



GREATER
Chatham
INITIATIVE

 **Tree Care** 
Guide

✦ **Keep Them Thriving** ✦



Use this Guide to take care of your tree!



Your Tree Profile

✦ Honey-crisp Apple ✦



The Semi-Dwarf Honey-crisp Apple tree is a mid-season blooming apple tree for commercial or home orchard use. Its explosive crispness, outstanding flavor, and a storage life of up to seven months make this one a true winner.

Growing Conditions & Key Features

Growing Conditions

Sun Exposure: Full Sun

Bloom Time: Spring

Flower Color: White

Fall Color: Yellow

Fruit Color: Red

Mature Height: 12 - 15FT

Mature Width: 12 - 15FT

Key Features:

- **Attract Bees**
- **Attract Birds**
- **Edible to People**
- **Attract Butterflies**
- **Attracts Pollinators**
- **Attractive Fruit**

Trees provide natural flood control by absorbing rainfall and reducing water runoff. In urban areas, they can reduce storm water management costs by up to 7%.

Maintenance Care for Honey-crisp

Harvesting

- Dwarfs and semi-dwarfs will bear in 3 to 4 years, yielding 1 to 2 bushels per year.
- Pluck your apples when their background color is no longer green.
- Different apple varieties mature at different times, so the harvest season can stretch from August to October.
- You'll know to harvest when the stem of your apple should part readily from the branch when the fruit is cupped in the palm of your hand and given a slight twist around. If the apple is overripe and soft, use it for cooking!
- Apples keep well for about six months at temperatures between 32 and 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

Watering - After Planting & Throughout the season

- Plants typically take approximately 6 weeks to establish new roots in your soil. During this period, water plants as often as every 2-4 days at the start and at least a minimum of once per week. Beyond the 6 week establishment period, water once per week, unless rains occur.
- After the first season, plants should only be watered during extended periods without rain.
- How do you know if your plants need water? The easiest way to tell is to touch the soil around the roots. If it is moist, there is no need to water. If it is dry, give it a good soaking with the hose end (no nozzle) watering the soil only, not the leaves.
- Stick your finger into the soil around 3" to check soil moisture.

Maintenance Care for Honey-crisp

Pruning - After Planting (Young Tree)

- Be sure not to heavily prune your plant too soon.
- Prune and remove any broken or damaged branches..
- Remove branches that may be too low. This will also help promote faster top growth.
- Additional pruning to help can be achieved by selectively removing branches that are too close or otherwise might not be proportionate with the rest of the tree.
- All pruning should be done with sharp pruning shears.

Pruning - Throughout the seasons (Mature Tree)

- You'll know when your tree is mature when it starts bearing fruit.
- Prune your mature tree when it is dormant. Completely cut away overly vigorous, upright stems. These are commonly higher up in the tree.
- Remove weak twigs (which often hang from the undersides of limbs).
- Shorten stems that become too droopy, especially those low in the tree.
- After about ten years, fruiting spurs (stubby branches that elongate only about a half-inch per year) become overcrowded and decrepit. Cut away some of them and shorten others.
- When a whole limb of fruiting spurs declines with age, cut it back to make room for a younger replacement.
- Thin out excess fruit is important for the health of your crop and fruit tree.
- Soon after fruit-set, remove the smallest fruits or damaged ones, leaving four inches between those that remain.

Five Steps to Properly Remove a Branch

1. ASSESS THE TREE'S PRUNING NEEDS.

Stand several feet away from your tree and assess the tree's shape from several angles, identifying which branches should be prioritized for removal. Focus on dead and damaged branches. Determine which branches are dead by making a small scrape in the bark with your thumbnail. If you see green, the branch is still alive.

2. IDENTIFY THE BRANCH COLLAR.

Identify the collar (the swollen area at the base of the branch where it connects to trunk) on the branch you wish to remove.

3. MAKE AN UNDERCUT.

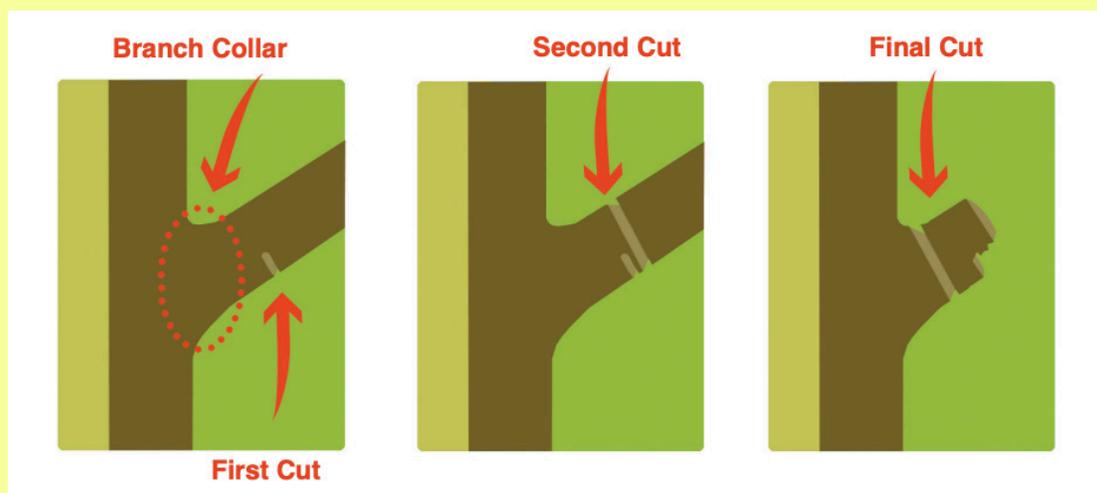
Using a handsaw, make a shallow undercut (cut upwards from the underside of the branch) 12-18" from the point where the branch attaches to the trunk, but do not cut the entire way through the branch. This cut will help to prevent ripping or tearing the bark.

