

Winter Cove Farm's

FAQs



Can't find the answer you're looking for in our FAQs?

Please feel free to drop us an email on our [Contact Page](#) or Message us on [Facebook](#)

Our Most Asked Tree and Plant FAQs

[When Is The Best Time To Order?](#)

For best selection, the sooner the better!

We strive to get our inventory online by the middle of fall so you planners out there can get your orders in early.

You can place an order until the middle of April; however, due to our fabulous customers, the longer you wait, the smaller the selection.

We are truly a Mom & Pop business with limited, but well-loved and cared-for inventory. We rotate our grafted trees so many selections are only available every 3rd year.

[When Do You Ship?](#)

Our trees and plants are shipped bare root during the best time for cold climate planting, usually the last week of April into the second week of May.

This may change due to early or late spring. You never know here in Maine, every year is a surprise!

If you need later shipping due to your weather, let us know! We understand the challenge frozen ground can be.

Once our trees are dug, they are kept in our cold storage building so we can usually hold them successfully until the end of May.

[How Far Apart Should I Plant My Trees?](#)

Such a great question with so many different answers.

We've included information on the rootstocks that we use that can help you with the "recommended" spacing. This is what most customers are asking us about as they've read somewhere that there are "recommended" distances.

We don't use the standard distances for our tree planting. As we use a Forest Ecosystem as our guide, we stack trees, woodies, and vegetative plants to recreate an ecosystem vs. your standard orchard.

We've written extensively about it in our blog post: [How Far Apart Should I Plant Fruit Trees?](#)

[Why Should I Buy Bare Root Trees, Not Potted Trees?](#)

This is a LONG reason and read on down the page if you'd like the details.

The long and short (well, the really short) of it all is they are hardier and grow faster.

When we started trying to grow our fruit on our farm, we wanted to use all the natural methods we were working so hard to learn.

We bought fruit trees, shrubs and plants from our local big box store. They had good prices and the trees looked good. They were big and had lots of branches, with green healthy leaves.

We bought varieties like Macintosh apples and Belle of Georgia peaches. Don't they sound great! We also purchased raspberries, blueberries and grapes in little boxed bags. We were on our way to growing fruit! Yay!

Brian and I spent hours digging and mulching the trees. We took care of plants with the all the natural methods we were exploring.

But it was not to be. The trees either died or struggled really bad. We had bugs and diseases that we didn't even *know existed*. We weren't getting fruit and we had no idea why.

We figured maybe we had bought terrible land. It would never grow anything other than weeds and ugly fruit trees.

Maybe it was too cold? We weren't sure, but we were ready to give up.

Have you been there? You're not alone, most of the customers we talk to have been there too.

We had to figure out why we couldn't get healthy fruit to grow here in Maine?

Just two words changed our fruit growing adventures forever.

BARE ROOT

You know those potted trees we were buying? Well, they're basically trees that are on life support. They are not the healthy trees we thought we were getting.

We learned that not only were the roots **too small** to support the canopy of the tree, but that they had been fed **chemical fertilizers** their whole life. This produces a sale-able tree in a short amount of time. Good for the nursery, not for us. Profit was the only goal the tree sellers had.

These plants were not even suited for home growing. Trees like Macintosh are grown in big orchards with intensive spray programs. Belle of Georgia is a peach that is, in no way, suited for growing in our area of Maine.

Professionals grow bare root trees. They buy trees during the late winter and early spring, when the tree is still sleeping with all of its nutrients stored in its roots.

The trees come with huge roots and small trunks. The trees get shipped out in early spring

so that as soon as the ground is ready, they get planted.

These trees grow gangbusters the first year and keep on going, growing *faster* than their potted counterparts. The strong root systems are a huge advantage to getting fruit early too.

After learning this, we started exploring bare root trees. This was a long road to explore. There are a lot of places that sell bare root trees. Not all of them were cold hardy, though and some of these died.

Eventually we discovered that we could create our own trees by grafting. This is the process of taking cold-hardy roots, good for our area, and joining them with the cold-hardy varieties of fruit that we wanted in our orchard.

We found success! The trees grew. They were healthy.

We learned more about varieties and what plants to grow together to create a better orchard. One that needed no extra watering or fertilizers.

Now we have acres of cold-hardy fruit trees growing in Maine. Our trees are healthy and hardy. They survive -30 F and keep on growing. We get fruit every year and we don't worry about poison on our fruit.

When friends and family found out about our success, they started asking about these fruit trees.

- Where could they get one?
- Which ones would work well in their yard?
- What should they plant this year?

And so we started making more and more trees for them too.

This eventually led to us growing more and more trees until we started growing enough to sell to others who want to grow successful fruit in their yards.

[What Size Are Your Trees?](#)

We consider a tree saleable once it reaches between 3 and 5 feet. Different rootstocks and varieties will contribute different sizes and growth habits to trees.

Some trees are slow growers, like Honeycrisp, and these trees are usually smaller.

Other trees are precocious, growing quickly and reaching an easy 6 feet by year 3.

For trees that are shipped, we prune the trees, when possible, to 3-3.5 feet tall. This tree will survive shipping better than a tree with a large canopy. And, it will save you lots of \$\$\$ on shipping (shipping costs have risen exponentially with COVID-19 and we expect that they will rise again in January).

Most all of our trees are grown out for at least 3 years. We use no fertilizers, no watering and, most importantly, no poisons. This means your trees will concentrate on their root system and getting everything they need from our local soil.

So, even though our trees may not look as big in the beginning, you will find that once you plant them, they will grow quicker than a tree raised with man-made fertilizers.

[Why Don't You Have More Dwarf Trees?](#)

That's a really great questions! One we thought on for many years.

So, we primarily sell disease resistant, cold-hardy fruit trees. You expect the trees you get from us to thrive in your backyard without having to fuss over them. Who has time for that?

Dwarf trees require lots of fussing. Most of them require good staking to ensure they don't fall over. Most of them never provide good anchorage so they will always need to be watched. Most of them require watering because they don't put on sizable root balls that go looking for water.

Because of these reasons, we carry a limited selection of trees on dwarfing rootstock. Most of our stock is either semi-dwarf or full sized. Most of the dwarfing rootstock we do carry is hardier and more self-sufficient than a lot of them available today.

We want you to enjoy your trees today and for many, many years down the road.

There are lots of ways to keep a tree on semi-dwarf rootstock smaller through proper training and gentle pruning. This way you can have your tree and eat it's fruit without a ladder.