

Fruit Care Guide : Plum, Pluot, Prune

Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Amend Soil											
Spray before rains		Spray Before bud break					Spray (As Needed)				
Prune							Summer Pruning (As Needed After Harvest)				
				Fertilize Young Trees	Fertilize Mature Trees	Fertilize Young Trees		Fertilize Young Trees	Fertilize Mature Trees		
Remove old fruit				Thin fruit at dime size							
				Irrigation							

PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

In Ground

- **G&B Planting Mix**
- **G&B Starter Fertilizer** or **Bone Meal**
- Native soil from the planting hole
- **Mulch**

1. Dig hole 1x the height and 2x the width of the rootball
2. Settle your root ball in the hole and fill in with soil

- Paper pots
 - Cut an X on the bottom and up the sides of the pot.
 - Set the paper pot in the hole. Do not take out the pot.
- Plastic pots
 - Tap sides of pot firmly
 - Tilt pot at a diagonal, pull out gently

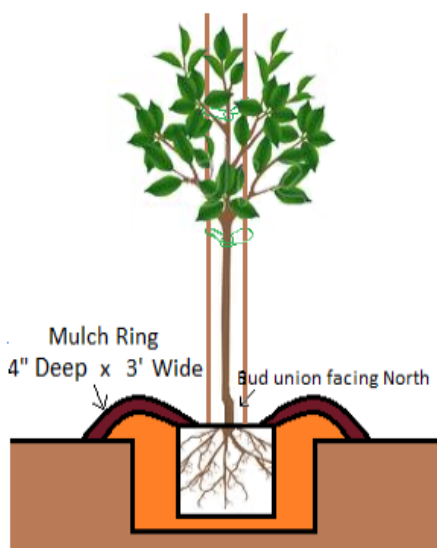
- Place into the hole

- Bare root

- Settle roots and fill soil mixture around and on top of it.
- Top of the roots should rest just above grade.

3. Settle the root ball with graft union facing north

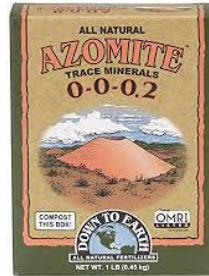
4. Soil mixture should consist of your native soil, planting mix, and fertilizer mixture



5. Attach two stakes on each side of your trunk and tie to trunk in a figure 8 with stretch tie tape or rubber tree ties
6. Check after watering that all roots are covered
7. Cover your root ball with a 4" thick mulch layer as wide as the canopy, starting 2" away from the trunk

FERTILIZER AND AMENDMENTS

- Amendments applied November - January time frame
 - **Compost, Earth Worm Castings** for increased water holding capacity, and increased populations of earthworms and beneficial organisms that improved soil ecosystem.
 - Optional : Include **Langbeinite** for improved branch rigidity and sweetness
 - Optional : Include **Azomite** (Micronutrients) for larger fruit set
 - Mix and spread amendments in a donut shape as wide as the canopy
 - Cover amendments with four inches of mulch starting 1" away from the trunk
- Mulch options
 - Best mulch for enriching soil: **G&B Soil Building Conditioner** or **G&B Harvest Supreme**
 - Other options: Bark, rock, or cardboard
- Fertilizer: First 3 years fertilize with **G&B Citrus and Fruit Tree** fertilizer in spring, summer, fall
 - Starting year 4 change to **G&B All Purpose** fertilizer in spring and summer



Yearly Amendments

Amendments as needed



Fertilizers

PEST AND DISEASE RESISTANT

Plum types that are amended yearly, fertilized throughout the year, watered correctly, planted in full sun, and pruned yearly will have minimal pest problems.

Pests or disease presence is a sign that water, fertility, or light needs to be corrected for the tree to thrive.



Aphid



Whitefly



Scale



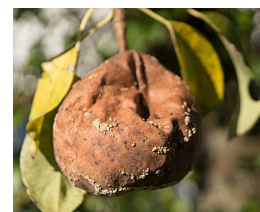
Plum Bud Gall Mite



Shothole Fungus
Coryneum Blight



Powdery Mildew



Brown Rot



Plum Fruit Moth



Preventative Application

- Combine 2 - 4 oz of **Horticultural Oil & Liqui-Cop**
 - Dilute in water and spray entire tree
 - To prevent against shothole fungus, spray before winter rains in November
 - Spray 1x in late Jan - early February when buds start to swell, before they open to prevent against spring pests and diseases



Spray between these two stages

- If powdery mildew appears: Spray with **Liqui-Cop** or other fungicide



WATERING

Plums can become drought tolerant after several years. How quickly the watering plan can be adjusted depends whether the plant has ideal or less ideal growing conditions. This is affected by what kind of soil you have, whether or not the tree is fertilized and watered correctly, or whether or not the tree has a thick layer of mulch. There are more factors to be considered, but those are most important.

