FRUIT TREE PLANTING AND ESTABLISHMENT

Lee Reich, PhD, www.leereich.com

I. When and where to plant?
MYTH #1: Plant in spring
The ideal site: pests, soil, microclimate

II. Tree selection
Kind of nursery plant: bare root or container
MYTH #2: Bigger is better, for a nursery tree
Kind of fruit
Easiest: pear, pawpaw, persimmon, perhaps peach, mulberry
Moderate: apple, plum (variety choice important), nectarine, juneberry, quince
Difficult: apricot, cherry
Variety of fruit: adaptability (soil, pests, cold), flavor, storability, season
Eventual tree size
What determines size
Pros and cons of full-size and dwarf trees

III. Planting:
MYTH #3: Better a $5 tree in a $50 hole than a $50 tree in a $5 hole
MYTH #4: Improve drainage with loose material at bottom of planting hole
MYTH #5: Amend soil in planting hole and add fertilizer
Soil out, soil back in
Top down nourishment
Mulches
Trim extra-long roots
MYTH #6: Stake young trees to prevent movement
Avoid staking if possible
If you do stake, allow for some movement of trunk
Minimize length of time tree is staked
Exceptions: Certain dwarf trees, windy sites, large trees

IV. Voles!!!

V. Post planting care
Watering: 1” depth per week for first year
Fertilization
Not needed at planting
Top down
Ideal is bulky organic materials
In poor soil, concentrated fertilizers?
Pruning young tree for health, good form, and strong branches
MYTH #7: Prune stems to balance loss of roots
So best approach
Minimize pruning of any young tree
Prune off dead, diseased, broken, and misplaced branches
Better to do a few thinning cuts rather than many heading cuts
Exceptions: dry or windy sites, dry years where little supplemental watering
Develop scaffold limbs and central-leader (C-L) or open-center (O-C) form
C-L: Apple, apricot, sweet cherry, pear
Modified C-L: apricot, sweet cherry, persimmon, Euro plum, American
tart cherry, Japanese plum
O-C: tart cherry, sweet cherry, peach, persimmon, Japanese plum

VI. Into the future: How much and what to prune depends on bearing habit

Books for more information
Grow Fruit Naturally, by Lee Reich
The Pruning Book, by Lee Reich

Some Sources for Plants
www.cumminsnursery
www.raintreenursery.com
www.sln.potsdam.ny.us

www.elmoreroots.com/
www.acnursery.com
www.waflernursery.com