

Apples

Apples are traditionally a northern crop, but can be fruitful here. Although southern apples have little red color, their flavor is excellent. Certain varieties are semi-self fertile, and can produce a reliable crop as an individual tree. Others will do best with a second tree as a pollenizer. Apple trees will need about 4-6 years before producing fruit to establish a healthy tree able to produce a large crop. Consult our handout Planting and Maintenance Guide for Fruits, Nuts, & Berries for more information.

Apples should be pruned according to the central leader or modified central leader system. The first three years should be spent on training only, but by the fourth and fifth years, the trees can be allowed to produce a light crop. For further pruning help, search for fruit tree pruning information online, and only consult university websites for more accurate information. The proper time to prune fruit trees in Central Texas is late January/early February. Jim Kamas of Texas A&M University says that it's ideal to prune as late in winter as possible, even while the tree is flowering.

For the health of the tree and better quality fruit, thin the fruit to about 6" apart when apples are about the size of marbles. Be careful not to damage the spurs (the short branches) that produce the flower buds and fruit. Apples harvested early continue to ripen in storage. Ideal storage is at a temperature above freezing and below 50° (the refrigerator).

Apple Varieties for Central Texas (chilling hours)

Anna (300). Medium-sized fruit ripening early to mid-June. Crisp, with sweet to semi-tart flavor. Light green-yellowish skin with red blush. A good choice for fresh eating and cooking. A *heavy producer* that starts at an early age. From Israel. *Self fertile.*

Dorsett Golden (250). Medium to large fruit that ripens early to mid-June. Firm, smooth, crisp flesh with sweet-tart flavor. Yellow skin with slight pink blush. From the Bahamas. *Semi-self fertile*, but best with *Anna* as pollenizer.

Ein Shemer (400 – 450) Large; Mid-June to early July; Crisp, tart, good quality flesh; Yellow skin; Bears young and very productive; *A more self-fertile tree than others*; From Israel

Fuji (400 – 600). Medium-sized fruit that ripens early to mid-September. Very sweet, crispy, juicy white flesh. Yellow skin with pink-red speckling – redder with sunlight and cooler temperatures. Stores well. From Japan. *Use Gala, Granny Smith or Mollie's Delicious as pollenizers.*

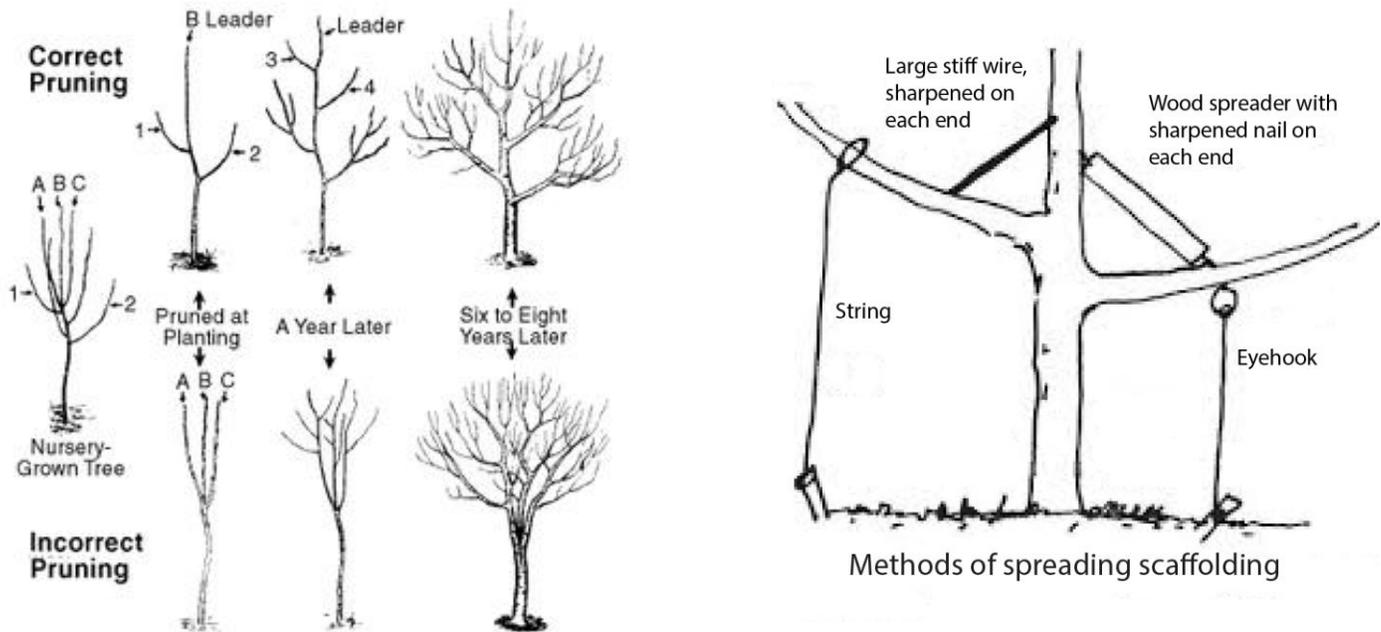
Gala (600). Small to medium-sized fruit, ripening late July to early August. Flesh is firm, crisp, sweet, and juicy with excellent flavor. Golden yellow skin with orange to red blush. Stores well. From New Zealand. *Use Granny Smith, Fuji, or Mollie's Delicious as pollenizers.*

