

# Plum Tree Planting Instructions

## Site and Soil Requirements

Plum Trees like full sun. As with all fruit trees, sunlight is a key to maximizing fruit production. Pick an area where the trees will be in the sun most or all day. Early morning sun is important because it dries the dew from the leaves, thereby reducing the incidence of diseases.

A well-drained sandy loam soil at a pH of 6.5 is ideal for growing plums.

It's recommended to plant at least 8-10' away from patios, water pipes and sewer pipes. You might not expect sewer and water lines to be affected since they are buried so deeply. But, since sewer and water lines tend to be wet, roots will grow to them and around them if the tree is planted too close. This is true for most trees.

## Planting and Pruning

It is best to plant the trees in the winter while they are dormant.

Spacing between trees: 12-15'

Dig the hole deep and wide enough so the root system has plenty of room. (Keep the topsoil in a separate pile so you can put it in the bottom of the hole.)

Roots grow better in soil that's been loosened.

Fill the hole, putting the topsoil back in first. You can avoid creating air pockets by working the soil carefully around the roots and tamping down firmly.

You will see a knot at the base of your plum tree. This is the graft. This knot should be at least an inch above the dirt line.

### **Help the tree develop a strong framework.**

Remove weak, diseased or injured branches. Also remove upright branches and any that sweep back toward the center of tree. You want to keep your tree from becoming too thick and crowded; some thinning is necessary to permit light and air flow to enter the tree and to keep its height reasonable. All these objectives promote improved bearing, which is your overall aim.

## Fertilization

It is always a good idea to have your [soil tested](#) before planting, and follow the recommendations. You can get information on [soil testing](#) from your county extension office.

Apply 1 pound of 10-10-10 in March of the first and second years, as well as 1 and 1½ cups of calcium nitrate in May and July of the first and second years, respectively. Thereafter, apply 1 cup of calcium nitrate each March and August, being careful not to place the fertilizer against the tree's bark.

## Water

If you receive about an inch of rainfall every 10 days or so, you won't need to water. But if it gets dry, you can give your new tree a good, thorough soaking. The best way to do this is to let your garden hose trickle slowly. This gives the water a chance to soak in instead of running off. You can also use a soaker hose to water several trees at once. Give your tree enough water to soak the ground all around the roots.

It's important to note that even if you're in the middle of a drought, you don't want to water too much. Once every 10 days or two weeks is plenty. Worse than dry, thirsty roots is waterlogged, drowning roots.

## Harvest

Plums are ready to be picked when they separate easily from the tree with a little twist. They should not be picked when firm.

Harvest season begins mid-July thru early September depending on the variety and location. Annual average yield per tree: 4-5 bushels.

**Plumcots** - Harvest season begins June depending on the variety and location. Annual average yield per tree is 3-4 bushels.