



Fruit Trees of Georgia

Cameron Mehalek, ANR Educator

Outline

Stone Fruit



Figs



Pome Fruit



Persimmons



Pawpaw



What should you know before choosing a fruit tree?

- What **cultivar** is it?
- What **rootstock** was it grown on? (if applicable)
- Does it need to be pollinated?
- Years to maturity?
- How should you prune it?
- **Cold hardiness?**
- What are the **chilling hour** requirements?
- What pests and diseases is it susceptible to?
- Fertilization requirements?

Personal Considerations:

- How much space do you have in your yard?
- How quickly do you want it to start producing fruit?
- When do you want to harvest the fruit?
- How much maintenance are you willing to do?
- Are you willing to spray pesticides?



But first...
Some terminology

Variety

Naturally occurring, distinct
plant group

Prunus persica var. *nucipersica*



Cultivar

“Cultivated variety”
A plant variety that has been
cultivated by humans

Fantasia nectarines

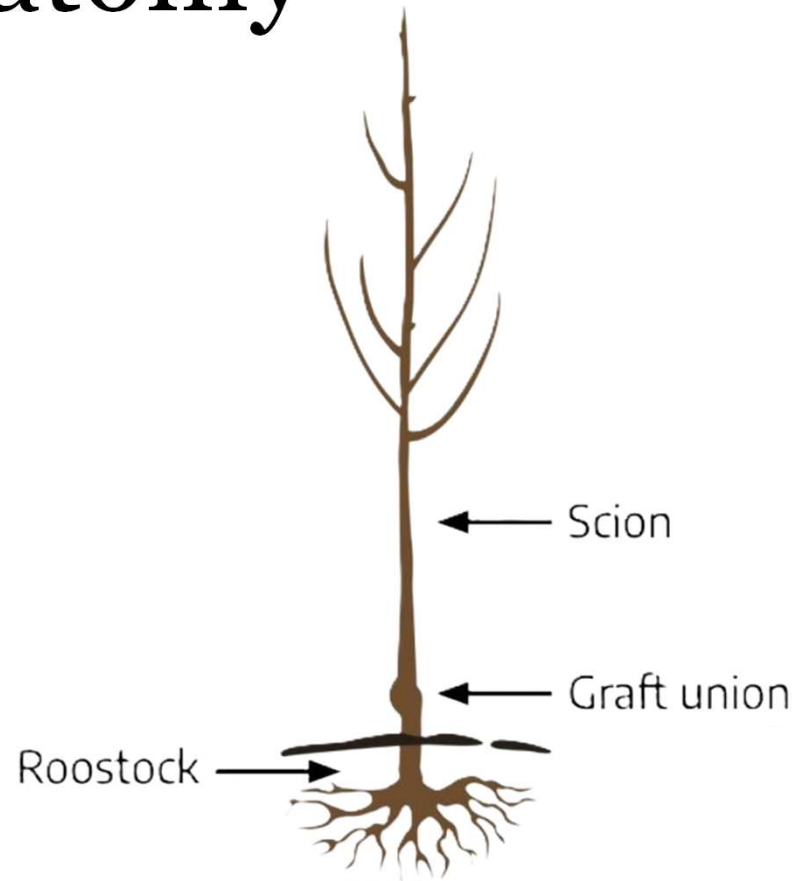


Tree Anatomy

- Many fruit trees are **NOT** grown from seed
- Cutting are joined to **rootstocks** at the graft union
- Rootstock effects size, cold hardiness, and disease



Tree Anatomy

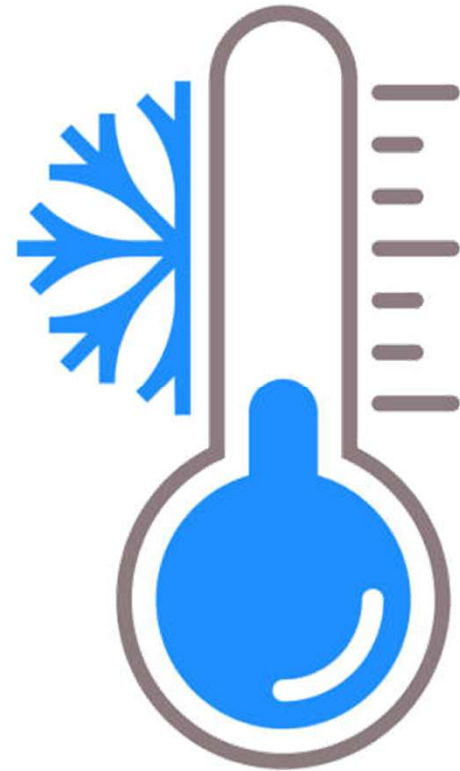


Emily Tepe, University of Minnesota

Chilling Hours

Different fruit tree and different cultivars require different amount of **chilling hours**

Chilling hour = *the cumulative amount of time in a season that the temperature is between 32°F and 45 °F*



Use UGA weather network to find number of chilling hours



Georgia Weather Net
<http://weather.uga.edu> › mindex

Chilling Hours - Georgia Weather Network

Chilling Hours Under 45 °F. Station Name. 2024 TO 2025. 2023
Alapaha. 959. 816. 743. 957. Albany ...

Chilling Hours Between 32 °F and 45 °F				
Station Name	2024 TO 2025	2023 TO 2024	2022 TO 2023	2021 TO 2022
Gray	583	557	565	NA
Griffin	693	686	686	616
Griffin-Demp	662	668	666	598
Hatley	366	418	385	376
Homerville	386	388	315	325
Jekyll Islan	185	238	45	NA
Jeffersonvil	468	510	490	448
Johns Creek	774	787	761	712
Jonesboro	627	668	622	594
Kennesaw	710	729	706	673
LaFayette	793	747	811	782
Lake Park	338	108	NA	NA
McRae	512	512	479	435
Midville	448	458	477	450
Moultrie	345	376	335	341

Cold Hardiness

Ability to withstand cold temperatures

Poor cold hardiness can lead to cold damage:

- Ice crystal formation in cells
- Results in sudden dieback, browning of leaves and branches, and tree death



