



Using Fruit Trees and Berries to Create an Edible Landscape in Utah

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Most gardeners can agree that the best tasting produce is that which they have grown themselves. As yards are getting smaller, incorporating berries and fruit trees into a perennial landscape is a great way to maximize space and minimize water use. By incorporating these plants into your landscape you are not only able to grow more produce on limited space, but you are also using water wisely by watering plants that have more than just an aesthetic purpose. Another benefit of creating an edible landscape, the flowers and blossoms can attract native bees and wildlife which help with

pollination. Many herbs and vegetables can also be incorporated into your landscape design, but this paper will focus on using berries and fruit trees to build an edible perennial landscape. For optimum fruiting, all fruits should be grown in full sun. Listed yields are for mature plants under optimum management and growing conditions.

Fruit trees can make excellent shade trees in the landscape. Semi-dwarf or standard trees can be planted in the landscape, while dwarf forms can be planted in large containers and set on a patio.

Figure 1. Dwarf peach tree grown in a patio.



Figure 2. Dwarf apple tree in full bloom as a small shade tree in the landscape.



Figure 3. Raspberries being grown as a hedge.

Figure 4. Blackberries and Raspberries planted to cover a fence.



Keep in mind that most fruit trees require some spraying and pruning for best production, so plantings should be designed so the tree can be easily accessed for pruning and away from windows or play areas for spray applications.

Beautiful blossoms in the spring followed by home-grown produce in the fall make fruit trees an excellent option for a shade tree in the landscape.

Brambles (raspberries and blackberries) require a support trellis system to stay upright. These can make an excellent hedge or barrier plant in the landscape. They require pruning in the late winter, but require little else to grow well in Utah's soils. The berries in the fall are quite showy against the green foliage.



Figure 5. A grape vine being used as a living fence.



Figure 6. Strawberries growing as a perennial groundcover.

American-type grapes do very well in Utah. They are long-lived and make excellent vines. They do require extensive pruning, so plant where they can easily be accessed and cut back each winter. They provide an excellent natural shade to cover a pergola, arbor, or archway.

Strawberries can be grown in containers or as a perennial groundcover in the landscape. They will stay under a foot tall and spread out as much as the runners are allowed to spread. Strawberries do not compete with weeds very well and they will need to be replanted every 3-4 years for optimum fruit production.

Many berries can be used as shrubs in the landscape design. Elderberry is a large shrub and would do well as a focal point of a shrub bed with showy white flowers followed by bluish-purple berries. Serviceberry and Gooseberry can be messy shrubs, but would be good to use as a barrier plant to block an undesired area. Both have beautiful orange leaves in the fall. Currants are excellent landscape shrubs that have uniform shape that can be used in a shrub bed or pruned as a hedge. The red berries are very attractive in the summer.

Careful observation of fruit trees and shrubs in the landscape is important for successful pest control. Although many fruit plants have insect pests, homeowners can reduce insecticide use by practicing good sanitation, using exclusion techniques and placing traps to capture pests. Additionally, spraying can be reduced if some amount of insect damage is acceptable. Since fruit will not be sold commercially, if the homeowner doesn't mind occasional

insect damage, spraying can be reduced. Limiting insecticide use will reduce the cost of producing fruit, keep beneficial insects around in the yard and in some cases, reduce environmental concerns. Visit <http://utahpests.usu.edu/ipm/htm/subscriptions> to sign up for newsletters that address timing of sprays and other options for pest control. <https://extension.usu.edu/productionhort/htm/fruit/> has fact sheets with more detailed information for each crop.



Figure 7. Strawberries grown in a container.



Figure 8. Red Lake Currant berries contrasting the green foliage making a very attractive landscape shrub.



Figure 9. An Elderberry growing as a large landscape shrub.