4 Year Watering Schedule (Ideal Conditions)

Summer Watering	Fall and Spring Watering	Winter Watering
Year 1 Once every 1 week	Water less frequently than summer watering schedule.	No water needed During drought year winters water deeply every 2 months.
Year 2 Once every 2 weeks		
Year 3 Once every 3 weeks		
Year 4 Once every 4 weeks		
Year 5 - 6 Once every 1 months		
Year 7 - 8+ Once every 2 months		
Year 9 - 10+ Once every 3 - 4 months		

8 Year Watering Schedule (Less Ideal Conditions)

Summer Watering	Fall and Spring Watering	Winter Watering
Year 1 - 2 Once every 1 week	Water less frequently than summer watering schedule.	No water needed During drought year winters water deeply every 2 months.
Year 3 - 4 Once every 2 weeks		
Year 5 - 6 Once every 3 weeks		
Year 7 - 8 Once every 4 weeks		
Year 9 - 10+ Once every 2 - 4 months		

Adjust watering over time as the plant's root system grows

- Volume of water should increase, watering should be applied at the drip line as the plant grows wider, frequency of water should decrease

How much water to apply

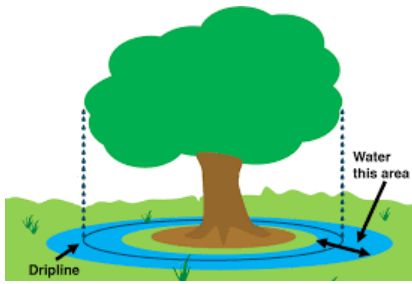
At planting the volume of water should be **equal to double the original plant root ball / container size**.
Example: A 10 gallon container plum should get 10 - 20 gallons of water per watering.



Existing trees need approximately **10 gallons of water per one inch of trunk diameter** measured 6 to 12 inches from the ground

Question: What is the drip line?

The drip line is where a natural rainfall would fall onto the ground, at the edge of the canopy.



Watering zone indicated as blue in photo

PRUNING

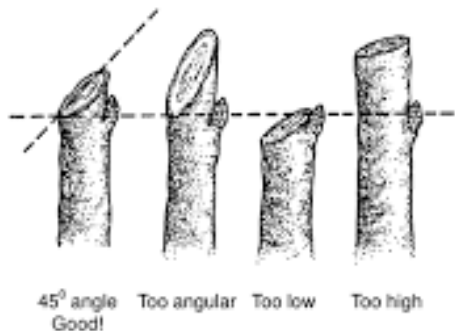
- The shape of your tree should be decided at a young age.
 - If you want lower branching, a pruning cut should be made below chest height year 1 to encourage lower canopy development.
 - If you want higher branching you can walk under, all lower branches should be removed below chest height.
- Majority of new plum fruit buds are located on short spurs located on wood that is 2 to 3 years old.
- Plum fruiting spurs and branches can produce fruit for 6-8 years.
- No more than 30% of the canopy should be removed in a single pruning session. The exception for this would be the first year's pruning to create core scaffolding shape
 - More than 30% reduction may stress the tree
 - Stress response = Vertical water spout growth

How to Prune

- Prune November - January time frame for strong spring growth response
- Remove dead, diseased, and damaged branches
- Remove or shorten disoriented, crossing, rubbing branches
- Check for rootstock suckers at the base and remove
- Reduce the length of fruiting branches by $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{2}{3}$ depending on your desired shape and size.
- Recommended amount of new growth to keep:
 - Keep $\frac{2}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$ of new growth, remove the rest
 - Pruning cuts should be $\frac{1}{8}$ " - $\frac{1}{4}$ " above a growing node or leaf bud at a 45° angle. Choose your cut based on the direction the bud is pointing. Bud should be pointing out into open space in the direction you want your new branch to grow.



Directing growth:
Cutting above a bud



- **Only keep the rigid portions of the branch**, remove weak floppy branch sections. Weak branch sections may break under fruit weight and are not worth keeping.

When to prune?

- Winter Pruning (December - February)
 - Best for young trees
 - Encourages vigorous branch growth response in spring
- Summer Pruning (August - September after harvest)
 - Best for mature trees
 - Plum types usually have vigorous yearly growth, with heavy pruning required.
 - Summer pruning for mature plum type trees is strongly recommended.
 - Good time for pruning of current year's growth down to 4"-12" (Or 1 - 2 hand spans)
 - Good time for larger height reduction cuts
 - Encourages more fruit spur development
 - Remove vigorous upright shoots from the interior canopy to improve light penetration and air circulation.