Fruit Tree	Pollinator required?	Chilling Hours	Cold Hardiness	Insect Susceptibility	Disease Susceptibility
Peach	No	300-800	Moderate, spring frost	High	High
Nectarine	No	400-900+	Moderate, spring frost	High	High
Plum	No	400-700	Moderate, spring frost	High	High
Fig	No	100-200	Poor	Low	Low
Apple	Yes	800-1000+	Very	Medium	Medium
Pear	Maybe	400-900	Very	Medium	Medium
Persimmon	Maybe	200-400	Variety dependent	Low	Low
Pawpaw	Yes	400-800	Very	Low	Low

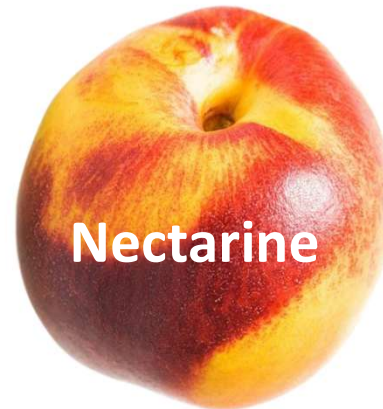
**These are generalizations and can vary by cultivar*

A collage of stone fruits. The left side features several large, ripe peaches with a mix of red, orange, and yellow hues. The right side is filled with numerous plums and nectarines, ranging in color from deep purple to bright red. The fruits are piled together, creating a vibrant and textured background.

Stone Fruit: Peaches, Plums, Nectarines

Peaches & Nectarines

- Both are the same species (*Prunus persica*)
- Nectarines have a recessive gene giving them smooth skin with no fuzz
- Nectarines tend to be slightly smaller, and often appear darker in color



Kinds of Peaches & Nectarines

- Yellow or white flesh
- **Freestones:** flesh easily separates from the pit (preferred for eating)
- **Clingstones:** flesh clings to pit (preferred for canning)



Peach/Nectarine Pollination

Peach & nectarine trees
are self-pollinators! No
cross pollination
required.

*(However, pollination can
help improve fruit quality)*



Kinds of Plums

European plums (*P. domestica*)

- Processing or fresh consumption

Japanese/Asian plums (*P. salicina*)

- Better for fresh consumption
- More common in Georgia



Plum Pollination

- *Most plums do NOT self-pollinate!*
- Recommended to plant multiple trees



Tree Selection

- Avoid varieties that bloom early in North Georgia - this leads to issues with frost
- **Peach Rootstocks:** Guardian, MP-29 (semi-dwarf), Halford, and Nemaguard



Planting

(Generally applicable to most fruit trees)

- Amend soil **prior** to planting (*testing can be done through UGA extension office*)
- Fruit trees should be planted during the dormant season (often December – February)



Photo by University of Maine Extension

Planting

- Choose a spot with full sunlight (**8-10 hours**), well-drained soil, and limited wind
- Dig a hole twice the size of the root ball
- Plant the same depth as the nursery or keep the graft union 2" above the soil
- Provide adequate space for multiple trees if applicable
- Water thoroughly



Fertilizing

(Generally applicable to most fruit trees)



- **DO NOT** fertilize immediately after planting (this will burn the roots!)
- Fertilizer requirements are tree specific and typically change each year of growth
- Fertilizer should be broadcast around trunk



Photo by Guodong Liu, University of Florida/IFAS

UGA Home Garden Fertilizing Recommendations

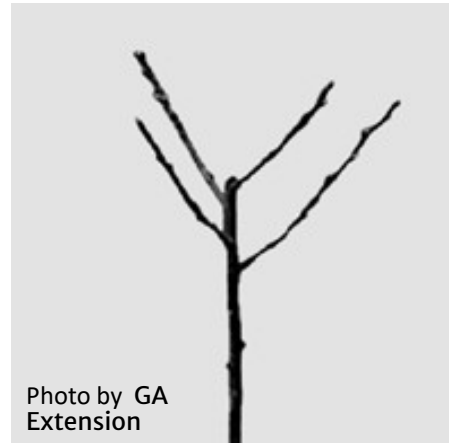
Soil pH should be between 6 and 6.5

Fruit Tree	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3 +
Peach/ Nectarines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 lb of 10-10-10 fertilizer in March (4-5 inches from trunk)• 1 lb of calcium nitrate in May and July (6 inches from trunk)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 lb of 10-10-10 in March (6 inches from trunk)• 1.25 lb of calcium nitrate in May and July (6 inches from trunk)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain year 2 fertilization rates• If trees show symptoms of deficiency or growth/yield is inadequate, supplement 0.15-0.25 lb post harvest
Plum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 lb of 10-10-10 fertilizer in March (4-5 inches from trunk)• 1 lb of calcium nitrate in May and July (6 inches from trunk)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 lb of 10-10-10 in March (6 inches from trunk)• 1.25 lb of calcium nitrate in May and July (6 inches from trunk)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue fertilizing in March and July if growth and yield is sufficient

*If preplant soil fertilization was done, exclude phosphorus and potassium until year 3

Pruning

- After planting, cut back to 24-30 inches
- Pruning should be done every year during late winter-early spring
- "vase-like", 3-4 limbed, open-base center



Pruning

Select 3-4 branches to be the primary limbs

Remove . . .

- Vigorous upright and center limbs
- Diseased, broken, low hanging limbs
- Branches below the scaffolding limbs
- Suckers from the base



