

CHILLING HOURS

Chilling refers to the number of hours 45 degrees and under during the dormant period. All fruit and nut trees need a specific amount of chilling hours before they will produce fruit. The amount varies with each variety and the hours need not be continuous.

Mild areas, which include most of Los Angeles and the beach areas should choose varieties with the lowest chilling hours, less than 300. Most of our local area, including Woodland Hills, Calabasas, Thousand Oaks and Westlake can choose varieties that require less than 500 hours. The coldest valley areas including Agoura, Monte Nido and other chilly microclimates can experiment with the higher chill varieties though there is no guarantee that the temperatures required for fruit production will be met.

PRUNING

Peaches, Plums, Apricots, Apples, Berries and Grapes each require slightly different pruning techniques to encourage to best fruit production. We highly recommend picking up a copy of the paperback, "How To Prune Fruit Trees" by R. Sanford Martin (\$4.99). The book is available at Sperling Nursery and is an incredibly valuable tool when pruning season arrives. It explains, in simple terms, the different pruning techniques for all fruit trees and berries.

POLLINIZING

With the exception of just a few indicated varieties, most of our fruit tree selection is 'self-fruitful'. The 'self-fruitful' varieties do not require pollinizing from another variety and should produce enough fruit for the home orchardist.

PESTS & DISEASES

If you have had trouble with insects, such as mites, scale, mealybug or whitefly, on your fruit trees, try using a an oil spray such as Ortho® Volck during the dormant season to destroy overwintering insects and their eggs. Also, keep the area around the tree clean and tidy by discarding any fallen leaves or debris.

For diseases such as Peach Leaf Curl on peaches and nectarines and Shot Hole Fungus on plums, try Lime-Sulphur spray during the dormant season. Lime-Sulphur spray can also be used on Roses during the dormant season to control black spot, powdery mildew, and rust.

As with any chemicals, always read and follow the manufacturers directions before application.