

# THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO DWARF MINIATURE & PATIO FRUIT TREES

Fruit trees love sunshine and this is true for the smaller growing miniature and patio fruits as well. The more hours of sun you can give then the better the results will be - you will find the fruit is sweeter and ripens with more colour; remember that it will probably be earlier in season too - protected patio's may have a microclimate that is warmer than the surrounding area. If you have an area that is more shaded then some varieties can still cope and do well - notably the Morello cherry. Lastly try to select a spot that is out of the wind as there is nothing more irritating than continually having to stand up trees in pots that have blown over! 'Morello Cherry Tree' – this is a hardy doer & one of the few fruit trees that can take some shade or a cooler position.



## Patio Fruit Trees For Pots And Containers

These naturally dwarfing trees are ideal for containerisation; just make sure you select the dwarfing trees and an appropriately sized container of not less than 24". The trees prefer you use a Loam based compost such as John Innes no 2 or a similar type, it's better than peat-based compost for fruit trees in containers. Make sure you feed - and water - regularly and, with a little care your apples, plums, or cherries can stay in pots for years. In many ways they are easier to care for than garden grown trees because they can more readily be protected from pests, birds and worse weather.

The obvious home to your dwarf fruit trees is in an easy to manage container or pot, which we have provided for you. Observe a few pointers and your trees will thrive in such an environment.

First, the minimum size is a good 24" or so. Fill it with a loam based potting compost such as John Innes no 2 or a similar brand your local stockist can recommend. Never use garden soil. Peat based compost is ok but tends to lose it's 'body' sooner than loam based.

Any type of container is suitable, plastic, clay, whatever. As long as it has adequate drainage - no tree likes to sit in water.

WATERING is the number one essential; every day during the growing season (Growing season is May to September) unless it has really, really rained – and you will soon learn that it needs to rain A LOT to do any good when it comes to trees in pots because 'ordinary' rain may not penetrate the compost, or it gets shielded by the umbrella of leaf and branches above. So, try to get into a routine and water once a day – early or late are the best times. Pour the water on to the compost direct with the watering can or hose.



Feeding needn't be a chore; you can use a foliar feed if you want to, but this will need applying every fortnight or so. By far the easiest method, is to apply osmocote granules once every Spring. This type of fertilizer is slow release, so you get a steady trickle of nutrients right through the season.

## Pruning Dwarf Plum, Cherry, Apple Patio Fruit Trees



This can often be made a quite complicated and convoluted subject; undoubtedly some pruning will be essential to your trees but as long as some basics are observed then it will provide you with good results. There is a lot more information that the less experienced can safely leave to the specialists. When you get the tree, it will likely have one straight 'leader', cleve the leader branch at the top, or it may have two or three which will need cleaving. One or all of these should be shortened after planting, by about one third of their current

length. This will encourage greater bushiness and bud bearing spurs.

Any lower branches that you don't want can be removed until you have a 'trunk clearance' of the desired length. You don't have to remove lower branches but mostly it results in a shapelier tree and it's easier to weed beneath, plus these lower laterals don't tend to be great fruit producers anyway. Cut them off clean at the trunk.

In subsequent seasons more strong growing upright branches will likely be produced. Again, they can and should be cut back by one third. All pruning is best carried out over winter. These are the basics that will get you by and help the tree to produce fruits early in life.