

## Fruit and Nut Trees for SALE in JOCO

By Marshall Warren, Johnston County Horticulture Extension Agent

Over the last several of years, the Johnston County Extension office, has seen a considerable increase of inquiries from the public about growing one's own food. There has also been an increase in people moving to Johnston County from other parts of the country and many are not familiar with what will grow well here. But, with the help of the Extension office, we can provide you with information on how to correctly grow vegetables, small fruits, fruit trees, and nut trees and recommend the specific varieties suitable for this area.

Each year to help support the efforts of the Johnston County Extension Advisory Council, Extension offers a **"Fall Fruit and Nut Tree Sale"**. The Johnston County Fall Fruit and Nut Tree Sale begins Oct. 3rd, 2022 through Tuesday Nov. 29th, 2022 at the Johnston County Agriculture Center 2736 NC 210 Hwy., Smithfield, NC 27577. You can purchase a variety of blueberries, muscadines, fruit trees and pecan trees specifically selected for their superior qualities and expected performance for our area and at economical prices. Educational handout materials will be provided to give you the knowledge needed to grow and maintain your edibles. You can come by the extension office and pick up a fruit tree sales form, or you can click the website link below for the sales form, print and mail a payment check.

Before you get too excited, there are benefits and challenges to consider in growing fruit trees so you have realistic expectations and can determine if it is worth it. One of the biggest challenges is that it requires some work and many of the plants are not considered low maintenance. They usually require yearly pruning, need to be closely monitored (and sprayed), to stay ahead of common pest problems and weather can be a challenge. Some of the easiest fruits to manage and grow would include blueberries, blackberries, figs, Japanese Persimmons, and pecans. Figs and Japanese Persimmons are the best fruit trees to select if you want to grow organically or do not want to deal with routine spraying. Fruits with moderate management requirements are muscadine grapes and pears. Apples and peaches require between moderate to high management to grow in our area because they require extra inputs (pruning, pest control, weather challenges) to obtain a decent harvest. The benefits include harvesting fresh, healthy fruit from your own yard, having control of what has been applied, and the satisfaction of growing your own food.

So, if you are ready to get started with growing your own fruit in your garden, it pays to do some research and plan ahead so you will be successful in having a decent harvest a few years after planting. Proper site selection is critical in growing healthy, productive plants. If you have compacted or poorly drained soil and wish to grow fruit plants, create raised beds by amending and mounding up the soil. **VERY IMPORTANT - Soil preparation needs to be done this fall** so it will be ready when you receive your plants next year on February 9<sup>th</sup> 2023. Don't wait until you pick up your plants to decide where and how to plant them. All the plants offered produce best in full sun and in areas with good air circulation. Blueberries are the most shade tolerant of the fruiting plants available, and will produce even at 50% shade. Good drainage is essential for all fruit plants.

Once you select the site, take a soil sample, bring it to the Extension office and we will submit it to NCDA&CS Agronomic Division for analysis. <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/a-gardeners-guide-to-soil-testing>

Nematodes can be a problem if you are considering growing figs or peaches, especially on sandy soil, submit a nematode soil sample. To keep nematodes alive, bring the soil sample in a plastic bag. <https://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/pdffiles/nflyer.pdf>  
<https://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/pdffiles/nnote15.pdf>

Pollination is another important factor to consider before purchasing any fruit trees to plant. Apples, pears, pecans, and some Muscadine grapes need cross pollination for fruit production to occur, so you will need to plan on planting more than one variety of tree. Blueberries, blackberries, figs, peaches, and Japanese Persimmons are self-fruitful, meaning you won't need multiple plants for pollination and fruit production.

All selections of fruit and nut trees, vines, and shrubs offered in our "Fall Fruit and Nut Tree Sale" are of varieties proven to perform well in Eastern North Carolina. Listed below are a few special features of the fruiting plants offered at the sale. You probably will not find these varieties at your local box store or garden center.

**Apples:** The apple trees are grown on semi-dwarfing Geneva 41 rootstock, (a new Cornell University introduction) which grows 25-30% of the size of a standard apple tree making it a perfect size for urban gardens. The Geneva 41 rootstock has good precocity (produces fruit at a younger age) and is resistant to fire blight, (which is a major disease concern in our area), collar rot, wooly aphid, and tolerant of replant diseases. It is recommended these grafted trees be trained and staked with a 10' metal pole or trellised with two wires spaced at 3.5' and 9' heights. You will need more than one apple variety to ensure adequate cross-pollination. For our area, Yellow Delicious is an excellent pollinator.

General information about growing apple trees  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kE2loCpWzY>

**Peaches:** The peach varieties offered are grafted on Guardian rootstock. If you want success with growing peaches in our area, you should only buy trees that are grafted on Guardian rootstock. Guardian Rootstock is resistant to root knot nematode and peach tree short life. The peach cultivars we offer have very high chilling hour requirements. Chilling hours = the total number of hours below 45 degrees F that is needed during winter for flower buds to develop and bloom normally. Only varieties that require at least 750 hours of chilling are recommended to be grown in our area. The greater the chilling hours, the less likely the peach blossoms will be damaged by late freezes. Peaches are self-pollinating and only one tree is needed for fruit set.



Carolina Gold Peach



Marshall's one day harvest from a Contender Peach tree 2021

### **General information about growing peach trees**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13BlySQb5Xs>

**Pecans:** Scab is a common disease caused by a fungus that attacks the leaves and the shuck and is a problem with older pecan tree cultivars that can ruin a pecan harvest. We are offering new cultivars which are scab resistant which is beneficial to homeowners that can't regularly spray for diseases. For nut production, we offer both Type I and Type II pecan varieties and you will need at least one of each for cross-pollination. Fully mature pecan trees require 70 feet between trees.

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/growing-pecans-in-north-carolina>

**Figs:** General information for growing figs -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGYaRhGXPkM>

**Muscadines:** Production Guide <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/muscadine-grape-production-guide>

**Blackberry:** Production Guide <https://johnston.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/southeast-regional-caneberry-production-guide.pdf?fw=no>

**Japanese Persimmon:** Fuyu - <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/diospyros-kaki-fuyu/>

Jiro - <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/diospyros-kaki-jiro/>

**Training and Pruning Fruit Trees:** <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/training-and-pruning-fruit-trees-in-north-carolina>

**Comprehensive Resources link for fruit and nut trees**

<https://horticulture.ces.ncsu.edu/comprehensive-resources-for-fruit-trees/>

Growing fruit in your own garden can be challenging and also very rewarding. They do

require some routine management like pruning and pest control. Care instructions and educational handout materials will be provided at pick up to help you with growing and maintaining your edible trees. Plants will be ready for pick up on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 from 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM at the Johnston County Livestock Arena located at 520 County Home Rd., Smithfield, NC 27577. This is the optimal time to plant so plant them as soon as possible.

Proceeds from the sale will support the efforts of the Johnston County Extension Advisory Council.

**Please check out our Fruit and Nut Tree description list for all our fruit trees, vines and shrubs. For more information and order form click here:**

**<https://johnston.ces.ncsu.edu/2022/10/the-annual-fall-fruit-nut-tree-sale/>**