothing, remove clothing and wash skin thoroughly. Launder clothes separately. Store pesticides in their original containers and keep them out of the reach of children, pets, and livestock.

<p>400 Washington St. Wenatchee, WA 98801 WSU Chelan County Extension (509) 667-6540 http://www.ncw.wsu.edu</p> <p>Chelan Douglas Counties Pest and Disease Board (509) 667-6677 http://www.co.chelan.wa.us/pc/pc_main.htm</p>

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