



Sierra View Nursery Inc.

Cherry Tree Care

Cherries are stone fruits which produce “drupes,” or fleshy material surrounding a single seed. They are in the genus *Prunus* and are closely related to other stone fruits and nut trees such as peaches, almonds, apricots, nectarines, and plums, along with other ornamental flowering trees and wild species. Establishing a healthy cherry tree demands some forethought and proper planning that may be intimidating to the casual gardener. USDA Hardiness Zones 5-7.

Planting

Cherries need deep and well-drained soil; Planting in rocky areas or soils with high clay content can be problematic. They require ample spacing to grow without becoming crowded. Plant approx. 35-40 feet apart, although dwarf varieties need only about 5-10 feet of breathing room. (If you are limited on space, consider purchasing a multi-grafted cherry tree as most cherries will need a pollinator.) Choose a spot that will receive at least 8 hours of sun per day. Dig a hole twice the width of the size of the pot, and just as deep as the root ball. The dirt that you have taken out of the hole should be well mixed 50/50 with our **organic compost**. When you remove the plant from the pot, be careful not to hurt the root ball, and gently place it into to your freshly dug hole. Water thoroughly.

Watering

Make sure to water your cherry trees after the first two to three top inches of the soil are dry during the growing months. You want your soil to be moist, but not waterlogged. You may need to give container-grown trees water more frequently, as containers dry out faster than the ground does.

Pruning

Pruning should be done twice a year, once in early spring (before buds break but after threat of cold snap), and once in late summer. The early spring pruning is when you make more aggressive cuts and remove limbs and large branches. This is intended to provide the tree with a few strong limbs for bearing fruit, instead of many weak limbs that cannot support the weight of fruit. Late summer pruning, aka “thinning,” is intended to clean up the canopy and to increase air circulation as a preventative measure to protect against fungal infections. We aren’t shaping the tree during this time and are only opening things up; make only a few cuts when pruning in late summer.

Fertilizing

You can use either traditional, organic or a hybrid mix fertilizer for your cherry tree. **Lily Miller’s All-Purpose Planting and Growing Food** (hybrid) or **Down To Earth Fruit Tree** (Organic) are both excellent choices and will deliver the required nutrients. Be sure to evenly spread fertilizer under the entire canopy of your tree, avoiding a 5-inch area closest to the trunk. After fertilizing, be sure to water your tree. Depending on the age of your plant, application of the fertilizer should be adjusted. You should be fertilizing your cherry tree at least three

times per year. Consider applying *Down To Earth Gypsum* or *Down To Earth Dolomite* in the fall to correct calcium and magnesium deficiencies.