



Urban Harvest
Gardening for good.

Pears

Category:	Temperate; deciduous
Hardiness:	Easily withstands freezes
Fruit Family:	Pome fruit
Light:	Full sun
Size:	9'H x 8'W average, may be pruned to desired HxW
Soil:	Well-drained; will tolerate short, temporary periods of standing water
Planting:	Plant during dormancy in Jan – Feb

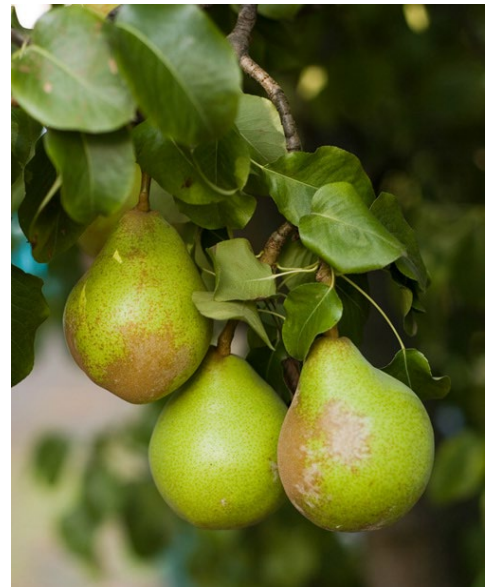
Pears can be grown throughout the Houston area. They are beautiful when in bloom and the fruit can be plentiful in August. Homegrown pears are as tasty as the best of the supermarket ones, and are light years better than the hard canning pears of decades past. With few exceptions, pollenizers are needed to produce fruit. All pears will set better fruit if a pollenizer is nearby.

Care of Pear Trees

Planting: Select a planting area that is well-drained or create a raised planting bed. Remove all vegetation within a minimum three-foot diameter circle.

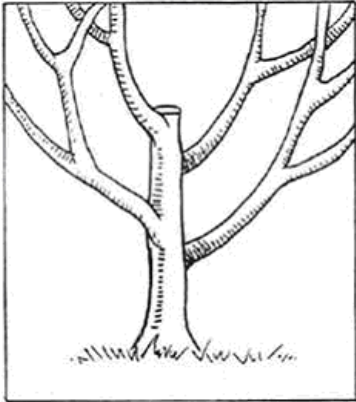
Locate the root flare; the point where the trunk transitions to the roots. Remove any nursery soil above this point, making sure the roots are still covered. Trim any roots that appear to be circling the root ball and any broken or clearly dead roots. Measure the depth of the resulting root ball.

Dig a hole that is wide and deep enough to easily accommodate the root ball. The sides of the hole should be tapered outward, not straight down (visualize a wok, not a stock pot) with the widest point at the top of the hole. The deepest point of the hole should be no deeper than your measurement of the root ball. This will allow the root flare to sit at the soil level and insures that the graft scar (located several inches about the root flare) will always be several inches above the soil level.



Place the root ball in the prepared hole. Check for straightness. Position the lowest branch you have decided to keep facing southwest. Backfill $\frac{1}{2}$ of the depth with existing soil – no amendments should be added during planting. Water well and allow it to drain. Fill the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ of the depth. Tamp the

soil, but do not pack hard. Water in well and water every day for a few days unless it rains. A mulch of composted native mulch or rotted leaves is highly recommended. Do not use bark mulch.



Pruning: Pear trees need to be pruned to get sunlight onto all branches. It is recommended to develop a modified central-leader scaffold. Scaffold branches should be well spaced around the trunk horizontally and vertically. Limbs should be upward-sloping at an angle of 45° to 60° from horizontal. Limbs with these angles will discourage unproductive upward growth from side branches. This builds a strong infrastructure for holding the fruit and helps give sunlight access to lower limbs. Remove crossing branches and remove or thin interior branches that grow vertically from the scaffold. Trees will produce little, if any, fruit on branches growing downward. These downward hangers should be removed.

Pears can grow to be quite tall and have an upright in growth habit. They can quickly outgrow your practical harvesting height. Pears should be pruned in mid-summer and again in winter to keep the tallest part of the fruiting canopy within a safe picking height. Thin anything taller to a weak side branch and thin any other tall branches back at least one foot lower than this new central leader.

Production: Pears can begin to produce in year three or four. If there is fruit before year three, pick it off immediately in order to allow all energy go into root production and tree growth. Fruit will form on horizontal spurs that are at least two years old. Do not let more than one pear develop per spur. Cut off others when they reach the size of a grape.

Watering: All fruit trees should get consistent water in the first few years. Watering can come from rain or a hose. During the first year, if the soil under the mulch is dry, provide the tree with about 7 gallons of water per week, preferably once a week. Water slowly. This can be a little more than 3 minutes with a ½" hose and 1 ½ minutes with a 5/8" hose. Remember to account for rainfall when determining how much to water with a hose.

Fertilizing: Pears need little, if any fertilization. Trees that receive too much nitrogen are more susceptible to fireblight, a bacterial disease that gives the appearance that the foliage has been singed by fire. Fertilize only if the trees fail to thrive, using the following program.

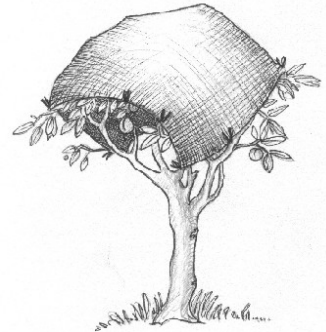
We recommend an organic program for fruit trees in the home landscape. For a small number of trees, use a slow release organic fertilizer, available at local independent nurseries. If you have a large number of trees, or a small number of trees and a limited budget, you can use cottonseed meal, available at nurseries and feed stores. Fertilizers should be broadcast under the entire canopy space of the tree. An organic mulch of compost and native mulch, or well-rotted leaves should be maintained at all times as part of your nutrition program.

