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Zone 3 Fruit Tree Care Calendar

Months are typical for zone 3 (worked out from a representative location with average frosts May 9 and Oct 18). Shift them by your local frost dates and by what your trees are doing.

For apples. Only one or two varieties of pears, plums and tart cherries are rated hardy here, so they have no tasks on this sheet. Check off each job as you do it; small print under a month lists short jobs still running from earlier.

All season, once started

Order trees for spring planting (Sep–Jan)
Water new trees on a schedule (Apr–Oct)
Water deeply during dry spells (May–Oct)

January

1 JOB

- ☐ Order trees for spring planting — continues

February

2 JOBS

- ☐ Clean and disinfect pruners when cutting diseased wood
- ☐ Remove fire blight cankers while dormant

March

5 JOBS

- ☐ Prune in late winter, before bloom
- ☐ Train young trees to a central leader — Young trees
- ☐ Cut off root suckers and water sprouts

Still going: Clean and disinfect pruners when cutting diseased wood; Remove fire blight cankers while dormant

April

13 JOBS

- ☐ Check bare-root trees the day they arrive — New trees
- ☐ Plant bare-root trees before growth begins — New trees
- ☐ Put a white trunk guard on — New trees
- ☐ Water new trees on a schedule — New trees
- ☐ Head back the new tree at planting — New trees
- ☐ Remove first-year stakes, except on dwarf apples — Young trees
- ☐ Dormant oil window, if mites or scale were a problem † — Bearing trees
- ☐ Feed weak trees a month before bloom

Still going: Clean and disinfect pruners when cutting diseased wood; Remove fire blight cankers while dormant; Prune in late winter, before bloom; Train young trees to a central leader; Cut off root suckers and water sprouts

May

14 JOBS

- ☐ Water deeply during dry spells
- ☐ Spread young branches just after bud break — Young trees
- ☐ Apple scab window, green tip to petal fall † — Bearing trees
- ☐ Plant potted trees after the last frost — New trees
- ☐ Keep a weed-free circle around young trees — Young trees
- ☐ Remove winter trunk wraps in spring — Young trees
- ☐ Loosen ties and guards as trunks grow — Young trees
- ☐ Keep insecticides off trees in bloom — Bearing trees
- ☐ Scout for pests as buds turn pink — Bearing trees
- ☐ Hang codling moth traps by first bloom — Bearing trees
- ☐ Check trunk bases for borers

Still going: Prune in late winter, before bloom; Put a white trunk guard on; Remove first-year stakes, except on dwarf apples

June

10 JOBS

- ☐ Plum curculio window opens at petal fall † — Bearing trees
- ☐ Cut out fire blight strikes promptly
- ☐ Bag apples against apple maggot after thinning — Bearing trees
- ☐ Thin apples to one per cluster — Bearing trees
- ☐ Pinch out shoots competing with the leader — Young trees
- ☐ Hang red sphere traps for apple maggot — Bearing trees
- ☐ Rub off water sprouts in early summer — Bearing trees

Still going: Put a white trunk guard on; Plant potted trees after the last frost; Keep a weed-free circle around young trees

July

3 JOBS

- ☐ Prop or lighten limbs bowing under fruit — Bearing trees

Still going: Pinch out shoots competing with the leader; Rub off water sprouts in early summer

August

3 JOBS

- ☐ Skip feeding and pruning in late summer

Still going: Rub off water sprouts in early summer; Prop or lighten limbs bowing under fruit

September

6 JOBS

- ☐ Pick apples as the ground color turns — Bearing trees
- ☐ Chill the harvest quickly and keep it humid — Bearing trees
- ☐ Test the planting site's soil — New trees
- ☐ Order trees for spring planting — New trees

Still going: Prop or lighten limbs bowing under fruit; Skip feeding and pruning in late summer

October

4 JOBS

- ☐ Wrap young trunks against winter sunscald — Young trees

Still going: Pick apples as the ground color turns; Chill the harvest quickly and keep it humid; Test the planting site's soil

November

8 JOBS

- ☐ Cut grass short around young trees — Young trees
- ☐ Fit hardware-cloth guards against mice and rabbits — Young trees
- ☐ Fence or cage trees where deer browse
- ☐ Water deeply before the ground freezes
- ☐ Mulch new trees and fill soil cracks — New trees
- ☐ Rake up fallen leaves and fruit

Still going: Test the planting site's soil; Wrap young trunks against winter sunscald

December

1 JOB

- ☐ Order trees for spring planting — continues

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

Sources: University of Minnesota; Virginia Cooperative Extension; Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and 12 more (full list at the web address on the left)

Data as of 15 Nov 2026