4. MAKE A SECOND CUT TO REMOVE THE WEIGHT OF THE BRANCH.

Next, place your handsaw a few inches beyond your undercut and cut downwards through the branch from top to bottom. This will remove the weight of the branch, leaving just a stub and making it easier to make your final cut.

5. MAKE A FINAL CUT JUST ABOVE THE BRANCH COLLAR.

Finally, remove the stub by cutting the branch just above the collar. Cut slowly and evenly using long strokes, making sure the surface of your cut is smooth and flat



Fruit Trees

FRUIT TREES NEED SPECIAL CARE!

Fruit trees require special care to thrive. Most fruit trees are cultivated varieties designed to produce an abundance of fruit. Keeping this growth under control will help to ensure plentiful yet manageable harvests.

PRUNE AND THIN BRANCHES.

Remove dead and damaged branches to prevent disease and infestation. More extensive pruning can improve both the quantity and quality of your harvest. A dense canopy will prevent air and light from reaching the interior, which prevents fruit from ripening and encourages rot. Thin the canopy by cutting small side branches back to their point of origin on the parent branch, as well as removing crossed, crowded, and inward-growing branches.

PRUNE IN WINTER. (EXCEPT FOR PEACHES!)

Prune your fruit trees during the dormant season, generally between January and early March, but preferably when the temperature is above freezing. Peach trees should be pruned when they are flowering or just after, and up to 50% of the foliage/crown can be removed each year.

THIN THE HARVEST IN SUMMER.

Thinning will allow your tree to put energy into ripening several full-size fruits rather than growing hundreds of small fruits that don't ripen. Thinning also prevents branches from breaking under the weight of ripe fruit and allows air to circulate in the crown, which helps to prevent rot. To thin, remove fruits so that there is 2"-5" of space between each piece of fruit you want to ripen.



WATCH FOR PESTS AND DISEASE.

Fruit trees are especially susceptible to infestation and certain diseases. Apple and crabapple trees are susceptible to Cedar Apple Rust, a fungal disease that is spread by apple trees (*Malus*) in close proximity to eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*). Peach and nectarine trees are also susceptible to the Peachtree Borer, an insect that feeds on the sapwood of stone fruit trees. If you suspect your tree may have an issue, please contact the University of Illinois Agricultural Extension at uie-cook@illinois.edu or (773) 800-2078, or call a certified arborist.

Maintenance Care for Honey-crisp

General Tips

- Keep a crisp edge between the grass and the planting bed/ mulch ring.
- Maintain 3" of shredded bark mulch for your mulch ring around the tree.
- Stake trees in wind prone areas. Maintain stakes for the first growing season. A stake using a looped strap of cloth or rubber hose can be used to steady the tree. Never tie the tree to the stake tightly. Remove stakes after the tree trunk is stable and firm in ground (usually after 1 year of stake installed).
- Test soil for nutrients available in soil to add fertilizer in the early Spring to provide needed nutrients for the fruit trees production
- For fruit trees, within the first several years, remove large bearing fruit like apples and peaches, as tree branches will not be able to fully support the weight of the fruit and can impact the branch orientation on the tree.

Contact US!

Should you have any questions, need additional information, or wish to move forward with scheduling our next site visit, please feel free to reach out.

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Resources for Tree Guidance

University of Illinois Agricultural Extension

Local Agricultural extension that can provide resources related to fruit trees

Cook County Extension Office (Cook Main Chicago South)

Address: 8751 S Greenwood Ave Suite 112, Chicago IL 60619

Phone: 773-800-2078

Email: uie-cook@illinois.edu

Hours: Monday - Friday 9 am to 3 pm

Morton Arboretum Plant Clinic

Website:

<https://mortonarb.org/plant-and-protect/expert-advice/contact-plant-clinic/>

Phone: 630 719 2424

Email: plantclinic@mortonarb.org

International Society of Arboriculture

Find a certified arborist in your area to contact about tree related work at [Treesaregood.org/findanarborist](https://treesaregood.org/findanarborist)

Illinois Arborist Association

Find an arborist company in your area to contact about tree related work at <https://illinoisarborist.org/find-an-arborist/>

Openlands TreeKeepers

A volunteer-led program by openlands, where community members are trained on tree basic knowledge, education, and tree maintenance and care.

Website:

<https://openlands.org/programs/treekeepers-certification-and-program/>

Contact:Johan Martinez

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Olive-Harvey College, Urban Agriculture Department

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