Photo by Utah State Extension

Pruning

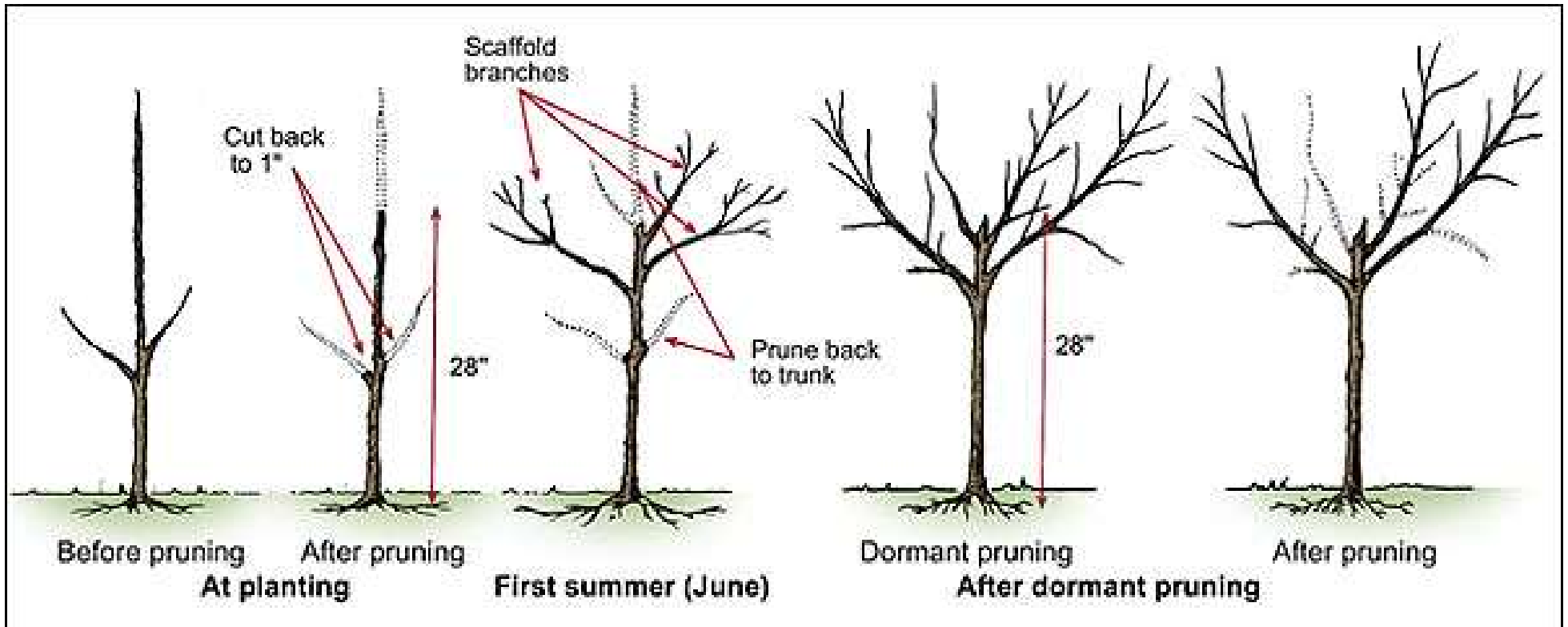


Fig. by University of Missouri Extension
<https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/g6030?utm>

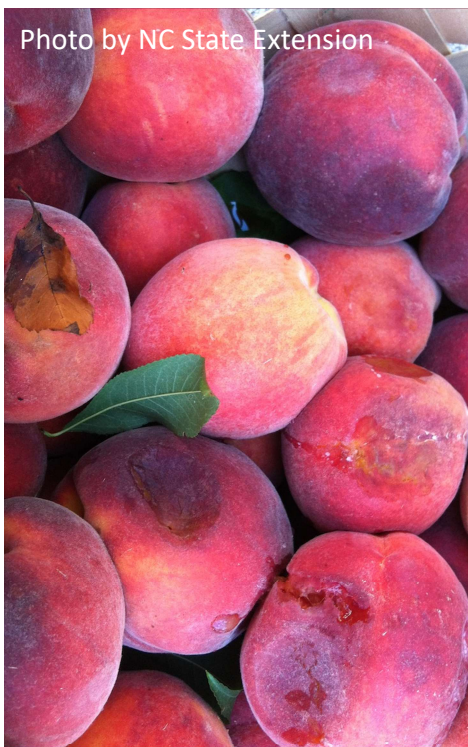
Thinning

- These trees produce too much fruit!
- Thinning lets trees allocate more nutrients to the fruit
- Thin when fruit is the size of a quarter (0.7-1.0 inches)
- Fruit should be 6-8 inches apart



Photo by UMaine Cooperative Extension

Peaches & Nectarines are Very Difficult to Grow!



Damage



Disease



Insects



Frost

Physical Damage

Impact Damage



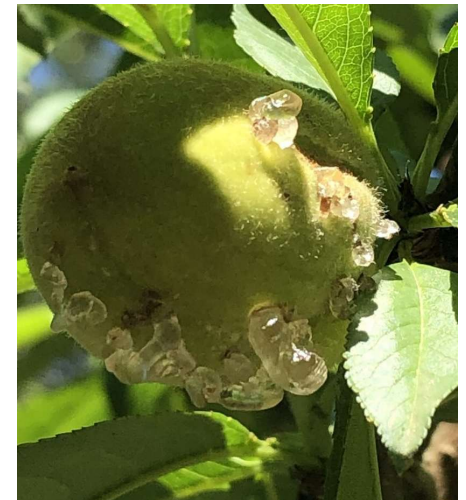
- Prone to physical bruising

Split Pit



- Flesh expands faster than the fruit hardens
- Caused by growth imbalances often due to cold damage, excess watering, nutrient imbalances, or excessive pruning

Gummosis



- Oozing resulting from insect feeding or fungal damage

Disease Management

Brown Rot (*Monilinia fructicola*)

- Fungus that infects peach, plum, and nectarine flowers or fruit
- Overwinters as “mummies” on infected fruit
- Severe during wet years



Treatment/prevention:

- Spraying at bloom and 2-3 weeks before harvest is most important
- Remove mummies and infected fruit

Photos by University of Kentucky

Disease Management

Peach Scab (*Cladosporium carpophilum*)



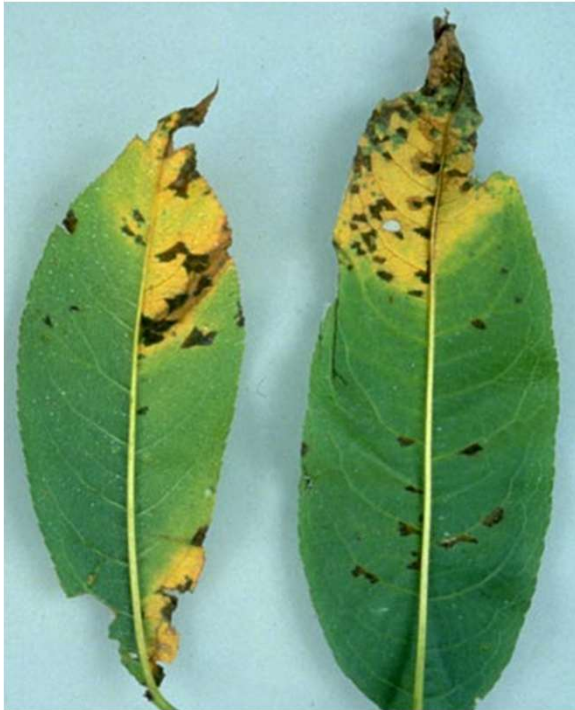
- Fungal disease causing mostly superficial blemishes on peach/nectarine
- Overwinters on infected twigs and shoots
- Spores are splashed out by rain (necessary for infection)
- Primarily susceptible from **shuck split** to pit hardening

