



GREEN Gardens UTAH

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FALL 2010

Cool Weather Vegetable Gardening Autumn is the right time for these



aren't really going to do that well when it gets to be freezing outside – are they?”

Looks like these Leeks are doing just fine playing in the snow – doesn't it? Truly there are many frost and cold tolerant vegetables you can actually grow here in the high desert. You do need to follow some simple rules though.

Veggies do well in soil that has good drainage. This is why so many desert gardeners have discovered that containers or pots and raised beds are just what the Doctor ordered. If your soil doesn't drain very well, then here are some ideas for improving that.

Amend your soil! This means adding a good quality compost like Pay Dirt, and some peat moss. If your dirt is very fine (high clay content) add some sand to loosen it up. If your garden is in the ground, “berm” the areas where you'll be planting. Higher soil levels where the plants will be growing naturally drain better. Make the berms at least five to six inches, and make them out of this great “mix” you have blended together.

Whether it's a raised bed or in the ground your vegetables need good fertilization to grow well and taste their best. Use a slow release, calcium rich, complete fertilizer like Dr. Q's Vegetable & Tomato Food. Like all of the Dr. Q Fertilizers, this one is designed specifically for our soil and climate.

Watering in the Winter can be tricky. We often get very little rain, but then sometimes a lot. When we get our winds the plants will need more frequent water, but if you give them too much and keep their feet wet this will cause trouble. A moisture meter is inexpensive, and especially when dealing with these type of variables; indispensable. Get one and use it. Check before you water in the top few inches of soil and if it is already quite wet; Don't water.

How about the fun part? – Harvesting! Pick your cool-season vegetables at the peak of perfection using these guidelines.

Broccoli - When you begin to see the head form in the middle, start checking daily. You want to harvest broccoli while the little buds are tightly closed. Don't be surprised if your broccoli head is smaller than the ones in the grocery store.

Brussels Sprouts - Brussels Sprouts are ready to harvest when the heads are firm and about an inch in diameter. Remove by twisting them from the central stem.

Cabbage - Cabbage is ready when the head forms. Some types keep well in the garden for weeks, while others may need to be cut soon after the heads are firm. Test the heads by squeezing them to see if they are solid.



Cauliflower - Check every day as it gets near to maturity. Let the head grow as long as it is small and compact. Maybe until it reaches about 6 inches. If the head begins to open up, cut it immediately no matter how small it is.

Collards - Collards are easy! They're ready to eat at just about any size. Cut off the lower leaves and let the plant grow more from the top. Routine harvesting will help keep the plant growing fast to produce more tender leaves.

Lettuce - Lettuce leaves are also ready to harvest at just about any size. Pick leaf lettuce by breaking leaves one at a time from the outside of the plant. Leave the center bud to grow more leaves. Lettuce that matures in cool weather is the sweetest.

Onions - When the tops begin to yellow, it is a sign that they are just about ready. Then, stop watering and let the bulb tops fall over and dry. The onions are mature and ready to be picked. After pulling the onions, spread them out in a dry place to cure for a few days.

Later in the season As the weather warms, many plants will go to seed. By the time they begin to stretch and send out a seed stalk, the leaves are often bitter. You planted and watchfully cared for your garden, don't forget to harvest and above all... **Enjoy!**

Those pots or that raised planter that you planted into this Spring needn't just lay there unproductive all Winter. It's time to start your Winter vegetable garden.

Though our Winters may feel a bit chilly to many of us, there are plenty of crops that you can start in your Fall garden that thrive in our mild Winters. Vegetables that add zest and vital nutrients to your family's diet.

If we start near the beginning of the alphabet the first Winter veggie we are likely to discover is the Beet. Beets are a major source of the sugar we eat, so it should be no surprise that whichever of the many ways we might prepare or cook this root crop, they are all going to make a dish - sweet to eat.

Beets grow large leaves quickly soaking up all the sunshine to help produce lots of sucrose. Then that delicious energy stored in the root, will later become a feast. The “greens”, which as you see are beautiful, are also a great side dish and source of potassium, calcium, vitamin A and anti-oxidants.

Ah but this is just the beginning of our Winter eating opportunities. There is Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage and Cauliflower to mention a few. Garlic and Onions handle our Winters just fine. Parsnips, Peas, Shallots and Turnips round out a veritable cornucopia of yummy opportunities.

