



APPLE



Department of Horticultural Science | University of Minnesota

Apple Cultivars Recommended for Minnesota Gardens.

Cultivars marked with indicate a University of Minnesota release.

Cultivar	Hardiness in Zone 4	Hardiness in Zone 3	Average Harvest Date	Description
Chestnut crab	Excellent	Very good	Early-mid Sep	Large crabapple with russeted skin. Rich, nutty flavor. Best for fresh eating, sauce. Fruit stores 4-5 weeks.
Cortland	Good	Fair	Late Sep-early Oct	Sweet-tart, aromatic flavor. Flesh is slow to brown when cut. Good for fresh eating and cooking.
Freedom	Good	Fair	Sep	Very resistant to scab. Crisp, juicy, sweet. Good for fresh eating and cooking.
Frostbite	Excellent	Very good	Early Oct	Small fruit is intensely sweet, firm, and juicy. Extremely cold hardy.
Haralson	Very good	Good	Late Sep-early Oct	An heirloom cultivar still very popular today. Medium size, striped fruit is full-flavored and tart. Great for fresh eating, cooking, especially pies. Fruit stores 4-5 months.
Honeycrisp	Very good	Good	Late Sep	Extremely juicy and crisp. Well-balanced flavor. Flesh is slow to brown when cut. Fruit stores 7 months +.
Honeygold	Good	Fair	Early Oct	Medium size golden fruit. Crisp, juicy, sweet. Great for fresh eating, cooking. Stores 2-3 months.
Liberty	Good	Fair	Early Oct	Resistant to scab. Medium size, similar flavor to McIntosh, but firmer. Good for fresh eating, cooking.
Regent	Good	Fair	Early-mid Oct	Red striped fruit is crisp, juicy, well-balanced. Good for fresh eating, cooking. Stores 4-5 months.
SnowSweet	Good	Fair	Mid Oct	Large, bronze-red fruit. Sweet. Slow to brown when cut. Good for fresh eating, cooking.
Sweet Sixteen	Very good	Good	Mid-late Sep	Medium to large, rosy red fruit. Crisp, juicy, very sweet with spicy, cherry flavor. Best for fresh eating. Stores 5-8 weeks.
Wealthy	Good	Fair	Early Sep	This heirloom cultivar was the first apple developed in Minnesota. Medium size, striped red fruit. Moderately tart. Good for fresh eating, pies.
William's Pride	Good	Fair	Mid Aug	Resistant to scab. Medium size, somewhat tart. Good for fresh eating, cooking.
Zestar!	Good	Fair	Late Aug-early Sep	Large, crunchy, juicy red fruit with balanced sweet-tart flavor. Excellent for fresh eating and cooking.

Apple Tree Tips

Apple trees require well-drained soil and direct sunshine throughout the day.

Two cultivars are required for successful pollination. One can be a crab apple.

Tree size ranges from about 6' tall to over 30' tall, depending on rootstock.

Plant trees 4'-20' apart. 4' for dwarf, 10-15' for semi-dwarf, and 20' for standard size trees.

Most cultivars tend toward biennial fruiting. Thin fruit each spring to encourage annual bearing and larger fruit.

Annual pruning increases productivity, reduces disease and insect problems, and keeps the tree looking good.

Dwarf apple trees will bear fruit 2-3 years after planting. Standard size trees could take up to 8 years.

Apple cultivars NOT recommended for Minnesota:

- ✗ Braeburn
- ✗ Fuji
- ✗ Gala
- ✗ Golden Delicious
- ✗ Granny Smith
- ✗ Jonathan
- ✗ Red Delicious

Apple rootstocks

Rootstock affects tree size, winter hardiness, years to fruit production, and drought tolerance, among other things.

You might have to speak directly with a tree fruit specialist at your nursery to discover what rootstocks their trees are grafted on; some nurseries offer custom grafting on larger orders.

When purchasing trees, choose cultivars grafted on rootstocks that are hardy to the region and that meet your customer's needs for tree size, etc.

The most common apple rootstocks used for general nursery sales:

Dwarfing

- M.27 - Produces very small trees, about 5 to 6 feet tall. Best for very small spaces. Must be staked.
- B.9 (Bud.9) - Mature tree height is 6 to 8 feet. Very winter hardy. Any fruit produced the first 2 years should be removed to promote root/tree growth. Must be staked.
- M.9 - Size is similar to B.9, or slightly larger. Slightly less hardy than B.9. Any fruit produced in the first 2 years should be removed to promote root/tree growth. Must be staked.

Semi-dwarfing

- M.26 - Mature trees reach about 10 feet tall. Produces few root suckers. Vigorous enough to allow early fruiting. Highly susceptible to fireblight.
- M.7 - Very common semi-dwarfing rootstock. Mature trees reach about 12-15 feet tall. Produces many root suckers. Begins fruiting about 5 years after planting.

Standard

- MM.106 and MM.111 - These are technically semi-dwarfing, but produce trees 75-85% of standard size, about 15-17 feet tall. Best for marginal soils because of their high vigor.
- Seedling - Trees on seedling rootstock will reach 20+ feet tall. They usually produce few root suckers and have few disease problems. Standard size trees produce a lot of fruit.