Treatment/prevention:

- Fungicides applied at shuck split
- Sulfur sprays

Disease Management

Bacterial Spot (*Xanthomonas arboricola* pv. *pruni*)



- Small, water-soaked lesions in leaves that can lead to defoliation
- Can spread to fruit if severe
- Spreads by splashing rain & favored by wet conditions



Treatment/prevention:

- Use less-susceptible cultivars
- **Dormant** applications of lime or sulfur

Disease Management

Peach Leaf Curl (*Taphrina deformans*)



- Primarily infects peaches and nectarines
- Fungal disease-causing distorted leaves
- Can infect fruit if severe



Treatment/prevention:

- Use less-susceptible cultivars
- **Dormant** applications of lime or sulfur

Disease Management

Black Knot (*Apiosporina morbosa*)



- Fungal disease of plum
- Produces black knots/galls that harbor the fungus and allow it to overwinter
- Spores released in spring

Treatment/prevention:

- Prune knots/galls immediately
- Fungicides can help in combination with proper pruning

Insect Management



Plum Curculio

- Affects peaches, nectarines, plums
- One of the main insects affecting peaches in Georgia
- Eggs are deposited in the fruit, often resulting in gummy residue
- Larvae tunnel into the fruit, often to the pit

Treatment/prevention:

- Regular sprays from shuck split to shuck off
- Sprays can be reduced with regular scouting

Insect Management



Peach Borer

- Mainly attacks peaches and nectarines
- Adults lay eggs in wound of the tree
- Larvae feed and damage the inner bark and vascular system



Treatment/prevention:

- In season/ late summer fungicides
- Avoid excessive wounding when pruning

Insect Management



Scale Insects

- San Jose scale and white peach scale
- Feed on sap of trees and fruit
- White armor, produces fluffy, white residue
- Can lead to sooty mold



Treatment/prevention:

- Horticultural oils (1-3%) twice during the dormant season (leaf drop to first swollen fruit buds)

Temperature Fluctuations

Frost Damage

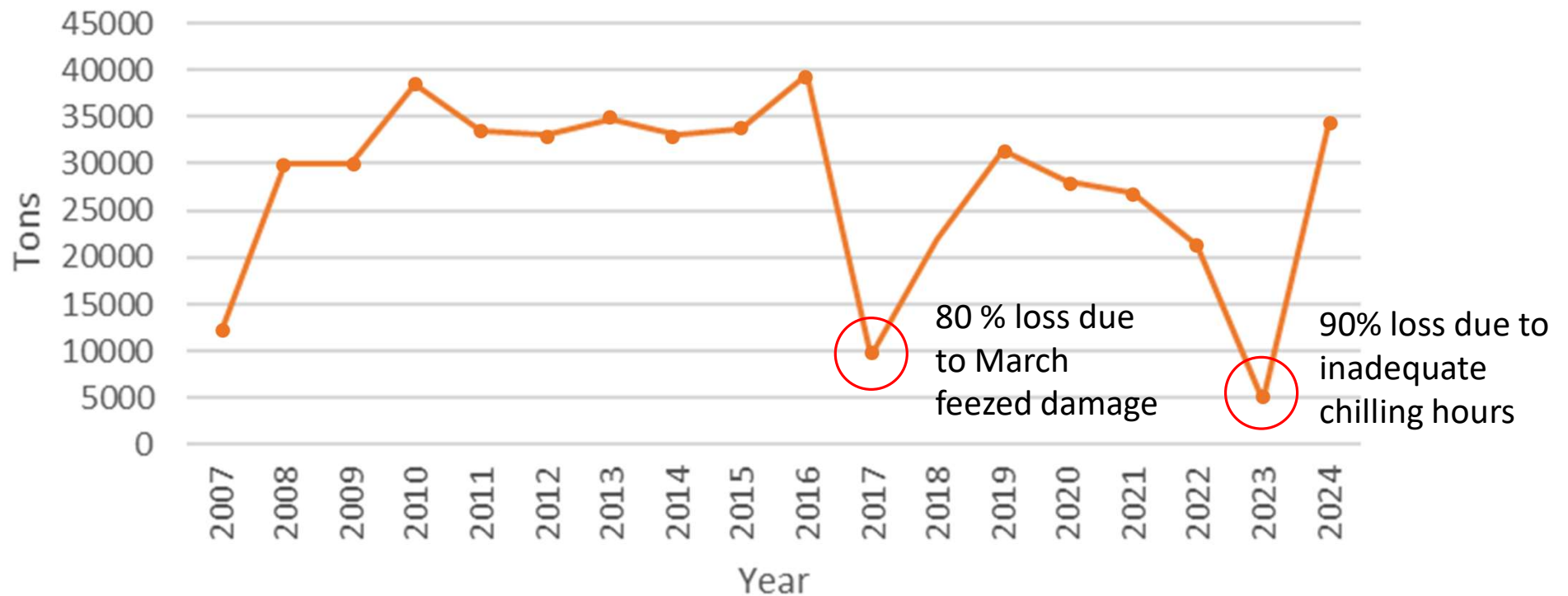


Increased temperature fluctuations are detrimental to peach production:

- Earlier blooms followed by sudden frost
- Reduction of necessary chilling hours

Temperature Fluctuations

Utilized Peach Production in Georgia



*Data from USDA National Agriculture Statistic Service



Figs

Tree Selection

- Certain cultivars require pollinators not present in GA (ex. Calimyrna)
- **ONLY** buy fig trees adapted to the southeast
 - ↳ Female flowers and no cross pollination required
- **Piedmont, Celeste, Hardy Chicago, and Conadria** are well adapted to DeKalb



Photo by UGA Extension

Propagation

- Figs are easy to propagate!
- 8-10 inches cuttings can be taken from dormant trees (at least 1 year old)
- Rooting hormone stimulates root development
- Place directly in soil with bud exposed
- Grow for 1 year before transplanting



Planting

Should be done in dormancy (late fall or winter)