FRUIT THINNING

- Your tree was grafted from a mature, fruit bearing tree
 - But it's not yet a mature tree. Remove fruit first year for stronger branch and root growth
- Sometimes plum trees only fruit every other year if they are not thinned
 - This is due to the fact that the tree has produced such a copious crop that it's just plain done and needs an extra season to gather its resources before it can fruit again. Thinning plums promote yearly fruit sets.
- Mature trees will drop immature fruit in May - June that it does not have space for if not thinned
- Trees that aren't thinned will have
 - Weak branch and root growth
 - Broken branches
 - Decreased size and quality of fruit
- Year 1: Remove all fruit asap
- Year 2+
 - Thin when fruit is dime sized
 - Keep 1-3 fruit per cluster



Not Thinned



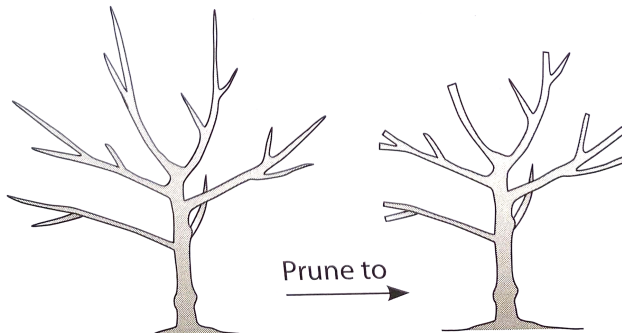
Thinned

PRUNING EXAMPLES

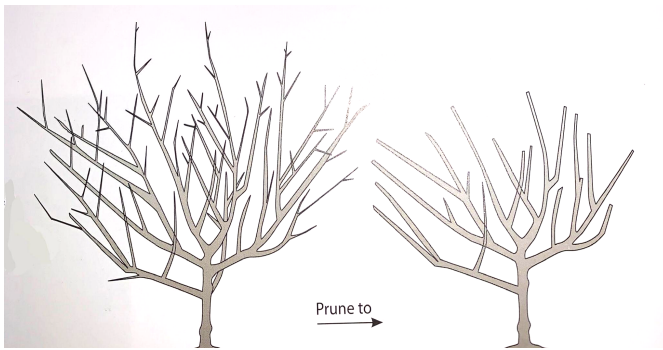
What should your tree look like?

There are many different styles and shapes you can prune your tree

We recommend Fruit bush or open center pruning style for lower harvesting and increased sunlight and airflow to the center of the tree



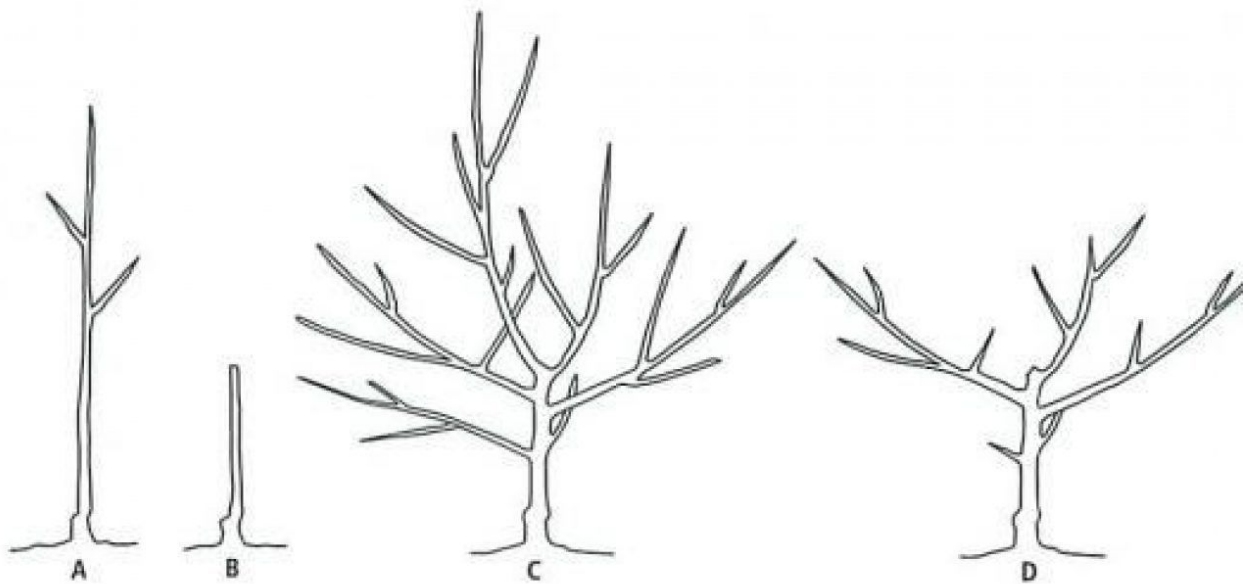
After 1 year growth since planting, prune back long branches to 1 - 2 handspans
Goal: Fruit bush style



After 2-3 years growth since planting
Goal: Fruit bush style



1-2 years growth since planting
Goal: Open center canopy
Limb spreaders could be used to widen the angle of the scaffolding branches
Black is growth that was kept, brown is growth that was removed



Open Center Pruning

- A) Bare root tree at time of planting
- B) Tree heading after planting
- C) Growth after one year
- D) Tree pruned after one growing season

Mature plum

Black is growth that was kept, brown is growth that was removed



Mature Plum

Black is growth that was kept, brown is growth that was removed