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Thinking about adding fruit trees to your garden? Here are a few things to consider.

What type of tree will you plant – fruit and/or nut?
Apple
Pear (European or Asian)
Plum (Japanese – best eaten fresh, European – canning or fresh, American - canning)
Sour cherry
Pawpaw (the "tropical prairie fruit")
Persimmons
Hazelnuts
Black walnuts
Chestnuts

Dealing with insects disease, and animals
Choose disease resistant cultivars
Orchard sanitation – get rid of the places where insects and disease harbor; weekly and seasonal
Attract beneficial insects
Spray – chemical or synthetic vs. organic methods; Surround one organic choice
Use nets and other protective wraps to keep animals at bay (birds, squirrels, rabbits, mice)

Ensuring a good harvest
Thinning the fruit – remove weight from branches, small fruit, alternate bearing years, excess moisture
Pruning – to encourage "spurs" where fruit trees flower and set fruit
Training the tree – important for tree form, earlier fruit production, and improved fruit quality
Espalier – training a tree to grow along a wall or other support structure
Storage – where will the fruit and nuts produced be stored?

Weather protection for gardens
Consider adding deciduous trees (oak, crabapple, etc.) for shade and pollination or conifers (pine, spruce, etc.) as wind breaks. Shade adds a place for people to seek refuge during hot summer days. Conifers help redirect winds around the garden.

**Visit Iowa State Extension website for many publications on fruit and nut tree production.**

**General Considerations**

To help reach the maximum potential for your fruit or nut trees, there are several things you can do, from selecting the right location to amending the soil if needed. The following list will help guide you as begin thinking about what tree is right for your location.

**Full Sunlight**

Fruit and nut trees grow best where they will receive full sunlight (minimum of 6 to 8 hours of sunlight a day), but some (paw paws, persimmons, serviceberries) can survive in partial sunlight.

**Well-Drained Soil**

Fruit and nut trees prefer a well-drained soil – fruit and nut trees do not like "wet feet." Areas prone to flooding could have negative effects for long-term growth of trees.

**Proper Spacing**

Each tree should be planted with at least 6 to 15 feet of space from other trees or objects, depending on the size and type of tree. The closer the trees are together, the more pruning they will require to stay healthy (air circulation would become a concern if the trees were too close together). Unless it's possible to train the tree (as on a trellis), plant each tree at least 10 feet from any structures. Make sure each tree has enough space to grow vertically also. Avoid putting standard trees under power lines or in a location that would block sunlight for other plants or trees.

**Tree Heights**

Dwarf: 5 to 12 feet
Semi-dwarf: 15 to 20 feet
Standard: 25 to 30 feet

**Cross-Pollination**

In order to have a good crop, many fruit and nut trees require that you plant at least two different trees in order to achieve cross-pollination. For this reason, you should research the pollination requirements of the tree variety you choose and locate them close enough that pollination can occur.

**Access to Water**

Watering your tree during its first years of establishment and during times of drought is imperative. Lack of water is one of the fastest ways to kill a tree. When locating a site for your tree planting, check for sources of water or the ability to easily transport water to the site.

**Soil Quality**

Before planting your trees, conducting a soil test is highly recommended. For a small fee, the Iowa State University Soil and Plant Analysis Laboratory will test your soil and provide recommendations for amending the soil with fertilizer, if needed. Soil pH ranges from 5.6 to 7.0 are best for tree fruit crops.