

### Starting Your Own Fruit Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Every year I get calls from home gardeners who want to start their own apple trees. They most often want to plant seeds from an apple that is particularly tasty so they can get more of the same. I can tell you right now that you probably have a better chance of winning the lottery as you do getting an apple tree from seed that tastes as good or better than the parent tree. As a matter of fact, the odds of getting something as good or better are about 1 in 80,000. It's very simple, apple trees are cross pollinated. The apple trees you buy from a nursery are grafted. They take cuttings, or scion wood from the parent tree and graft it on to dwarfing root stock. By doing this you obtain genetically identical trees, or at least the fruiting part of the tree. As hard as it may be to realize, virtually all of those millions of red delicious apple trees can be traced back to that one tree in Iowa that somebody discovered in the 1870s. Now, if you want to try your hand at grafting a fruit tree, I can sure help you learn the technique. All you need is a parent tree (that isn't protected by patent by the way), and then dwarfing rootstocks - those will cost you about \$5 a piece plus shipping. Then there's the knives, the wax or grafting tape and a bunch of time to learn how to make it happen. After you get a graft to take then it's a couple more years of pruning and training to get it up to a decent size where you can then think about getting fruit, IF the weather cooperates. So yes, I can help you get there if you really want to, but I'd suggest you just head to the nursery and buy another apple tree! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Pruning Fruit Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I grew up on a farm in Nebraska with a good sized fruit orchard - and by good size I'm talking more than 30 trees. From the time I was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I dreaded seeing February roll around because I knew that on warm evenings or warm weekend days, Dad would expect me to be out pruning the fruit trees. Late winter, while fruit trees are still holding pretty dormant, is the time to be pruning trees. Fruit tree pruning is something that needs to be done annually but far too many homeowners do rarely. Each species of fruit tree has different pruning needs. Basically we prune to control the size of the tree, we prune to improve quality of fruit by reducing the amount that the tree will set, thereby increasing the size of the fruit and we prune to make it easier to apply fungicides and insecticides if needed. In a two minute radio program I can't explain to you all the intricacies of fruit tree pruning. You need to learn where on a tree each species bears fruit. It's different for peaches than apples, for cherries and for pears - well, pears are a lot like apples. You want to keep the middle of the tree sort of open so sunlight can get in to the leaves in the middle. You want to eliminate branches that hang to low or that are rubbing on each other. You want to prune so as to keep fruit on shorter branches where the tree can support the weight without propping up branches with 2 x 4s. We have a good bulletin on fruit tree pruning available at the Extension Office and I can answer your questions, even stop by and look at your tree and give you suggestions, but not prune it! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

What should I plant?

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We are a very mobile community. Partially because of Ft Riley, but also as a reflection of the society that we have become, we have a lot of families leaving and arriving on a regular basis. As a result every spring we have a lot of new residents who want to garden or want to improve the landscape in their yard who either wind up in a quandary about what to plant, or they try to plant what they did at their last home, which can sadly lead to a disaster. For anyone who is used to gardening east of the Mississippi River, Kansas can seem like a pretty extreme location. And they are correct, it is. Just take last week as an example. We went from a record setting 76 on Monday afternoon to a morning low of about 6 on Friday morning. We can have, like we saw last year and may see again this year, blistering heat, winds and low humidities that will wilt all but the hardiest plants. Then the next year, or even the next month we can have "normal" summer temperatures, abundant rainfall and high humidities. Great for growing all sorts of things and all the diseases that grow on those plants. So we do have a harsh climate and you have to utilize plants that can handle this. To that end we have a whole series of bulletins that talk about trees, shrubs, garden plants, annuals and perennials that seem to be best suited to our Kansas climate. You can find them on line or call the Extension Office or stop by and ask to see some of the bulletins on plants adapted to Kansas. The information is free and you might be surprised at what all we do have information on! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.