Planting potted trees:

- No need to prune after purchasing



Planting bare-root trees:

- Cut 1/3 of the top immediately after planting



Potted Figs



- Figs do well in pots!
- 18 inch container
- Use soilless potting mix
- Watering becomes essential

Pruning

Tree form: One central trunk



Bush form: Closer to ground & easier to pick



Pruning


Bush form:

- Plant in holes 4 inches deeper than the nursery to facilitate low branching
- Late winter 1st season: pick 3-8 leading limbs
- Prune lower lateral branches
- Prune suckers and dead branches



UGA Home Garden Fertilizing Recommendations

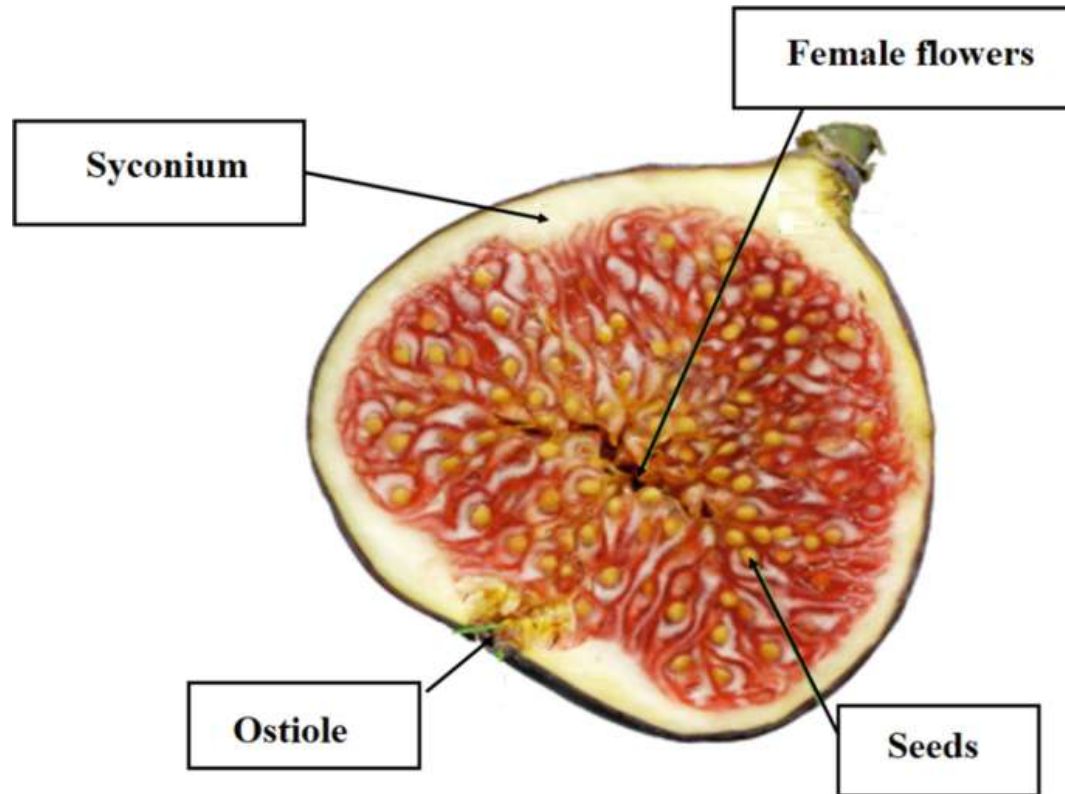
Adjust the pH to 5.5 to 6.5 with dolomitic limestone

Fruit Tree	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3-5	Year 6+
Figs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1½ ounces of 8-8-8 or 10-10-10 in early spring, mid-Mar, and mid-July (18 inches from the trunk)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3 ounces of 8-8-8 or 10-10-10 in early spring, mid-Mar, and mid-July (24 inches from the trunk)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1/3 pound fertilizer per foot of bush height	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fertilize once in early springOn trees spaced 10 feet apart, apply ½ pound of fertilizer per foot of height, up to 5 pounds per yearOn trees spaced at least 12 feet apart, apply 1 pound of fertilizer per foot of height, up to 10 pounds per year

*A satisfactory amount of shoot growth for mature plants is about 1 foot per year
If issues with fruit yield or ripening, fertilization should be reduced*

Fruiting

The blossom is inside the fruit!



Aicha Debib & Soumaya Menadi, Fig (*Ficus carica*):
Production, Processing, and Properties

Pest Management

Root Knot Nematodes

- #1 killer of fig trees
- Cannot be cured
- Pruning can extend the lifespan



Disease Management

Rust (*Cerotelium fici*)

- Fungal, foliar disease
- Not typically an issue unless severe

Treatment/prevention:

- Remove infected leaves



Disease Management

Fig Souring

- Caused by a variety of bacteria and yeasts
- *Carpophilus hemipterus* and vinegar (fruit) flies carry microbes into figs
- Causes pink coloration, fermentation, and souring

Treatment/prevention:

- Remove fallen or overripe fruit
- Pick immediately when ripe



A close-up photograph of several pome fruits, likely from the genus Eriobotrya. The fruits are shown in various stages of ripeness, with some being bright green and others showing a mix of green and red or orange. The background is dark, making the fruits stand out. A semi-transparent dark grey box is overlaid across the center of the image, containing the text 'Pome Fruit' in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

Pome Fruit

Apple Tree Selection

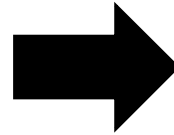
- Zones 1, 2, 3
- Dwarfing rootstocks are often preferred
- **Rootstocks:** M7, EMLA106, and EMLA111 (*semi dwarfs*)
- **Cultivars:** Ginger Gold, Gala, Mollie's Delicious, Ozark Gold, Golden Delicious, Mutzu, Yates and Granny Smith



Photo by UGA Extension

Tree Selection

Markets shift toward dwarfing rootstocks



Pear Tree Selection

- Bartlett is the most common European pear in the US (**NOT** suited for GA)
- Disease resistant cultivars suited for the southeast:
Carrick, Orient, Waite