I know, many readers are thinking “these plants

Fall Highlights

Cool Weather Vegetables

Growing Grapes

Trees and Our Environment

It's Time to Fertilize!

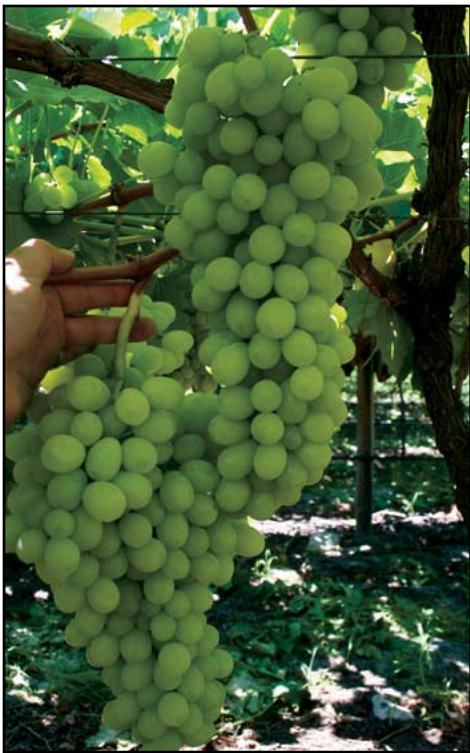
What to use? What's fertigation?

The Glory of Autumn

Fruit Trees

How to keep yours healthy

Growing Grapes In the Desert Southwest, Part 1



Edible and Beautiful

We all know how sweet and wonderful grapes are to eat. Because of the price we are compelled to pay for them, we are not including them in our diet very often. This is unfortunate because grapes are a good source of nutrition. Grapes are very low in Saturated Fat, Cholesterol and Sodium. They are also a very good source of Vitamin C and Vitamin K. Grape vines are a super addition to any Summer landscape and they withstand our hot Summers. In today's landscaping concepts, the opportunity to have edible and beautiful landscape plants is a priority, and grape vines belong at the top of this list.

Actually, just what you use to support your grapes vines can vary greatly, from a simply expandable trellis to an overhead arbor. Just give your grapes something to support them. Keep them off the ground and away from hungry insects.

Location and Soil

The ideal vineyard site provides lots of full sunlight, protection from prevailing winds and some protection from Spring frosts. Plant your grapevines in a sunny area with good drainage if possible. Grapes do grow in a broad range of soils but do their best in a well-drained soil. They also like a pH of 5.5 to 6.0 so you'll want to use soil amendments like organic mulch and sulfur products routinely to have the sweetest grapes and healthiest plants.

Clay soils can be made more suitable for grape production with the addition of sand and organic matter (manure, compost, or peat moss). Use Dr. Q's Stinking Rich Manure or Pay Dirt Compost for soil-building. Apply in the Fall before planting at the rate of 4 cubic feet per 100 square feet, then till into the soil deeply.

If you want to produce a large crop and intend to start a vineyard or you just want one good vine full of big sweet juicy grapes the basic soil preparations are the same. Prepare the site several months ahead of planting to allow for soil pH adjustment and enhanced nutrition levels in the soil. You will also want to make sure that you have the weed problem in that area under control. Don't make things extra tough on yourself by planting your grape vines into an area already producing a nice crop of undesirable "weeds".

It's that preparation you make ahead of time that produces grapes like you see here.

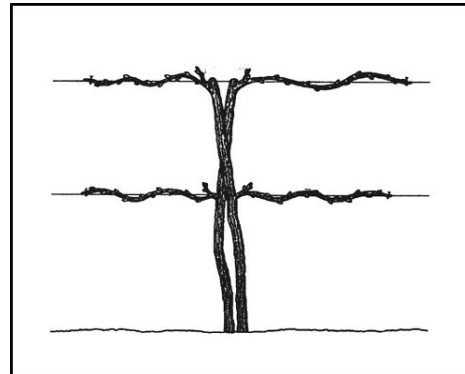
Planting

As with many plants "Fall is the time for Planting" with grapes. You can also plant in the Spring, but remember; our Winters are mild and plant roots continue to grow.

