



GROWING APPLE TREES

Pollination-All apple varieties should be considered self-incompatible, meaning that they cannot pollinate themselves or any flowers of the same apple variety. The highest quality fruit is harvested when cross-pollination occurs with a suitable pollinizer variety. You will need to plant at least two varieties of apple trees together in order to maximize fruit production and quality. Make sure that the varieties you choose have overlapping bloom dates, so that both varieties bloom at the same time. Some varieties, such as Winesap, Mutsu, Jonagold and Stayman produce sterile pollen and should never be used as pollinizers. However, pollen from other varieties can be used to pollinate these pollen-sterile varieties. Remember, two trees of the same apple variety cannot be used for cross-pollination. Since the pollen from apple blossoms is transferred primarily by bees, be careful not to spray insecticides during bloom when honey bees are present.

Soils-Apple trees will tolerate a wide range of soils as long as water and nutrients are not limiting and soil pH is adequate. Avoid heavy, poorly-drained soils and low spots, since apple trees cannot survive if water remains standing in the root zone.

Air Drainage-It is important to select a site where the tree will not be in a “frost pocket”, where cold air settles in low-lying areas. In a frost pocket, low spring temperatures commonly kill the blossoms or developing fruit because cold air settles around the tree. Good air drainage, especially during early spring frosts, is critical. Choose a higher site with a slope if possible so cold air will flow down away from the trees and will not accumulate around the trees.

Other Considerations- Apple trees require full sun and should be planted where the trees will not be shaded from large trees or buildings. Do not plant trees near wooded areas or streams to avoid animal damage. Prior to planting, remove weeds either manually or with an approved herbicide that will not harm the young tree. If planting the tree in a lawn, remove the grass from the planting area in a 3-foot diameter circle. Grass competes with young trees for available water and nutrients and can significantly reduce tree growth and productivity.