



Caring For Plums, Prunes & Plum Crosses



Planting:

Plant bareroot trees as soon as possible in late winter/early spring. Potted trees can be planted any time soil can be worked. Soak the roots of your bareroot tree in Root Stimulator mixed with water while you prepare the hole.

Dig the hole wide enough for the roots to spread outward and downward (about 1 ½' x 1 ½'). If the soil is heavy clay, mix compost with the soil (1/4 compost: 3/4 soil). Plant the tree so that the uppermost roots are just below the soil line and the graft union is above the soil line. If you wish to apply a slow release fertilizer, like Dr. Earth Fruit Tree fertilizer or Espoma Bio-Tone Starter Plus, you could do so now mixing fertilizer in with the soil, or you can apply fertilizer 4-6 weeks later around the drip line of the tree. Fill planting hole with soil mix, being sure there are no air gaps around roots. Put a stake about 4 inches from the trunk and attach tree trunk to stake with chain lock (never use wire or string). Prune out any crossing branches or overcrowded branches and prune broken branches back to a bud facing outward. Water your tree to get rid of any air pockets in soil and thoroughly moisten soil. Then pour the Root Stimulator mixed water that you soaked the roots in over the root area. To prevent sun scald, paint the trunk with a white latex paint slightly diluted with water from the soil line to the lowest branches.

Pruning:

Plums, Prunes and Plum Crosses should be pruned into a vase shape in the summer. This will allow as much sun and air flow as possible. The trees will also produce a great deal of shoots and water sprouts that require some pruning. After the third year, very little pruning is needed.

Harvesting:

For best quality, plums should remain on the tree until firm-ripe. This can be hard to tell, so many people wait until the fruit start to soften to harvest. Fruit will continue to ripen inside the house.

Prunes either fall naturally from the tree or can be knocked off when they reach the stage for drying. If you are going to knock the fruit off the trees, it is best to wait until a few have fallen to the ground naturally. Then all the fruit can be cleared at once.

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