

Tree Fruit Cultivar Recommendations for Arkansas

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The commercial success of a fruit orchard is highly dependent on the selection of cultivars that will perform reliably for the selected site and location and meet market demands. When selecting cultivars for your orchard, consider the following:



Climatic Adaptability of the Cultivars

The cultivars you select need to be adapted to the climatic conditions for your geographic location. Pay close attention to the information given by the nursery catalogs such as USDA winter hardiness zones and chilling requirements. Arkansas has five hardiness zones (6a-8a). If your orchard is located in a colder area of the state (USDA hardiness zones 6a or 6b), you need to select cultivars that are adapted to the colder winter temperatures. If you are in the southern part of the state, then you need to select fruit cultivars with lower chilling hour requirements.

Time of Bloom and Days to Harvest

You can select early-, mid- and late-season cultivars to extend or concentrate the season to match your time constraints and specific market demands. However, care must be taken to make sure not to select cultivars that bloom too early, especially in crops such as peaches, where danger of frost damage to the blooms can be a problem. For fruits that require cross-pollination,

such as apples and pears, the time of bloom must coincide in order to have cross-pollination among the cultivars.

Pest Resistance

Growing fruits requires high horticultural and pest management inputs. The first step to reduce the amount of time and effort is to buy cultivars that have low susceptibility to pests prevalent in your area.

For example, in Arkansas, bacterial spot is a serious disease that affects leaves, twigs and fruit of peaches and nectarines. The disease can prematurely defoliate a tree, causing weakness and eventually death if not treated. It is prevalent in areas with hot, humid climates. Peach cultivars bred in areas where the climate is not conducive to the development of bacterial spot are usually not tested for resistance to this disease. If you buy cultivars that have been developed in an area where this disease is not a problem, e.g., California, there is a high probability that the peach will be susceptible to

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this disease unless otherwise stated in the nursery catalog. Buying trees that have pest resistance does not mean you will not have to spray your trees at all. It only means you will decrease the number of sprays needed.

Selecting a Nursery

The investment you will be making in buying plants needs to have very careful consideration. Plant quality from the nursery has an impact on the life-long productivity of the planting. Choose a nursery carefully. Ask other growers for suggestions on where to buy your plants. They can give you positive or negative comments about a nursery. Remember that bargain or low-priced plants may be more costly in the long run if they are of poor quality.



Fruit	Cultivar	Notes
APPLES		
Early (July - Aug)	William's Pride	Maroon-red, medium to large, dessert apple with crisp-like flavor. Trees are annually productive and easy to grow. Resistant to Apple Scab, Fire Blight, Powdery Mildew. Does not store well.
	Pristine	A yellow, dessert apple. Tree has a tendency toward biennial bearing. Resistant to Scab and Powdery Mildew, moderately resistant to Fire Blight and Cedar Apple Rust. Does not store well.
Mid (Sept)	Suncrisp	Medium to large, firm, crisp, rich fruit. Used for cooking and desserts. High yield and precocious tree. Good storage.
	Red Delicious	Standard older cultivar. Red, large, mild flavor, dessert apple. Susceptible to Apple Scab, but good resistance to Fire Blight. Good storage.
	Golden Delicious	Yellow, large apple. Mild and juicy flavor. Used for cooking and as dessert apple. Susceptible to Powdery Mildew and Apple Scab.
	Arkansas Black	Arkansas favorite with a red, medium-size fruit. Hard, distinctive flavor. Used for cooking and fresh consumption. Susceptible to Apple Scab and Fire Blight. Good storage.
Late (Oct-Nov)	Enterprise	Red, medium to large apple, spicy, full flavor. Best disease resistance available. Stores well.
	Gold Rush	Yellow, medium-size, very firm, crisp, unique flavor, dessert apple. Disease resistant to Scab, Powdery Mildew and Fire Blight. High susceptibility to Cedar Apple Rust.