Handle young plants carefully to prevent their roots from drying out. Space plants 8 feet apart. If you are planning a vineyard make the rows about 8 to 10 feet apart.



Proper planting will have you dig the holes the same depth as the nursery pot – don't bury the roots under dirt; that will suffocate them. Do pack the soil firmly around the roots, prune newly-set plants to a single cane and head back to 2 or 3 buds. During the first growing season, select the most vigorous shoot from the single cane and prune off the rest. Make sure to give your grape vines a good start with Dr. Q's Gold Dust Starter Fertilizer.



The Trellis

The trellis can consist of: 1) firmly-set, well-braced posts at intervals of 10 feet along the row. Attach two strands of No. 10 coated or galvanized wire to the posts—one 6 feet above the ground and one 3 feet. Set the posts at least 3 feet deep (or in concrete) leaving 6 feet above ground. End posts should be well-braced to prevent pulling by

the taut wire coupled with the weight of the grape vines.

2) A pre-manufactured trellis.

Basically, this is the way you would like each grape vine to grow. This will produce the maximum amount of large delicious grapes.

You can have several vines on the same support system. Each gardener needs to apply their own imagination. This is what makes a garden so much fun anyway. Know which things are essential and then use your garden area the way that works best for you.

The Desert Southwest is a great place to grow grapes. These tips should give you some ideas on how to get started with some grape vines for your yard. Check back in the Winter Green Pages for things like pruning, weeds, insect control and best of all - harvesting. Grapes have no trouble with our Winters, which makes them one of our hardy plant recommendations. Plant now, and harvest next Summer.



Jon Robinson

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Trees – Beauty, Energy and the Environment

We hear all too often that using energy in our homes and burning gasoline in our vehicles causes carbon dioxide (CO²) to be added into the atmosphere. But what can we do? We have to work and live.

An answer lies with our friend the tree. In addition to some other very important benefits, trees are “sponges” for CO² and help reduce many other pollutants like ozone in the atmosphere. Trees are kind of like the lungs for our planet. Only they breathe in carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen. Mature trees can absorb roughly 48 pounds of CO² a year and in turn release enough oxygen to sustain two human beings.

Mature trees have a significant impact on the salability of homes. The greater the value of a home the larger an impact is made by the trees and landscape surrounding it. In today’s challenging market, this is an aspect that no home seller should overlook!

Trees add beauty! Just take a drive through several neighborhoods and compare landscapes laced with trees with those that offer only a



few desert shrubs, rock and not much else. It won’t take long to understand just how important trees are to the beauty of our homes and neighborhoods. As beauty is enhanced, value is increased.

Cooling! Here in the desert this benefit is likely the greatest. Our hot Summer temperatures typically run around 108°, and the afternoon

sun is just brutal when it enters the windows of our homes. This radiant heat drives up our Summer electric bill, busts our budgets and adds to our pollution problems. By shading the windows and walls of a home, landscaping can reduce air conditioning costs up to 40 %. Trees are especially effective where insulation is poor or exposure is high. If you plant a tree today on the west side of your home, in as little as 5 years your energy bills can be reduced by 4% or more. In 15 years the savings can reach 12%.

Where trees are shading asphalt and sidewalk or driveway, they have

a major impact on the “heat island” effect. These areas of our landscape absorb heat all day, then radiate this heat all night.

Constantly exposed soil and rock are significant reasons for the desert having such hot evening temps.

Consider the last time you parked your car this Summer; were you not looking for some shade from a nice tree?



Trees absorb sound and reduce noise pollution. Used for privacy they can help turn your home into a sanctuary.

Trees provide an inviting habitat for birds. Birds will add genuine charm to your landscape, but even better; they are a natural control for insects. Have you ever wished there were fewer bugs eating your plants? Well, birds are these insects worst nightmare. Not that you can’t get out the protective clothing and spray to get rid of the bugs – but who wants to? Having some help from a natural ally is a great idea.

Think about this too; Trees have social benefits. Adding trees to a neighborhood or a business park can really improve the mental state as well as the physical health of the residents or workers. The University of Cambridge did a study on job satisfaction of employees for businesses with and without a view of trees from their office. They found that employees with a view suffered from fewer diseases than workers without a view. Looking for ways to reduce overhead?

