

Latin Name/Genus: *Malus domestica*

Family: *Rosaceae*

Difficulty: Easy

Season: Warm season

Exposure: Full-sun

Zone: Between Zones 5-9; 'Hardy' cultivars hardy to Zone 3



Timing: Plant bare-root trees as soon as the soil can be worked (March-April); plant potted trees after threat of frost has passed. Prune existing trees prior to spring growth, but after the coldest temperatures have passed. Water newly-planted trees thoroughly and consistently.

Starting: Find a sunny location (at least 8 hrs/day), and ideally a location with other apple trees or crabapple trees nearby (within 30m/100'), otherwise another apple tree will need to be planted nearby in order for fruit development via cross-pollination. Dig a hole deep enough that the top of the root ball is level with the top of the dug hole; do not bury the trunk. When filling back in the hole, mix a bit of compost in for nutrients; mulch at the base will help keep roots cool, retain moisture, prevent run-off, improves overall soil content, and is a great weed deterrent (recommended: 1/2 cubic yard between 10-12cm deep to a radius of 1m from base for new trees, refreshing mulch regularly and pull away from trunk a bit to avoid rot). To grow from seed, seeds need to be exposed to cool moist conditions prior to planting (either in moistened sand in a container in the fridge for 3-4 months, or by sowing them 1cm (1/2") deep in fall and letting nature prepare the seeds naturally); sow outdoors 1/2" deep once threat of frost has passed.

Days to Maturity: From transplant date.

Growing: Ideal pH is between 6.0-6.5 for all fruit trees. For the first year-year and a half, use two wooden stakes on either side of young trees to help support them (avoid hammering into rootball); install a good tree guard to protect against animal/ winter injury. Water consistently daily (May-Oct), providing extra water during dry spells throughout summer. Pruning young trees can slow overall growth and delay fruiting, so prune frugally/as needed, but definitely annually to maintain adequate structure.

Nutrient Preferences: Apple trees benefit from minimal applications of nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium, although calcium is beneficial too.

Harvest: Ready to pick when fruit colour has changed, should part readily from the branch when cupped (do not yank). It's recommended to thin after natural fruit drop (approximately 4-6 weeks after bloom) to one fruit per cluster to avoid potential disease and insect issues, prevent limb breakage, and ensure better-tasting, larger fruit.

Companion Planting: Apple trees like comfrey, chives, herbs, clover, tansy, lavender, and fennel.