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November Tips FRUITS AND NUTS

- Ripe fruit pictured in catalogs is most attractive during this season. Avoid the temptation to order one or more of everything. Most yards have room for only a few fruit trees, so these must be selected with care. Before buying a tree, consider the ultimate size, the susceptibility to disease and insects, and the need for pollination.
- After the ground freezes, mulch small fruit plants, such as strawberries. One inch of straw or leaves is ideal for strawberries. Small branches laid over the straw or leaves may be used to keep mulch in place.
- Remove grass and weeds from trunks of fruit trees and grapes to prevent damage by mice and rodents. Leave a bare circle (one foot wide) around tree trunks when spreading mulch to keep mice from feeding on the bark. A collar or fence of poultry wire or a commercial tree guard approximately 18 inches high will deter rodents and rabbits.
- Remove all mummified fruit from fruit trees, and rake up and destroy those on the ground. Also, rake and dispose of dropped apple and cherry leaves. Good sanitation practices reduce reinfestation of insects and diseases the following season.
- Break the crust on the surface of any sawdust mulch you have around blueberries, shrubs, and perennials to improve the absorption of water from fall rains.
- Dwarf fruit trees have a double purpose -- furnishing flowers in the spring and fruit in the fall. They are particularly suited to small lots. Early November is a good time to plant most fruit trees, especially if a light mulch is applied to the soil afterwards.

Monthly Tips have been prepared since 1986 by various staff of the Office of Consumer Horticulture including Ellen Bennett, Michelle Buckstrup, Susan Day, Susan DeBolt, Sharon Dendy, Kate Dobbs, Sheri Dorn, David Gravell, Virginia Nathan, Jenny Shuster, Ellen Silva, and Ruth Sorenson. Resource material for the development of this information includes the Virginia Master Gardener Handbook; Extension Publications and newsletters from VCE, numerous other states, and the USDA; and an extensive library of over 900 books, magazines, and journals. Project funded by The Virginia Gardener Newsletter subscription fees. Diane Relf, Project Director and Content Specialist.

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