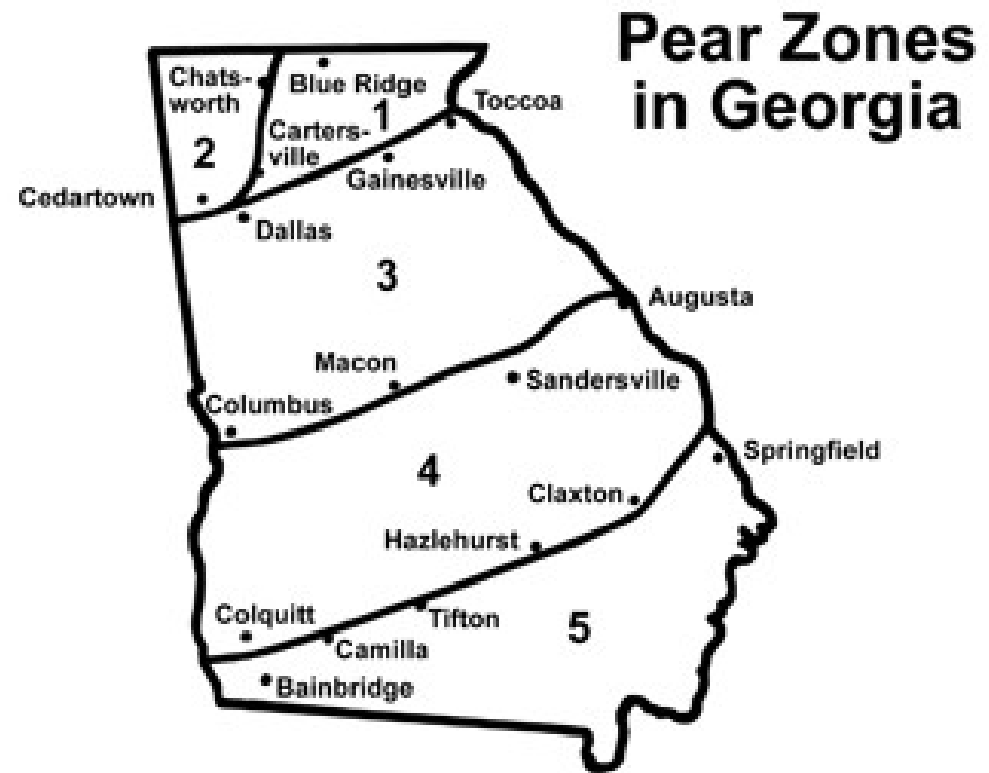


Photo by UGA Extension

Pollination

- Most apples and pears are not self-fertilizing
- Some pears can self-fruit: **Orient, Kieffer, and Spalding**
- Cross pollination still helps improve quality & yield



Photo by Becky Sideman, UNH Extension

Apple Pruning

- At planting, trim to 24-30 inches
- Additional pruning is done late winter
- Apples follow a **central leader system**
- Select 4-5 lateral branches 18" from the ground



Apple Pruning

Fixing an unmanaged tree:

- Select 3-5 main branches (45 - 60 degree angle)
- Remove all upright vigorous shoots
- Prune all other limbs to $\frac{1}{4}$ their length
- Do not fertilize after excessive pruning



Photos by UGA Extension

Pear Pruning

- Pears tend to branch at very upright angles
- Prune to 24-30 inches at planting
- **Season 1**, select 4-6 leading branches
- **Season 2**: tie branches to 45 degree angle

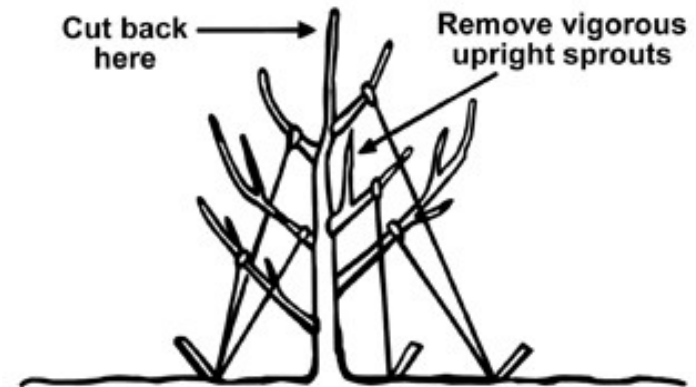
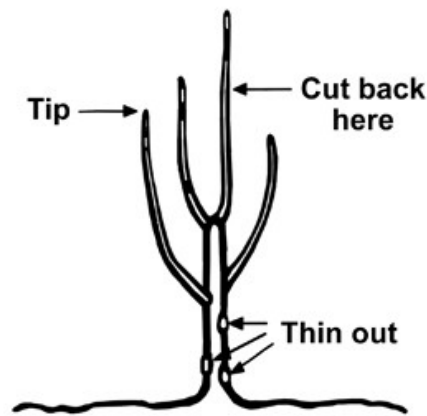
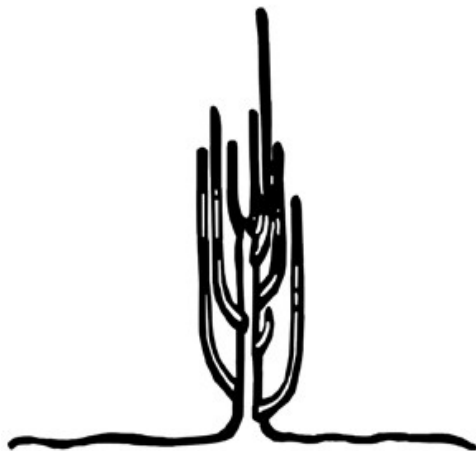


Photo by UGA Extension

Thinning

- Thin in early spring
- One fruit per cluster, 6" apart



Pear Ripening

- Harvest before they are ripe
- Letting ripen on the tree can lead to "core breakdown"

