

YOUR GARDEN

Growing Your First Apple Tree

(NAPSA)—According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each American eats about 120 apples a year.

“Apples are fat-, sodium- and cholesterol-free and a great source of fiber,” says Bayer Advanced™ Garden Expert Lance Walheim, who has written or contributed to more than 30 gardening books.

But apples can be expensive. One way to save money is to grow your own. The Garden Writers Association reports that more than 16 million households grow fruits, including apples.

While it can take a few years for a single apple tree to produce its first fruit, once it gets going it can provide enough apples for your family and your neighbors. In fact, the University of Illinois Extension Service says an average tree can produce 840 pounds of apples.

Here are some tips to help you grow your first apple tree:

- **Start small:** Don't plant an orchard your first time out. However, many apple trees need to cross-pollinate with another variety in order to produce fruit. Consult with your garden center or county extension service for best practices and to determine the best varieties for your area.

- **Sunny side gets the thumbs up:** Apple trees require full sun and well-drained soil.

- **Dig the right size hole:** Dig a hole at least twice the diameter of the rootball and just deep enough so the top of the rootball



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sits about an inch above the surrounding soil level.

- **Mulch around the tree root.** About an inch or two of mulch helps keep the weeds out and the moisture in.

- **Protect against insects:** Aphids and leafhoppers can damage apple trees. Since apple trees can grow tall and wide, using sprays while on a ladder can be difficult. One option: the new Bayer Advanced Fruit, Citrus & Vegetable Insect Control. It kills destructive insects and prevents new infestations for a season. Just mix in a watering can and pour it around the base of the tree. It's formulated for use on more than 100 fruit, vegetable and citrus plants. Be sure to read and follow the instructions on the label.

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