Sources

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	Size and Form	Landscape Uses	Landscape Features	Harvest Time and Yield	Challenges in the Landscape	Varieties Recommended	Uses
Apple <i>Malus</i> sp.	Tree, dwarf 6-12 ft. tall., Semi-dwarf 12-18 ft. tall	-Small shade tree -Espalier -Patio tree -Pruned as hedge -Container (15 gal. pot for dwarf)	-White & pink spring blossoms -Smooth bark -Colorful fruit	-Summer through fall, depending on varieties -Dwarf tree yields 1-2 bushels	-Fruit on ground -Needs regular spraying to control pests -Requires regular pruning -Needs cross pollination with another variety	' <i>Early Gold</i> '- late summer, green, used for fresh eating ' <i>Gala</i> '- early Fall, pinkish red, small to medium sweet fruit ' <i>Golden Delicious</i> '- Fall, golden large sweet apple ' <i>Granny Smith</i> '- fall, green, tart, perfect for baking	-Fresh -Sauce -Pies -Juice -Preserves
Apricot <i>Prunus armeniaca</i>	Tree, dwarf 4-8 ft. tall, Semi-dwarf 12-18 ft. tall	-Small shade tree -Espalier -Pruned as hedge -Container (15 gal. pot for dwarf) -Patio tree	-White popcorn-like spring blossoms in early spring -Colorful fruit	-Summer -Dwarf tree yields 1-2 bushels	-Needs regular spraying to control pests -Fruit on ground - Blooms early- high potential for frost damage	' <i>Rival</i> '- Large orange and red fruit, productive, requires pollination ' <i>Chinese</i> ' or ' <i>Mormon</i> ' - Yellow fruit, self-fertile*, blooms later to avoid early frost damage	-Fresh -Jellies & jams -Fruit Leather -Dried fruit
Peach <i>Prunus persica</i>	Tree, dwarf 4-10 ft. tall, standard 15-20 ft. tall	-Small shade tree -Espalier -Pruned as hedge -Container (15 gal. pot for dwarf) - Patio tree	-Pink spring blossoms -Unique growth habit -Red/Orange twigs create winter interest	-Summer -Standard tree yields 2-3 bushels	-Heavy pruning required -Needs regular spraying to control pests -Fruit on ground -Severe freezes can kill tree	' <i>Redhaven</i> '- medium sized yellow fruit, early to ripen, self-fertile* ' <i>Elberta</i> '- Large yellow fruit, most popular for canning, self-fertile*	-Fresh -Jellies & jams -Preserves
Plum <i>Prunus salicina</i>	Tree, dwarf 8-12 ft. tall, standard 20 ft. tall	-Small shade tree -Espalier -Pruned as hedge -Container (15 gal. pot for dwarf)	-Showy white spring blossoms -Vase-shaped form	-Summer -Standard tree yields 1-2 bushels	-Fruit on ground -Needs regular spraying to control pests	' <i>Superior</i> '- cold hardy, purple plum ' <i>Santa Rosa</i> '- red-purple skin, self-fertile*	-Fresh -Jams & jellies
Cherry <i>Prunus cerasus</i> (Tart), <i>Prunus avium</i> (Sweet)	Tree, semi-dwarf 10- 15 ft. tall, dwarf 6-8 ft. tall	-Small shade tree (if left unpruned can grow larger) -Pruned as hedge -Container (15 gal. pot for dwarf)	-White spring blossoms -Ornamental bark -Attractive red fruit	-Summer -Semi-dwarf tree yields 1-2 bushels	-Needs regular spraying to prevent pests -Fruit on ground -Birds eat fruit	' <i>Montmorency</i> '- tart, bright red, pie cherry ' <i>Lapins</i> '- self-fertile, dark red sweet cherry ' <i>Utah Giant</i> '- large, dark red/black cherry, sweet, needs pollinizer	-Fresh -Jams -Pies -Dried fruit