Imagine our community without trees! Just being around trees makes us feel good.

When you travel through neighborhoods without trees it’s not that difficult to sense how important they really are. A rockscape may be nice, but without some well placed trees to help balance the austere effect of decorative rock, it’s just not a comfortable environment. Trees need time to grow, so don’t wait, plant one today!

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It's Time to Fertilize! Did I hear - "What's that?"

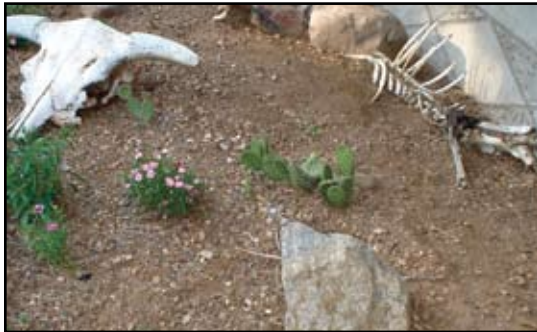
The soil in many parts of the country are naturally filled with all the nutrients that plants need and very little extra needs to be added for them to grow, bloom and fruit in the way we desire.



This is the Desert Southwest however. The soil for the most part has little to offer a plant. In fact our soil and water is very hard and alkaline – high pH. This means that often, even when nutrients are added, the soil binds these goodies up and keeps the plant from getting fed.

There seems to be a zillion fertilizers on the market, so are they all the same, or which one is needed for landscapes here?

This is a very important question. Because of the desert climate, soil and water root systems tend to develop more slowly than those in other parts of the country. If we use fertilizers that promote rapid foliage growth, the leaves and branches will out-pace the roots. What happens in a few years? The plant stresses because it has a small root system to support a large tree or shrub.



The best type of fertilizer will be one that is moderate-slow release nitrogen and high phosphorous and potassium. These three major (or macro) nutrients are essential to plant growth and not readily available in most desert soils. Then we have the

micro nutrients, or what I like to call plant vitamins like calcium, iron, zinc, magnesium, copper and more. The fertilizer you want for your landscape or garden needs to have a good supply of all these. This type of fertilizer is called "complete". One other very important aspect for fertilizers that excel here is sulfur. As bacteria breaks down the sulfur in the soil they produce acids. These acids modify the pH in our soil so that plants can take up the nutrients you put down. High pH is a real problem here and it interferes in a big way with nutrition.

Dr. Q's Fertilizers were developed for just these desert soils and water. They have the right kind of nitrogen and plenty of the other major nutrients for growth. They also have all the micro nutrients that your plants need to stay healthy and make the best use of the food you are giving them. Unlike other fertilizers advertised all over the country, Dr. Q's is designed specifically for the Southwest Desert.



If you're looking for the easiest way to fertilize your landscape, you need to know about "Fertigation". That's the term for automatic fertilizing. You will find the Yard Feeder system at Star Nursery. Once installed, all you need to do is to refill the tank with a quality liquid fertilizer like Dr. Q's Liquid Gold Dust, and it automatically feeds all the plants that are watered by your irrigation system. How's that for slick?

Now that the cool season is beginning, it's time to fertilize. During the heat we need to be very careful what we fertilize as nitrogen pushes growth and can easily cause stress when it's 108 degrees. With cooler evenings, plant roots get more active and will take up the food you're providing and help you to have a stand out lawn or landscape. Then, throughout our mild Winters, your plant's roots will continue to grow. Expanded and healthy root systems are essential for our plants when next Summer gets here, and now is the time to do something about this.

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The Glory of Autumn

The science behind it and how to achieve it!



Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the Fall and many change color. There is an interesting scientific cause for these color changes that are initiated by the cooler temperatures and shorter periods of daylight. Cork-like cells are created at the base of the leaf stem during this time. These cells then block the flow of nutrients between the leaf and the tree.

Chlorophyll is the chemical that makes the leaves green, and due to this blockage it is no longer produced.

As the green leaves fade, two chemicals, "carotin" and "xanthophylls" are released. These will cause the leaves to turn yellow. Red leaves occur when the leaves contain certain sugars or "tannins". The red color also depends a lot on sunny days and cold nights which causes the cork-like cells to form before these chemicals can drain away. Once trapped in the leaves, they combine with other substances to produce "anthocyanin", the red pigment that gives the leaves their color.

