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March Orchard Checklist

The March 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

- ☐ Prune cherries in late winter, after hard cold
  Late winter, after the coldest weather · Cherries · Zones 4, 5
- ☐ Prune in late winter, before bloom
  Late winter, after the hardest cold, until a week before bloom · Apples, pears
- ☐ Train young trees to a central leader
  Dormant pruning time, first three to five years · Apples, pears · Young trees
- ☐ Cut off root suckers and water sprouts
  Dormant season · Apples
- ☐ Prune stone fruit in late winter, near bloom
  Late winter, after the coldest weather, up to bloom · Stone fruit · Zones 4, 5

Middle zones 6–7

- ☐ Plant figs in spring, deeper than before
  Spring, after the danger of hard freezes · Figs · New trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Feed figs lightly, or not at all
  When buds swell · Figs · Zone 7 only
- ☐ 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 · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Feed weak trees a month before bloom
  About a month before bloom · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Remove first-year stakes the next spring
  The spring after planting · Young trees
- ☐ 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 · Zone 7 only
- ☐ 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 · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Prune stone fruit in late winter, near bloom
  Late winter, after the coldest weather, up to bloom · Stone fruit
- ☐ Cut back new stone fruit trees at planting
  At planting · Stone fruit · New trees
- ☐ Dormant oil window, if San Jose scale is a problem †
  Delayed dormant, from bud swell to green tip · Apricots

Warm zones 8–10

- ☐ Plant citrus in spring after frost danger
  Spring, after the last frost (March to April) · Citrus · New trees · Zones 9, 10
- ☐ Water new citrus trees often at first
  The first weeks after spring planting · Citrus · New trees · Zones 9, 10
- ☐ Check new leaf flushes for citrus psyllids
  Monthly, spring through fall · Citrus · Zones 9, 10
- ☐ Expect heavy fruit drop after bloom
  Spring bloom to late May · Citrus · Bearing trees · Zones 9, 10
- ☐ Head back last year's growth for branching
  Spring, after frost danger, before growth starts · Figs · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Check stems and cut out winter-killed wood
  Early spring, as regrowth begins · Figs · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Remove winter covers after spring frost danger
  After the risk of spring frost has passed · Figs · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Keep a weed-free circle around young trees
  Growing season · Young trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Keep insecticides off trees in bloom
  Bloom · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Loosen ties and guards as trunks grow
  Late spring · Young trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Check trunks for persimmon borer
  March through June · Persimmons · Zone 9 only
- ☐ Scout for pests as buds turn pink
  Pink bud · Apples · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Hang codling moth traps by first bloom
  By first bloom · Apples, pears · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Check trunk bases for borers
  During bloom · Apples · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Choose scaffold branches during the first summer
  First summer, through mid-summer · Stone fruit · Young trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Water young trees weekly once growth starts
  From spring growth through the first summer · Stone fruit and cherries, apples, pears, figs, persimmons, pomegranates · Young trees · Zones 9, 10
- ☐ Feed young trees once new growth shows
  May in the first year; March to June in the second · Apples, pears, peaches, nectarines, plums · Young trees · Zones 9, 10
- ☐ Pick peaches and nectarines firm ripe
  Florida: mid-March to mid-May; Arizona low desert: late April to May · Peaches, nectarines · Bearing trees · Zones 9, 10

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

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

Data as of 15 Nov 2026