

**AG NOTES**  
By John Teague  
UT/TSU Extension  
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**FRUIT TREES**

I got asked about variety selection of fruit trees for home orchards. I asked our specialist Dr. David Lockwood for advice. He's one of the best in the country, and here are some of his recommendations. I quote.

"For apples, here are some disease resistant varieties that should do well in Tennessee: Crimson Crisp, Crimson Gold, Crimson Topaz, Galarina, GoldRush, Enterprise, Liberty, Querina, and WineCrisp. Of this group, I have grown Liberty and Freedom. Both are good, but Liberty is a personal favorite. I have tasted the others and they are good. Arkansas Black is an old variety that is not very disease prone and that will do well in Tennessee. It also keeps a long time, as does GoldRush.

In regards to apple rootstocks, MM111 is the most forgiving apple rootstock we have. It is a semi-dwarf, giving about 20% reduction in tree size. It is a freestanding, long-lived tree. It is resistant to woolly apple aphid, a problem in Tennessee, and tolerant to a fairly wide range of soil conditions. In regards to dwarf trees, the smaller the tree, the more intense the management must be. As a rule, dwarf trees need support by staking or trellising and irrigation since the root systems are more confined than with semi-dwarf trees.

My primary caution regarding pears is to select varieties having fireblight resistance. Bartlett, Bosc and Anjou are three of the more popular varieties of pears, but they should **NEVER** be planted in Tennessee due to their extreme fireblight susceptibility. Potential European pear varieties for Tennessee include Ayers, Moonglow, Seckel, Starking Delicious and Warren. Keiffer is an option if the fruit are to be used for preserves, but not for fresh consumption. If Asian pears are desired, look at 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Hosui, Kosui and Chojuro. Rootstock options for pears are limited. There are no dwarf rootstocks that I know of. Usually, seedling or Pyrus callyana are used for full-sized trees and quince is sometimes used for a semi-dwarf tree.

The limiting factor for plum production is frost. Plums tend to bloom ahead of peach and are therefore more vulnerable to spring frosts. My favorite plum variety is Stanley prune (a prune is a plum with a high enough sugar content that it can be successfully dried). Stanley is a freestone variety. It does not need a pollinator. Other plum varieties are Green Gage, Methley, Ozark Premier, Morris and AU Rosa. Plums are budded onto plum or peach rootstock. No dwarf plum trees for fruit production exist to my knowledge."

There you have from the best in the business. Dr. Lockwood also made comments on sources and I'll share those on request.

**SAD COMMENTS**

On Sunday morning, at about ten a.m., I passed a couple of farmers in a truck pulling a trailer loaded with calves. They looked to be about heavy four hundred-light five hundred weights. The trailer was loaded, but not crammed full. They looked to be a nice set of calves with some value.

The things that went through my mind were mixed. They probably were not weaned, given their size. Therefore, I assume there will be stress from wondering where their mommas are when they get to where they are going. And when they are mixed with other calves, that will increase the stress.

The weather was sunny and warm. They were warming up from the sun, the higher than normal temperatures and their own body heat from being in a tight group. I noticed a couple with mucous discharge from both nostrils, and I would bet that they were candidates for respiratory problems.

Especially since the weather changed to wet and cold blowing winds. I hate to sell 'em when the weather is getting worse. I want the weather to be improving instead, especially were they are going.

These calves were a bit light to be sold, in my opinion. The owner could wean these calves, hold them for another 100 days and add weight to them, and they'll sell for more per pound given the market demand for bigger cattle, grossing more dollars.

The weaning process would give them more time to be treated to establish immunity for respiratory issues, and the buyers would be happier with healthier calves that are heavier. The farmer would have more money. It's a win-win situation.

Hope this little load did well.