Fall color can vary from year to year in any one region. In some years, early frosts kill the foliage, so the colors will be absent. Also, a warm, cloudy Autumn can produce dull colors.

You will also find that certain shrubs, like Nandina, will provide colors like this as the weather cools. One of the more popular of these shrubs "Heavenly Bamboo" will give a nice show of color after we have hit nighttime temps that get below 40°.

Another way to get some color action going in the Fall is to have plants that bloom in this nice cool season. Dianthus, Cyclamen and

Snapdragons are super for cool season color and the Snaps and Cyclamen will keep blooming right through the Winter.

Echinacea and Lavender start early. After this there are Chrysanthemums, Stonecrop and Autumn Joy Sedum that are great for an Autumn display of color. Black-Eyed Susan, Verbena and Gold Coin Flowers (Aster) are more late season bloomers to think about adding to your garden.

Other flowering shrubs like Hawthorn, Plumbago and Russian Sage bloom in Fall and Spring. Butterfly Bush and Blue Mist are great for Fall and of

course Camellias will keep going through the cold. A Camelia will need protection during the warm weather and needs lower pH soil, so you might want to grow these in pots.

There are a host of plants to help make your garden or landscape attractive during our wonderful Autumn season. Stop by your local Star Nursery and check them out!



Many colors of Chrysanthemums

Dr. Q's Fall Gardening Calendar

September

Help your Summer scorched plants, wait until month-end to prune off damage.



When you put new plants into the ground, be sure to use Dr. Q's Planting Partners: Pay Dirt, Gold Dust and Plant Tonic. These combine for that "best start" you want for your flowers, shrubs or trees.

Watch your citrus for signs of chlorosis

(yellow leaves – green veins). It's time for a good fertilizer like Dr. Q's with plenty of iron.

Avoid "loving your plants to death". Don't over water. Water deep, but let the soil get some air before you water again.

Late month should find that you've finished fertilizing all your trees, shrubs and flowers. Dr. Q's Tree Shrub and Vine Food can do it all!

October

This is the best month for planting (other than Palms). Roots get to grow and spread out all Winter. Read Star Note #001 "The Planting Guide" for tips.

There are too many gorgeous flowers at Star Nursery to name, but the Mums will be a stand out. You need to walk through and see for yourself.

Add color to your landscape. Plant cool season annual flowers. Pansies, Stock, Snapdragons, and Calendula are among the best for providing Fall and Winter color.

Soil preparation is important for having healthy new plants.

Till some new compost six inches into your flower or veggie beds. Use Dr. Q's Pay Dirt.

Do not increase the chance for fungal disease on your turf by over watering or watering at night.

By late month, you should have all your cold weather veggies planted.

November

Check your mulch. The mulch you put down this Summer might be gone with the wind. Cold weather is coming and mulch really works to keep roots warm. Try shredded cedar mulch (insects hate it)!

Cool weather will induce your roses to set new blooms. Keep spent blooms picked off. Also prune off suckers that grow up from below the bud union.

Watering of all trees and shrubs, including newly planted ones, may now be cut back to once-per-week, but the watering should continue to be deep.

It's still a great time to plant Pansies, Snapdragons and Stock, so fragrant!



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Employee Spotlight

One thing that means a lot to the folks that shop at Star Nursery is the professional and technical support they'll get from our salespeople. Sherrie Fox is a super example of how Star delivers on this need.



Sherrie has been with Star Nursery for more than two years and immediately began to deliver superior gardening advice to all of her customers. Her experience in horticulture comes from years of hands-on doing.

Sherrie was manager of the Washington County Demonstration Garden and assistant to the county horticultural agent. In this capacity she was not only exposed to numerous diagnostic and planting issues but

had the support of a well trained colleague in her continuing growth of knowledge. She is certified in landscape design & gardening proficiency thru Dixie applied technology & state certified as a nurseryman & horticulturist thru the UNLA. Sherrie is also an enthusiastic entrepreneur as she owned and operated her own flower growing business.

