



Plums

Plums make beautiful, small landscape trees, along with providing delicious fruit. The varieties we carry are self-fertile, and therefore may be planted alone in the home landscape. However, for maximum fruit production and quality, plant two different varieties of plums. All of our plums are Japanese varieties (*Prunus salicina*), the most familiar fresh plums in the U.S and better adapted to Texas than the European varieties.

Plant your trees 15 to 20 feet apart. Consult our handout *Planting & Maintenance Guide for Fruits, Nuts, & Berries* for further instructions.

Prune plums according to the **open center** method:

At Planting: Cut main stem back to a height of 24” to 30”. If there are any branches that are suitable for scaffold branches (strong, evenly-spaced, lateral branches at wide angles to main stem), cut these back leaving 2 – 3 buds on each. If not, cut all branches back, leaving only the main stem. Allow tree to grow freely the first year.

2nd & 3rd Winters: In January to mid-February, select 3-4 evenly-spaced scaffold branches, if you haven’t done so already. Head back (prune the tips of) these to 24” from the trunk. Remove any growth arising on the scaffold branches within 6” of the trunk. All branches on the trunk above or below the scaffold branches should be removed. Remove all branches growing down, towards the center, vertically, or at narrow angles.

Subsequent Winters: Long, slender branches should be headed back each winter to induce further branching. Continue removing branches growing down, towards the center, or at narrow angles.

Consult a reputable, current book or university website for more complete pruning information. It takes about 4 years for a plum tree to mature and produce a significant harvest. Thinning fruit so that they are 4” to 6” apart is essential for larger, more flavorful fruit, *and* the health of the tree.

Plum Varieties for Central Texas (chilling hours) – Size of fruit; Ripening time; Fruit quality & flavor; Skin color; Other qualities & information.

Methley (250) – Medium; Early June; Amber to reddish flesh with delicious flavor; Purplish skin; Self-fertile; Clingstone; Good quality for fresh eating and jams; The recommended pollinator for all other varieties.

Santa Rosa (300 - 400) Large; June; Red, firm, tender, extremely juicy, low acid flesh; Purple-red skin; Self-fertile; Developed by Luther Burbank and introduced in 1906; Clingstone; Good quality for fresh eating and jams.

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