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Raspberry <i>Rubus idaeus</i>	Bramble, Upright/ semi-upright, 4-8 ft.	-Barrier plant -Hedge -Trellis	-Red Berries -White flowers	-Summer through fall -Yields 1 quart per 2 feet of row every 3 days	-Can have prickly spines -Requires staking -Intensive pruning required -Spreads by root suckering -Avoid replanting in the same spot to reduce soil-borne pathogens and viruses	' <i>Canby</i> '- summer bearer, sweet, cold hardy ' <i>Caroline</i> '- fall bearer, sweet, cold hardy ' <i>Polana</i> '- cold hardy, earlier fall-bearer, sweet	-Fresh -Jams
Blackberry <i>Rubus ulmifolius</i>	Bramble, Semi-erect and erect varieties, 4-8 ft.	-Barrier plant -Hedge -Trellis	-Black Berries -White flowers	-Summer through fall -Yields 1 quart per 2 feet of row every 3 days	-Thorns (some thornless varieties) -Requires staking -Intensive pruning required -May spread through "tip layering"	' <i>Chester</i> '- cold hardy, thornless, semi-erect ' <i>Natchez</i> '- erect, cold hardy, thornless	-Fresh -Jams
Grape <i>Vitis</i> sp.	Vine, 12-20 ft.	-Vine to cover archway, arbor, or pergola -Vine hedge -Good choice for lower quality soil	-Large green leaves -Showy clustered berries -Aggressive vine	-Early fall -8 lbs. of fruit per vine	-Needs to be pruned (hard to do on chainlink fences) -Fruit on ground	' <i>Himrod</i> '- green seedless, cold hardy, table grape ' <i>Reliance</i> '- red seedless, cold hardy, table grape	-Fresh -Juice -Jellies -Wines
Elderberry <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	Large shrub, 10-12 ft. tall	-Shrub -Native plantings -Informal hedge -Few pest problems -Attracts native pollinators	-Showy white flowers -Fragrant -Blue-purple fruit	-Fall -Yield 12-15 lbs. annually	-Birds attracted to fruit -Suckers and spreads -Needs to be pruned	' <i>Adams</i> '- large fruit, productive, 8-10 ft. tall ' <i>York</i> '- largest berries, 6 ft. tall	-Juice -Jam -Pies -Wines
Strawberry <i>Fragaria x ananassa</i>	Perennial groundcover, 6-12 in. tall	-Groundcover -Hanging baskets -Containers (any size of pot)	-Rich green foliage -Red berries -White blossoms	-Spring through fall (depending on varieties) -25 plants yields 30 quarts of fruit	-Not very competitive with weeds -Optimum production if replanted every 3-4 years -Fruit attracts birds	' <i>Kent</i> ' or ' <i>Jewel</i> ' - Junebearer, large sweet fruit ' <i>Seascape</i> ' - day-neutral, large sweet fruit, disease resistant	-Fresh -Pies -Jellies -Sauces
Gooseberry <i>Ribes hirtellum</i>	Shrub, 3-5 ft.	-Small shrub -Border plant -Barrier plant -Attracts native pollinators	-Colorful berries -Orange fall color -Attracts wildlife	-Summer -3-4 quarts per plant	-Very thorny -Plants can be messy -Fruit attracts birds	' <i>Poorman</i> '- red fruit, compact shrub, less thorny than standard ' <i>Pixwell</i> '- pink fruit, high yield, less thorny than standard	-Fresh -Jams & jellies -Sauces

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Currant <i>Ribes</i> sp.	Shrub, 3-5 ft.	-Small shrub - Containers (10 gal. pot) - Border plants -Informal hedge -Attracts native pollinators	-Colorful berries -Red fall color -Uniform shape -Ornamental leaves	-Summer -2-3 quarts per plant	-Fruit attracts birds	'Red Lake'- cold hardy, shade tolerant, very prolific fruiting	-Fresh -Jams & jellies -Sauces
Serviceberry <i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	Small tree/shrub 10-15 ft. tall	-Native landscaping - Wildlife landscaping - Drought tolerant	-Spring blossoms -Ornamental bark and leaves -Orange fall color -Few Insect pests	-Late summer	-Plants can be messy and sucker -Gets overgrown if not pruned -Fruit attracts birds	'Northline'- Heavy producer, excellent flavor, few seeds 'Regent'- stays small, very few suckers, small fruit	-Jams & Jellies
Chokecherry <i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Multi-stemmed tree/ large shrub, 20 ft. tall	-Native landscaping -Wildlife landscaping -Informal hedge	-Clustered white spring blossoms -Ornamental bark -Bunches of dark red fruit -Red to orange fall color	-Fall	-Spreads and suckers -Attracts wildlife -Small fruit- need a lot to store -Leaves toxic to wildlife -Pits contain toxins so separate from pulp when processing	'Canada Red' or 'Schubert'- 20' tall tree, uniform shape & growth, red foliage 'Boughen's Chokeless' or 'Maskinonoge' nonastringent fruit	-Jams & jellies -Sauces

*Many fruit trees need pollen from another tree in order for the blossom to set fruit. Some fruit trees are labeled 'self-fertile' meaning they do not require pollen from another source. Consult a pollination guide when choosing your varieties of fruit trees to ensure adequate pollination requirements.

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