

Tree Talk

Planting Fruit Trees

This is the time of year when we start thinking about planting fruit trees and shrubs. You may be wondering if you need to plant a pair of fruit trees in order to have them pollinate and produce fruit.

Some fruit trees and shrubs are self-fruitful, which means they pollinate themselves, so you only need one plant for fruit to appear. These plants include: European plums, sour cherries, apricots, raspberries, and gooseberries.

The other type of fruit bearing plants are known as self-sterile. These plants and trees will not accept their own pollen and must be pollinated by a different cultivar. For example, a Haralred apple tree requires a different cultivar of apple in order to pollinate itself. If you have two Haralred apples, they will not pollinate each other.

Examples of fruit trees and shrubs that require two separate cultivars are: apple, pear, sweet cherries, blueberries and Nanking cherry. Closely related cultivars are also poor pollinators if planted together.

The identification and description tags found on new plant material usually recommend certain other cultivars that act as good pollinators. If you live in town, the good news is there are normally other trees, especially apples, that are close enough to create enough cross pollination on a single yard tree. If you know what kind of tree your neighbor has, that alone might be enough to pollinate a tree you are interested in.

Not all fruit trees and shrubs will grow throughout South Dakota. Make sure to not only check what hardiness zone the plant grows in, but what type of soils it requires. Some trees and shrubs being sold do not always list a hardiness zone. Don't automatically assume this as meaning the plant will survive our climate. The USDA lists the Aberdeen area with a hardiness rating of 4a, which is an average annual minimum extreme temperature of -25 to -30 below. If you have questions regarding hardiness or fruit tree selection, feel free to give me a call.

Please contact me for additional information or questions at forestry@aberdeen.sd.us or 626-7015

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