Granny Smith (500 – 600). Medium to large fruit ripening late September to early October. Juicy, firm, very tart flesh – gets sweeter in storage. Bright green skin. Good for eating fresh or cooking. Vigorous and productive, with a tough skin that stores well. From Australia. *Self fertile.*

Mollie's Delicious (400 – 500) Very large fruit that ripens early to mid-August. High quality flavorful flesh with light yellow skin and red blush. Vigorous, productive tree with fruit that stores for 10 weeks in fridge. Bears young. *Use Fuji, Gala or Granny Smith as pollenizers.*

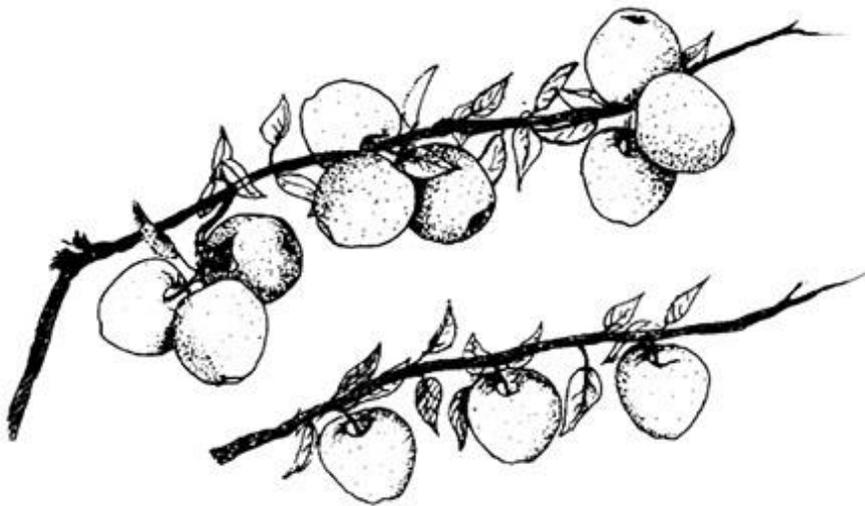
Pruning:

Train as much as possible and remove as little as possible. Bending and tying shoots instead of cutting them out, especially on **apple** and pear trees can induce early fruit production. Use sharp pruning tools to make clean cuts. Discard or compost pruned out shoots and branches.



Thinning:

Apples must be thinned for best production. There should be only one apple per cluster, and apples should be approximately 6" apart. Begin thinning when apples are the size of a jelly bean.



Before and after thinning. Note there is 1 apple per cluster after thinning.

¹ University of California Co-operative Extension, Center for Landscape and Urban Horticulture