



# PEACH TREES

## **Site planning**

Peach trees produce best when planted in full sun with well-drained soil with an ideal PH of 6-7. Plant in a location with good air circulation so leaves dry quickly after a rainfall, to minimize the risk of fungal diseases. When choosing a location, consider that while most peach trees are self pollinating you will get increased crop set with other varieties close by to aid in pollination! Full sun location is vital to fruit production/quality and also helps discourage fungal issues. Windbreaks can help minimize winter damage to your tree as well offering a milder "microclimate". Again- the further away from cover of the woods, the less inclined wildlife is to steal your fruit!

## **Planting**

Tree spacing is influenced by the rootstock and your pruning plans. Our peach trees are grafted onto Kr86 rootstock which will grow to 15' at maturity. It's best to leave space between trees for air flow, so we recommend planting them 20' apart if you have the space to do so. If you have a smaller area, remember you can keep them pruned to any size you want, so you can maintain them much smaller. Dig a hole twice the size of the pot and loosen up as much soil as you can around the hole. As you fill in around the root ball be sure to pat the soil down to remove any air pockets. DON'T add fertilizer to the hole as you can burn the roots. Ensure the soil level at the top of the pot is level with the ground - don't bury the trunk deeper than it was in the pot! Water well. Mulching the ground around the tree helps maintain moisture in the soil and cuts down on competition from weeds. DON'T put the mulch right up against the trunk of the tree - keep it out a few inches. A spiral tree guard is recommended to protect the trunk from damage as well as rodents chewing the nutritious bark in the winter months.

## **Pruning**

When you receive your peach tree it will be pruned for the best possible shape. Early blossoms on the tree should be pinched off to help the tree focus its energy into structural growth rather than fruit production. Always prune peach trees to an "open center" shape-this structure keeps the trees canopy open to maximum light which is needed for proper fruit development and to minimize fungal issues. It's best to prune harder in the early years to shape the tree, as opposed to serious corrective pruning later on!

## **Harvesting**

Peaches generally start producing fruit at 3-4 years. Peaches are ripe when there are no more traces of green on them and when gently squeezed it "gives" just a little-hard peaches aren't ripe and once picked they will not ripen further. A ripe peach also smells sweet-if it doesn't have that peach smell its not ripe! To pick them grasp the peach gently in your hand and twist it gentle while pulling it from the branch-if it doesn't pop right off its still not ripe!!! Be careful when handling the fruit as they bruise easily when ripe!