



# Job's Nursery LLC

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## Plums, Prunes and Pluots

When selecting Plums there are two major groups of varieties of Plums, Japanese and European. Both are great tasting just be mindful of this when selecting because the two groups do not cross-pollinate each other. European Plums are for fresh eating and cooking because of their firmer flesh allows the plum to remain intact while being exposed to the baking process. While the Japanese Plums are best for fresh eating and desert, with a pleasant tangy taste and are very juicy. Prunes are ideal for drying and canning. Pluots are a cross between Apricots and Plums but have the same growing habit as Japanese Plums.

### ***Plant Growing Conditions***

To grow a plum tree successfully it is best to plant a plum tree where it can have plenty of space to grow (most trees are now semi-dwarf so allow space for a tree that can grow 10 to 15 feet tall and wide). Plum trees grow best in full sun and in a spot with plenty of air flow, this also helps prevent fungal diseases from developing on your tree. Remember to routinely fertilize the trees with a fertilizer that has a mild nitrogen rate, strong phosphorous and potash like 8-16-16, this encourages a good leaf and root growth (nitrogen) while providing the nutrients for better flower and fruit production (phosphorous). Remember that fruit is mostly water so you will need to deep soak your trees in our hot summers to keep the fruit trees healthy and fruit production stable.

### ***Local Ordinances***

It is Washington state law that a property owner takes care of the all pest and disease on their property particularly economic pests. So when you want to plant an apple tree to produce your own fruit keep this in mind when growing apple trees in the Benton and Franklin Counties. If you do not wish to care for your tree do not plant them. Also if you move into a home with a fruit tree in the yard and you do not wish to spray have it removed to prevent it from being a host the pests listed below.

### ***Spraying***

This is a spraying summary of what kind of spraying is needed to care for your plums to be both a good neighbor and protection of your own fruit.

Late February- Apply dormant spray or Horticultural Oil to control over wintering eggs, larva, or scales that will cause problems when spring rolls around these pests become active. Also to control over wintering fungal spores use either Copper or Lime Sulfur fungicides.

To control Aphids, Scale, Powdery Mildew, Peach tree Borer, and Spider Mites as needed when the pest present themselves.

### ***Cross Pollinating***

Plums and Pluots, depending on the variety, either need a second variety or are self fertile. So check the pollination requirements of that variety. Japanese plums and European Plums bloom at different times so when choosing your varieties be sure to select varieties from the same group of plums. Pluots and Japanese Plum will cross with each other.

### ***Pruning***

When pruning plums for shape and performance you want to create a vase shape with an open habit. This allows for better fruit production as well as allow for plenty of airflow to help control diseases and pests. Japanese Plums are more vigorous and you will need to remove more shoots annually than the European. Fruit producing spurs need to be refreshed so when doing your spring pruning thin shoots, remove some older branches to make room for the producing ones, and keep the structure open by removing crossing branches.

### ***Thinning***

Plums to reach a normal fruit size as well as even fruit production from year to year, it is best to thin fruit so there is one per 4 to 6 inches on the branches.

### ***Harvest***

Plums are ready to pick when soft (yields to pressure) and fully colored for the variety. The fruit should be able to twist off easily, don't yank.