Fruit	Cultivar	Notes
PEARS		
European	Comice	Large, broad-based, greenish-yellow fruit. Finely textured flesh. Excellent dessert, but not canning. Large, vigorous tree. Good Fire Blight resistance. Low chill: 600 chilling hours.
	Harrow Delight	Medium-size fruit with attractive red blush over yellow background. Flesh is high quality with very low grit cells. Hardy, productive tree with high resistance to Fire Blight.
	Kiefer	Large, long, yellow-golden fruit. Coarse texture. Good for canning. Fruit is picked while still hard and stored in a cool place. Can be self-fruitful. Hard, vigorous tree. High resistance to Fire Blight.
	Maxine	Bartlett type. Large, golden, firm fruit with very low grit cells. Good for fresh eating, canning and preserves. Tree highly productive, upright habit. High Fire Blight resistance.
	Magness	Greenish-yellow, medium-size fruit with a red blush. Smooth flesh. Good for fresh eating, but not canning. Stores well. Does not produce good pollen. High Fire Blight resistance.
	Moonglow	A Comice seedling. Medium-large, dull yellow fruit. Excellent for fresh juice or canning; stores well. High resistance to Fire Blight. Requires 700 chilling hours.
	Seckel	Commonly called Sugar Pear. Not very attractive looking due to its russet skin, but great flavor. Smooth flesh. Excellent dessert pear. Self-fertile, but benefits from cross-pollination. Some Fire Blight resistance.
Asian	Shinsesik1	Round, firm, yellow-skinned fruit that can be stored up to three months in common storage. Can be self-pollinating. Moderate resistance to Fire Blight.
	20th Century	Common cultivar also known as Nijisseiki. Fruit is round and yellow skinned. Can store for a long period of time. Moderate resistance to Fire Blight.

Fruit	Cultivar	Notes
PEACHES		
	Bellaire	Yellow, freestone, 750 chilling hours. Medium crop potential. Medium to large fruit size.
	Contender	Yellow, freestone. High chilling hours. Hardy. Very good cropping potential. Small- to medium-size fruit. Late bloomer.
	Cresthaven	Yellow, freestone, lacks red color. Very good cropping potential. Large fruit size.
	Goldcrest	Low chill (400 hours), cling, non-melting flesh. Early harvest. Small fruit size. Frost prone.
	Loring	Yellow, freestone. Moderate resistance to Bacterial Spot. Good cropper with large fruit. Frost prone.
	Redhaven	Standard, yellow, semi-cling. Medium crop potential. Small- to medium-size fruit.
	Surecrop	Yellow, cling. Very good cropping potential. Medium-size fruit. Late bloomer.
	White County*	Very productive, mid-season, exceptional low-acid flavor, white, melting flesh, freestone. Distinct exceptional white peach flavor; sweet with an average of 14% soluble solids. Very firm, but softens to melting flesh when fully mature. Bacterial Spot occasionally seen on the leaves, but no economic damage on fruit.
	White River*	Very productive, large-fruited, high-quality, mid-late season, white, melting flesh, freestone. Red blush over 60%-80% of skin with cream-like ground color; very attractive. High resistance to Bacterial Spot and only very seldom seen on leaves; one of the more resistant peaches in the Arkansas breeding program.
	White Rock*	White, melting flesh, freestone. Low acid, very firm, non-melting flesh that remains firm when fully mature to overmature. Early maturing. Moderate resistance to Bacterial Spot, occasionally seen on leaves but no economic damage on fruits.
NECTARINES		
	Arrington*	Yellow, non-melting flesh, cling. Resistant to Bacterial Spot, and this disease seldom observed on fruits. Early ripening. Medium-size fruit.
	Bradley*	Yellow, non-melting flesh, cling. Resistant to Bacterial Spot. Bradley is the largest-fruited of the Arkansas releases thus far. Its flavor is not as fully “nectarine” as the others but is considered good in all ratings. It has very firm fruit and should handle well after harvest compared to many melting-flesh nectarines.

* Denotes University of Arkansas release.

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