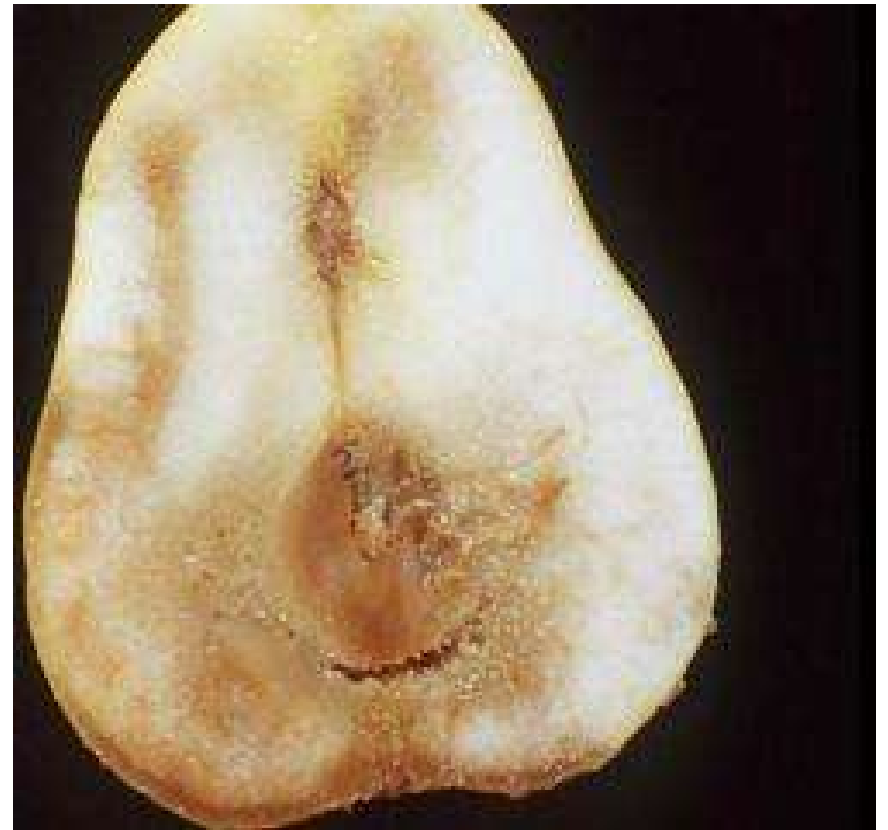


Photo by UC Davis Postharvest Research and Extension center

UGA Home Garden Fertilizing Recommendations

Soil pH should be between 6 and 6.5

Fruit Tree		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9+
Apple	Standard	1 cup of 10-10-10 fertilizer 1 month after planting over a 2ft circle. Repeat in June.	2 cups of 10-10-10 fertilizer over a 3-ft circle. Repeat in June.	Increase fertilizer (10-10-10) by 2 cups per year			Only nitrogen fertilizer is needed. Use 4 cups of ammonium nitrate per tree.			Only nitrogen fertilizer is needed. Use 6 cups of ammonium nitrate per tree.
	Semi-dwarf			Increase fertilizer (10-10-10) by 2 cups per year	Apply 8 cups of 10-10-10 per tree				Apply 4 cups of ammonium nitrate per tree	
	Dwarf			Broadcast over a 4-ft circle 4 cups of 10-10-10 around each tree	6 cups of 10-10-10 per tree broadcast over a 5-ft diameter circle		Only nitrogen at a rate of about 2 cups of ammonium nitrate per tree, broadcast over a 5-ft diameter area			
Pear	Apply 1 cup of 10-10-10 fertilizer per tree per year of tree age, with a maximum application of 12 cups. Apply half of the amount before growth begins and the other half after fruit set									

Disease Management

Fire Blight (*Erwinia amylovora*)

- Bacterial disease infecting blossoms
- Affects leaves, flowers, fruits, and stem
- Identified by “shepherds crook” and ooze

Treatment/prevention:

- Bactericidal sprays during bloom
- Prune branches **6-8 inches** below infection (sanitize tools!)



Disease Management

Bitter rot (*Colletotrichum spp.*)

- Fungal disease occurring on fruit
- Facilitated by high humidity and temperature
- Brown spots develop spores and form dark sunken lesions with concentric rings

Treatment/prevention:

- Remove infected fruit
- Preventative sprays



Disease Management

Scab (*Venturia inaequalis*)

- Fungal disease occurring on fruit, leaves
- Overwinters in infected leaves, spores dispersed by rain in the spring

Treatment/prevention:

- Remove infected fruit
- Clean leaf litter
- Preventative sprays before wetting events



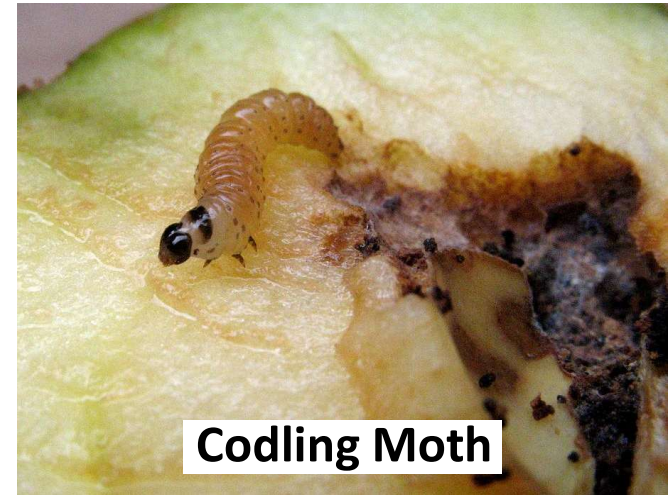
Insect Management

Codling Moth & Oriental Fruit Moth

- Minor-moderate pests in the southeast
- Larvae bore into fruit

Treatment/prevention:

- Scouting/monitoring to time preventative sprays

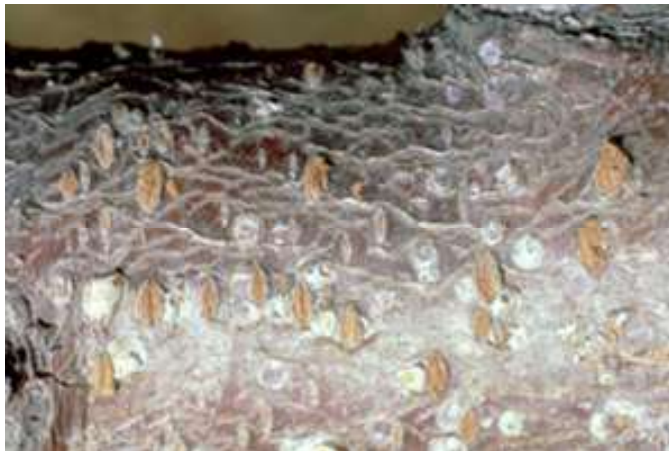


Insect Management



San Jose Scale

- Also infects apple and pear
- Feed on sap of trees and fruit
- White armor, produces fluffy, white residue



Treatment/prevention:

