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April Orchard Checklist

The April jobs for your fruit trees, by climate band. Months are typical for each band: let your local frost dates and your trees have the final say.

Cold zones 3–5

- ☐ Check bare-root trees the day they arrive
  When bare-root trees arrive in early spring · New trees
- ☐ Plant bare-root trees before growth begins
  As soon as the soil can be worked, before buds open · New trees
- ☐ Put a white trunk guard on
  At planting · New trees
- ☐ Water new trees on a schedule
  From planting through the first growing season · New trees
- ☐ Water deeply during dry spells
  Growing season, in dry weeks · Zones 4, 5
- ☐ Feed weak trees a month before bloom
  About a month before bloom
- ☐ Remove first-year stakes the next spring
  The spring after planting · Young trees · Zones 4, 5
- ☐ Head back the new tree at planting
  At planting · Apples, pears · New trees
- ☐ Remove first-year stakes, except on dwarf apples
  The spring after planting · Apples · Young trees
- ☐ Spread young branches just after bud break
  Just after bud break in spring · Apples · Young trees · Zones 4, 5
- ☐ Dormant oil window, if mites or scale were a problem †
  Bud swell to green tip · Apples, pears · Bearing trees
- ☐ Apple scab window, green tip to petal fall †
  Green tip to petal fall, ahead of rain · Apples · Bearing trees · Zones 4, 5
- ☐ Cut back new stone fruit trees at planting
  At planting · Stone fruit · New trees · Zones 4, 5
- ☐ Dormant oil window, if San Jose scale is a problem †
  Delayed dormant, from bud swell to green tip · Apricots · Zone 5 only

Middle zones 6–7

- ☐ Hang yellow sticky traps for cherry fruit fly
  Just after bloom, as fruit starts to develop · Cherries · Bearing trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Head back last year's growth for branching
  Spring, after frost danger, before growth starts · Figs · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Check stems and cut out winter-killed wood
  Early spring, as regrowth begins · Figs · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Remove winter covers after spring frost danger
  After the risk of spring frost has passed · Figs · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Plant potted trees after the last frost
  After the last spring frost · New trees · Zone 6 only
- ☐ Water deeply during dry spells
  Growing season, in dry weeks
- ☐ Keep a weed-free circle around young trees
  Growing season · Young trees
- ☐ Feed weak trees a month before bloom
  About a month before bloom · Zone 6 only
- ☐ Keep insecticides off trees in bloom
  Bloom · Bearing trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Remove winter trunk wraps in spring
  After the last spring frost · Young trees
- ☐ Loosen ties and guards as trunks grow
  Late spring · Young trees
- ☐ Expect some fruit drop after bloom
  After bloom into early summer · Persimmons · Bearing trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Spread young branches just after bud break
  Just after bud break in spring · Apples · Young trees
- ☐ Apple scab window, green tip to petal fall †
  Green tip to petal fall, ahead of rain · Apples · Bearing trees
- ☐ Scout for pests as buds turn pink
  Pink bud · Apples · Bearing trees
- ☐ Hang codling moth traps by first bloom
  By first bloom · Apples, pears · Bearing trees
- ☐ Check trunk bases for borers
  During bloom · Apples · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Plum curculio window opens at petal fall †
  Petal fall and the following three weeks · Apples · Bearing trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Cut out fire blight strikes promptly
  The month after bloom, and whenever strikes appear · Apples, pears · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Thin heavy pear crops early
  Within four weeks after bloom · Pears · Bearing trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Choose scaffold branches during the first summer
  First summer, through mid-summer · Stone fruit · Young trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Watch for plum curculio after petal fall
  Petal fall and the weeks after · Stone fruit · Bearing trees · Zone 7 only

Warm zones 8–10

- ☐ Hang yellow sticky traps for cherry fruit fly
  Just after bloom, as fruit starts to develop · Cherries · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Water citrus deeply, not daily, in summer
  Mid-April to mid-September · Citrus · Zones 9, 10
- ☐ Keep figs mulched and watered through summer
  Summer, ahead of and during ripening · Figs · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Expect some fruit drop after bloom
  After bloom into early summer · Persimmons · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Thin heavy persimmon crops to 6 inches
  About three weeks to a month after bloom · Persimmons · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Pinch out shoots competing with the leader
  Early summer, while shoots are soft · Apples · Young trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Rub off water sprouts in early summer
  Late spring to early summer · Apples · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Plum curculio window opens at petal fall †
  Petal fall and the following three weeks · Apples · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Cut out fire blight strikes promptly
  The month after bloom, and whenever strikes appear · Apples, pears · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Thin apples to one per cluster
  Two to six weeks after bloom · Apples · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Thin heavy pear crops early
  Within four weeks after bloom · Pears · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Water at the ground, not overhead, in bloom
  Bloom, April through June · Pomegranates · Bearing trees
- ☐ Thin peaches to 6 to 8 inches apart
  Within about six weeks after bloom · Peaches, nectarines · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Thin apricots to 4 to 6 inches
  Four to six weeks after full bloom · Apricots · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Watch for plum curculio after petal fall
  Petal fall and the weeks after · Stone fruit · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Pick plums as they start to soften
  Florida: April and May · Plums · Bearing trees · Zone 9 only

† Timing only. Follow your state or provincial extension's home-orchard spray guide and the product label.

Sources: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach; University of Minnesota; Virginia Cooperative Extension and 17 more (full list at the web address on the left)

Data as of 15 Nov 2026