Slow release organic fertilizer: 1st year – ½ cup; 2nd & 3rd years – 3 pounds; subsequent years - 20 to 40 pounds per 1000 square feet. Apply every 3 – 4 months, and only after blooming has passed.

Cottonseed meal: 1st year – 1.5 cups; 2nd year – 3 cups; 3rd year – 6 cups; mature trees – 3 to 6 quarts per inch of trunk measured at the base. Apply twice a year, after blooming has passed.

Harvesting: Except for Asian varieties, pears do not ripen on the tree. Harvest them from late July into August when they begin to change color, the tiny dots on the skin surface turn brownish, and when one pear cut open has dark rather than green seeds. If you gently lift a pear and push it to one side, it will snap off easily when it is tree ripe. Refrigerate immediately, reducing the fruit temperature to approximately 40 degrees. Set out a few pears at a time on the kitchen counter to ripen at room temperature. They will keep for several weeks in the refrigerator, allowing you to ripen as many as needed in regular intervals.

Winter Protection: Winter protection is not necessary for pears. In fact, they need to acquire a specific number of chill hours in order to break dormancy and produce blooms & fruit. If the tree has open blooms in late winter/early spring, and temperatures are predicted to fall below 28° F, you may cover the tree with a cloth “tent”. It is not necessary to wrap the tree. Just drape the cloth to prevent frost from settling directly on the blossoms. Use clothespins or twine to secure the tent to the branch tips. Remove immediately after the danger has passed.



Varieties of Pears for the 2020 Sale

Acre's Homes, Hosui, Southern Bartlett, Tennesse

Varieties of Asian Pears for Southeast Texas

Asian pears comprise a large group of pears that are crisp in texture. Often Asian pears are called apple pears because they are crisp and juicy like apples, but with a different and distinctive texture. Asian pears do not change texture after picking or storage as do European pears. When mature, Asian pears are good to eat as soon as harvested or for several months after picking if held in cold storage. Most Asian pears listed are semi self-fruitful and will fruit sufficiently for the average home gardener. Your fruit yield will be greater if you plant multiple Asian pear trees.

20th Century: Juicy, sweet, flavorful, and crisp like an apple. Small, heavy bearing tree is easy to grow. Fruit keeps well. Self-fruitful or pollinate with Shinseiki. **450 chill hours**

Hosui: High-scoring in taste tests, perhaps the tastiest Asian pear. Large, juicy, sweet, flavorful, refreshing, crisp like an apple. Brownish-orange, russet-colored skin. Pollinated by Shinko, Bartlett, or 20th Century. **450 chill hours**

Shinko: Late ripening. Excellent quality, juicy, sweet, flavorful, refreshing crisp like an apple. Brown to golden brown russet. Medium-sized tree is a heavy bearer. Fruit will store 3 – 4 months. Fire blight resistant. Self-fruitful or pollinate with 20th Century, Hosui, Olympic, or Shinseiki. **450 chill hours**

Shinseiki: Vigorous, heavy bearing and precocious. Juicy, sweet, refreshing, crisp like an apple. Bright yellow-skinned fruit is medium size and high quality. Easy to grow and keeps well. Harvest late July to August. Self-fruitful or pollinate with 20th Century. **450 chill hours**

Varieties of European Pears for the Houston Area Climate

Acres Home: An outstanding pear for the Houston area – probably the best pear for the Gulf Coast. Acres Homes is a “found” pear; first seen growing in a backyard in Houston’s Acres Home subdivision. It is a very large fruit with a traditional pear shape and a red blush on the sun-exposed side. Acres Homes is precocious, bearing at about three years. It bears heavily every year. It makes a showy landscape tree with a naturally spreading shape. Acres Homes occasionally gets some fireblight, but it does not seem to descend down the limb. Pollenize with Southern Bartlett, Southern Queen, Meadows, or Tennessee. **300 to 350 chill hours.**

Atlas Super Orient: The best cooking pear. Very ornamental with cinnamon-red new foliage in spring. A bud mutation discovered by Dr. Leon Atlas. Very productive; self-fruitful. **325 chill hours**

Southern Bartlett: Southern Bartlett has a spreading shape, and bears in about 4-5 years. It is unrelated genetically to Bartlett but is similar in flavor. It is a modestly larger tree than Acres Home, but not as big as Tennessee. Its flowering period is about the same as Acres Homes and Southern Queen, but requires a slightly higher chill. It can get some fire blight, perhaps slightly more than Acres Home, but not enough to get excited about. The fruit size is about 70% of Acres Home. Southern Bartlett seems to be more of an alternate year bearer. An outstanding pear for the Houston area. It can be pollinated with Acres Homes, Tennessee, Tennesoi or Southern Queen. **450 chill hours**

Southern King: A high quality, good tasting, classically pear-shaped fruit. ‘Southern King’ was produced from the cross between Hosui Asian pear and Tennessee European pear – the cross that also produced the great tasting Tennesoi pear. Southern King is yellow, with a slight red blush on the sun-exposed side, medium in size and tends to heavily bear fruit. Self-fruitful. **350-400 chill hours**

Tennessee: An excellent European pear. Great flavor, excellent storage, bears in 5 – 6 years. Pollenize with Atlas Super Orient. Disease and fire blight resistant. **400 chill hours**

Tennesoi: Great flavor, great blight resistance, excellent storage quality. Cross between Tennessee and Hosui Asian Pear. Bears in 5-6 years. Pollenize with Southern Bartlett, Southern Queen, Tennessee or Acres Homes. **400 chill hours**