Sherrie's first spouse passed away and later she found a wonderful new partner Leroy to marry. He was a widower and so, between them they have thirteen children and twenty six wonderful grandchildren. Wow! As you can tell, Sherrie loves and values family.

On the job Sherrie is a constant benefit to the store, her customers and fellow employees. After work, she likes to spend her time gardening (wouldn't you know it), reading and is writing a novel. We look forward to reading it. Playing with her children and grandchildren are also big on her list of good things to do, as well as kicking back and enjoying time with her hubby Leroy.

Because Sherrie is fond of color it is no wonder her favorite plants are Calvias and Coneflowers. Sounds like purples and lavenders could be her favorite colors. She has lived in St. George for 27 years and very much enjoys this part of the country. As Sherrie feels so at home here it should be no surprise that her commitment to her customers is to be helpful, patient and honest. The next time you shop at the Star Nursery on Sunset Blvd. in St George, make sure to say hi and get to know Sherrie. You'll be very glad you did!

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Huntsman World Senior Games.

Oct. 4-16, 2010.

www.hwsg.com or 435-674-0550 for details.

Jubilee of Trees.

Nov. 17-22, 2010 at Dixie Center.

www.jubileeoftrees.org or 435-986-6624 for details.

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Fall Fruit Tree Care



The last of this year's crop is being harvested and stored. Possibly it was such a fruitful year that friends and neighbors are also enjoying apples, pears or peaches from your trees. Although it seems to be time to relax after all of the hard work – it's really time to dig in and get those fruit trees ready for Winter. So, if you had a bumper crop or you were unhappy with your harvest – here are some guidelines to ensure healthy, productive trees for years to come.

Even if it is tempting to cut-back and shape trees after the harvest,

do not do it. This will encourage new growth that you don't want this late in the season. Fruit trees need this time to harden off, store water and energy to protect against the cold Winter ahead. It is ok to lightly prune or remove dead, diseased or damaged branches. Then wait until late Winter to prune heavily and thin the canopy of all fruit trees. Star Nursery will put on free seminars at the stores in January to help you out.

Apply Dr. Q's Fruit and Nut Tree Food early in the Fall season. Fertilizing too late encourages trees to put on new growth just before Winter. Watering should be deep and infrequent. This helps establish a deeper root system. The infrequent watering will help push the trees into dormancy and drop their leaves. Winter watering should remain deep but usually weekly is often enough.

Remove all fruit that doesn't ripen and clean up leaves and debris at the base of trees. This is good for all of the shrubs, rose bushes and trees in your landscape. Leaves left under trees and bushes are ideal for Winter nests for insects, disease and rodents. Keep any grass at the base of the trunk cut short throughout the Winter as well. Don't build Winter homes for these garden pests.

A layer of mulch like Paydirt or shredded Cedar Mulch around the trees is beneficial. It tidies up your yard and insulates the root system. Just take care not to mound dirt or mulch up against the trunk of the tree. This restricts oxygen and encourages fungus.

If canker worms or tent caterpillars have been a nuisance, prevent them now. Tangle foot is a good product to prevent female moths from heading up into the top of the tree to lay eggs that will be next year's worms. Watch for and remove tent caterpillar egg bands that appear on twigs in the late Fall. Neem oil is beneficial insect control and can also be used when temps are below 90 degrees.



Protect the tender bark of trees from hungry gophers and rabbits by securing chicken wire around the trunk of the tree until Spring. This will keep our 4-legged friends from stripping the bark off of tree trunks when the surrounding natural vegetation runs out. The cold night temperatures can also wreak havoc

on young bark. Cold nights cause the bark to split and open a wound that may become infested. Wrapping trunks can protect them against the vertical cracks that are caused by these severe changing temperatures.

Autumn is a great time to plant new fruit trees. Success is much easier when the tree has all Winter to develop a good strong root system. Check out Star Notes #500 and 505 and follow the comprehensive guidelines. You can find these and other helpful technical bulletins at all Star Nurseries or online at www.StarNursery.com. Remember to properly stake a new fruit tree to protect it against high Winter winds.

There is nothing better than fresh fruit from your own tree. The flavor can't be beat, not to mention the savings at the grocery store. Making sure that next season provides a bumper crop requires a little time spent this Fall. It's fun and very rewarding.



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