

# Pears

## Pyrus

### A Garden Guide

Modern pears derive from trees in temperate regions of Europe and East Asia. Here in the NC mountains, we are also an excellent region for growing pears, especially Asian pears. European pears are renowned for their flavor and soft melt-in-your-mouth texture; Asian pears are juicy and crunchy.



Pear trees are commonly grafted. The lower part of the tree is called the rootstock, and this mostly determines the size of the tree, but can also confer some disease resistance. The upper part of the tree is called the scion, and bears the fruit.

Fruit trees generally come in three basic sizes - dwarf, semi-dwarf, and standard (full size). We mostly carry semi-dwarf, as they are a good compromise between the vigor and longer life of the standard tree, and the precocity of the dwarfing types, all at a manageable size.

For best production and fruit quality, **plant at least two different varieties** of pear trees with overlapping bloom periods.

**Siting:** Pear trees need plenty of space, with good air flow, in full sun (6-8 hours). Ideally plant them in the middle of a slope. Avoid planting them in frost pockets, at the bottom of a slope. Late frosts can damage blooms.

**Soil and Planting:** Pear trees prefer a pH of 6.0-6.5, with moist, well-draining soil. A good soil test will tell you exactly what to add, but usually in our soils, pear trees will need at least 1/3rd soil conditioner, up to 1/3rd rich composts, and perhaps lime mixed with our native clay. Applying mycorrhizae directly to the roots, just prior to planting, will improve tree resilience. Dig a hole 2-3x as wide as the pot, only as deep as the pot, plant the tree in the soil at the same height as it was in the pot or a little bit higher. Apply 2-3" of hardwood mulch to the root zone, do not let it touch the trunk or any woody roots that might be visible.

**Fertilizing:** Many options - Espoma Tree-tone® applied in the spring is an excellent choice. Compost tea is a wonderful snack for your trees in the spring and summer.



**Watering:** Slowly, deeply, and once weekly during the first growing season. Supplemental water will be needed during dry periods - drought can compromise fruit production. Less water will be needed during rainy periods. Remember, too much or too little water can cause significant health issues.

**Pruning:** Prune out any dead or diseased wood at any time, sterilizing your pruners between cuts. In winter, prune any crossed branches and to improve air flow. Pears have a very upright habit and benefit greatly from pruning. Please see this in-depth guide from the NCSU Cooperative Extension Service - [Training and Pruning Fruit Trees in North Carolina](#).

**Sanitation:** Clear leaves and fallen debris near trees.

### **Organic Spray Schedule:**

**Late winter** - Horticulture oil (knock back pests). Use Copper as needed to control fungal issues.

**Bloom** - Apply Nothing!! Bees are providing their valuable pollination services at this time, and must be protected.

**Petal Fall** - Apply Spinosad, Neem Oil, Insecticidal Soap, or organic Pyrethrins, as needed, to deter pests.

If pest pressure becomes significant, a Kaolin clay spray, that creates a physical barrier protecting the tree and fruits, may be a wise course of action.

**Rotate products to help prevent pests from developing resistance to them.**

**Harvesting:** Have patience! They may not start blooming and fruiting until they are 7 years old.

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