- Horticultural oils (1-3%) twice during the dormant season (leaf drop to first swollen fruit buds)



Persimmons

Tree Selection

Native Persimmons

- Practically immune to cold injury
- Smaller fruit
- 30-40 ft tall

Japanese/Asian Persimmons

- Cannot tolerate below 10 degrees F
- Larger fruit
- 10-30 ft tall
- More common



Photo by Hugh Kenny, Piedmont Environmental Council



Photo by David Ouellette

Growing from Seed/Propagation

- Easy to grow from seed (but low germination rates)
 - Store the seed in a container with a moist paper towel in the cold for 3 months
- 5-6 inch cuttings from 1 year old trees can be placed directly into soil



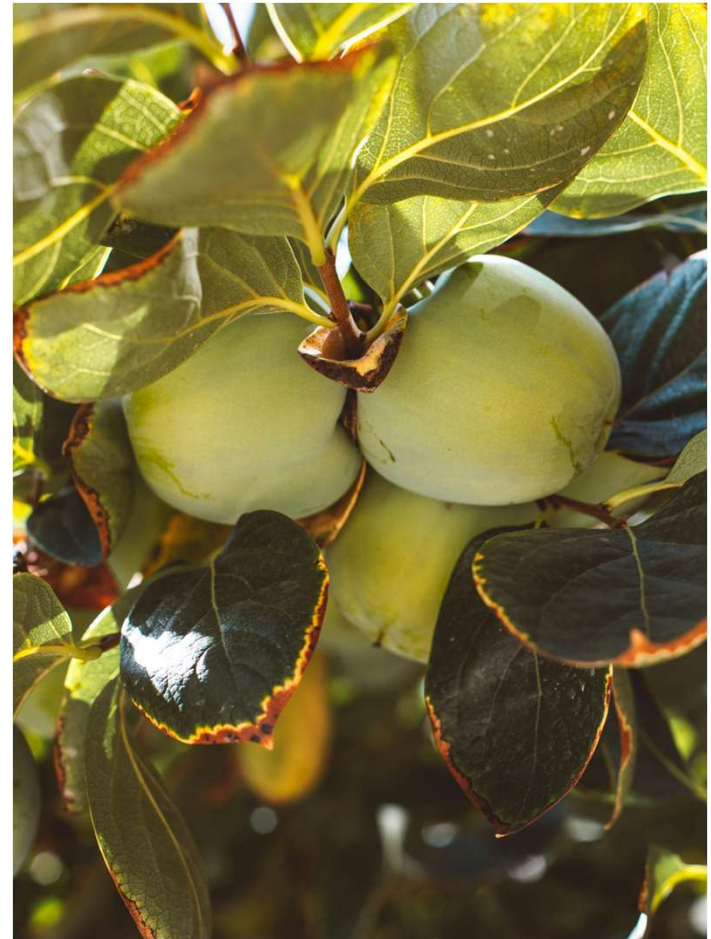
Planting

- Tolerant to many soil types
- Full sun, tolerating light shade
- Deep taproot (makes container gardening difficult – maybe?)
- Little watering required



Fertilizing

- Fertilize with 10-10-10 in spring or mid-summer
- Bearing trees need little fertilization
- Excess nitrogen causes fruit drop



Pollination

Native: dioecious (either male or female flowers)

Japanese/Asian: male and female flowers

- Can produce fruit from unfertilized flower (parthenocarpic fruit)



Pruning

- Minimal pruning
- Dead and broken limbs
- Crowded branches



Thinning

Fruit 6 inches apart,
roughly 1 month after
bloom



Insects

Scale Insects (persimmon & tuliptree)



- Generally controlled by other native pests
- Horticultural oil before bud swell

Persimmon Psyllid



- Causes leaf roll and curl
- Insecticides not often needed

Persimmon Borer



- Larvae attack trunk and taproots
- Preventative insecticides similar to peach tree borer



Pawpaw

What is pawpaw?

- Largest edible fruit indigenous to North America
- Grows from Florida to Canada
- Only host for Zebra Swallowtail



Planting

- Keep in shade until 1.5 ft tall
- Grows up to 30ft in full sun
- **Nursery tree:** fruit in 4-5 years
- **Seed:** fruit in 5-8 years



Photo by Holly Campbell, UGA Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resource

Planting from Seed

- Place seed in container with 1:1 moist sand and peat moss OR sphagnum moss
- Refrigerate for 70-120 days
- Plant 1 inch in the soil



Photo by Heather Kolich, UGA Extension

Pollination



- Cross pollination is required!
- Pawpaws growing in clusters are often genetically identical

Photos by Holly Campbell, UGA Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resource & Heather Kolich, UGA Extension

Harvesting

- Late summer – fall
- Can harvest from ground or tree
- Best when eaten fresh from the tree
- Only the inner flesh is edible
- Lasts for 3-4 days without refrigeration



Disease/Pest Management

Practically none

:)



Questions?

Contact Information

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GEORGIA**

Newsletter

Sign up for our digital newsletter to stay up to date on other classes and events!

<https://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/dekalb/newsletter.html>

General

Soil Testing Information <https://fieldreport.caes.uga.edu/publications/C896/soil-testing-for-home-lawns-gardens-and-wildlife-food-plots/>

UGA Select the Best Trees for your Region of Georgia <https://fieldreport.caes.uga.edu/news/select-best-fruit-trees-for-your-region-of-georgia/>

UGA Home Fruit Orchard Pruning Techniques <https://fieldreport.caes.uga.edu/publications/C1087/home-fruit-orchard-pruning-techniques/>

Thinning Fruit (UMaine) <https://extension.umaine.edu/fruit/growing-fruit-trees-in-maine/fruit-thinning/>

Managing Suckers Around Fruit Trees (Utah State) <https://extension.usu.edu/productionhort/research/managing-suckers-around-fruit-trees>

Chilling Hour Requirements of Fruit Crops (Mississippi State University) <https://extension.msstate.edu/publications/chilling-hour-requirements-fruit-crops>

Growing Fruit Trees in Containers (University of Florida) <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/stlucieco/2020/08/07/growing-fruit-trees-in-container/>

Growing Tree Fruits in Containers (MSU) https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/growing_fruit_in_containers

Container Gardening with Tree Fruits (University of Houston) <https://www.uh.edu/sustainability/news/articles/2017/november/11292017gardeningfruittrees.php>

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