# SUSAN POIZNER

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The Five Mistakes New Orchardists Make & How You Can Avoid Them

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# GROWING FRUIT TREES THAT THRIVE

rowing fruit trees isn't easy. I learned that lesson when I planted my first fruit trees in 2009. At first, my young trees looked healthy. But within a year or two, they started to decline. The pear trees developed orange spots on their leaves. The cherry trees had sticky goop oozing out of their branches. And the apple trees? Well, insect pests enjoyed the fruit before I got a chance to taste it myself.

Many new growers experience these problems. That's because, without hands on-care, fruit trees face lots of challenges including pests, diseases, and nutritional deficiencies. These pressures deplete your tree's energy, making it hard for the tree to produce a healthy harvest. After years of experience, I've learned how to grow fruit trees that thrive. And my goal is to help others do the same. So, in this little eBook, I share the five common mistakes that many new growers make – and explain how you can avoid them.

Once you know what to do, your fruit trees will be healthy. And you will see first-hand that when you actively care for your tree, it will return the favour by offering you abundant harvests for years to come.

Are you ready to get started? Let's dig in!

# **mistake number 1** PLANTING THE WRONG TREES



ften, aspiring orchardists decide they want to plant a fruit tree and what do they do? They rush off to the garden centre to buy a tree that produces familiar varieties of fruit - like Bartlett pears or McIntosh apples.

The problem is that many popular fruit tree varieties are vulnerable to pest and disease problems so most commercial growers help them along by spraying them with toxic pesticides and fungicides. Needless to say, this is not ideal for the home or organic grower.

In contrast, specialist fruit tree nurseries have a



OrchardPeople. com/where-to-buyfruit-trees wider selection of trees – many of them hardy and disease-resistant varieties – and you can choose one that is best suited to your unique needs and conditions. So it's important to do some research to find the right tree.

- Can the tree survive in your climate zone?
- What rootstock was the tree grafted on to and how large will it be at maturity?
- What are the tree's pollination requirements? Some trees need to be planted in twos and threes in order to produce fruit.
- Is the tree resistant to the types of fruit tree diseases that are prevalent in your community?
- What is the harvest time of the fruit? Be sure to stagger your harvest so that different trees fruit at different times in the growing season.
- Learn about bare root trees and how to plant them as most specialist fruit tree nurseries sell and ship bare root rather than potted trees.
- Learn how to choose a fruit tree in this online course.

# **mistake number 2** WATERING INCORRECTLY



 We all know that young fruit trees need regular watering, but how you water your fruit tree also matters.

oung fruit trees need babying until they establish themselves. In fact, newly planted trees should be watered deeply at least twice a week during the growing season for the first year or two after they are planted in the ground.

Watering is essential to keep your tree hydrated. But it's also key in keeping your tree well nourished. That's because fruit trees can only absorb the nutrients in the soil in liquid form. So dry soil will lead to a malnourished tree.

While watering your tree regularly is important, how you water your fruit tree matters too! That's because fruit trees are vulnerable to fungal diseases, and excess moisture on the bark, branches and leaves can make those problems worse.

- Water the roots, not the branches, leaves or bark! The roots are the only part of the tree that can absorb water.
- Avoid sprinkler systems that will water the entire tree as the excess moisture on the branches and leaves can encourage fungal diseases.
- Water all around the tree's roots on all sides of the tree to ensure all the roots are hydrated.
- Fruit trees need to be watered deeply and slowly – try using soaker hoses looped around the base of your tree so that the water can slowly soak into the ground.

# **mistake number 3** NOT PRUNING YOUR TREE



e all know fruit trees that look like they need a serious "haircut". The problem is that messy, unpruned trees don't just look bad, but they become a magnet for pest and disease problems.

Fruit trees need good air circulation in order to thrive. Correct annual pruning also helps you create a solid, fruit-bearing structure for your tree that will last a lifetime.

- One of your key pruning goals is to create a solid, fruit bearing structure for your tree.
- Begin pruning your tree when it is young as it's branches are flexible and easier to shape.
- Your first pruning cut is called a "whip-cut" and you do it after planting a bare root tree. Learn how in <u>this video</u>.
- Winter pruning spurs growth while summer pruning can slow growth. Learn when to prune your fruit tree in <u>this article</u>.

# **mistake number 4** IGNORING PEST & DISEASE SYMPTOMS



▲ Goopy stuff oozing out of your fruit tree is not a good sign. Monitor your trees regularly for pest and disease problems and deal with problems right away.

hen fruit trees start to struggle with pests, diseases, or nutrient deficiencies, they tell us. We might see spots appear on their leaves or goop oozing out of wounds on the branches. The fruit may be damaged or deformed. The mistake many new growers make is they ignore these changes, hoping the tree will somehow get better on its own.

Sadly, that rarely happens. Instead, pathogens and pests spread, and the problems get worse year after year. So, when you are growing fruit trees organically, we need to nip these problems in the bud, rather than waiting until they have spread all over your tree and to other trees nearby.

- Monitor your trees every week and look for changes or potential problems.
- Research the problems online or reach out to your local expert or mentor. Sometimes, the solution may be as easy as pruning off a diseased branch.
- Learn 5 strategies to prevent fruit tree pests in <u>this article</u>.
- Healthy trees are more resistant to pest and disease problems. Learn how to keep your trees healthy in this online course.

# **mistake number 5** NOT PRIORITIZING YOUR TREE'S NEEDS



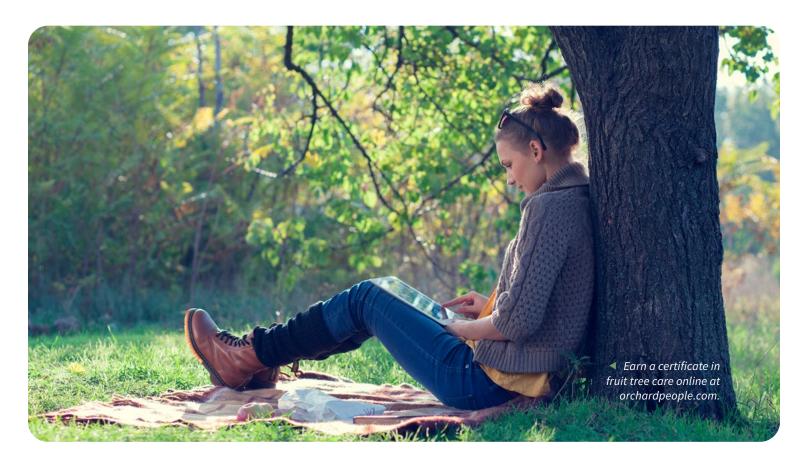
hen I planted my first fruit trees, all I could think about was how good the fruit was going to taste and how much money I would save on my grocery bills! Over the years, I've realized that in order to receive that abundance, you also have to give. Fruit trees are delicate and they need support from their human keepers in order to thrive.

### **TOP TIPS**

 Before you plant your tree, test and amend your soil to ensure your fruit tree will have the nutrients it needs.

- For the first two years after planting, remove all of the baby fruit from your tree! If you allow your tree to fruit when it's very young, it won't have enough energy to devote to establishing a healthy root system.
- Once the nutrients in the soil are absorbed, your fruit tree's feast turns into famine. Ensure that you mulch your tree annually in the early spring with compost or rotted manure. Learn more in this article.
- Weed around your fruit trees and ensure that there is nothing planted close to them that will compete with your tree for water and nutrition. That means no weeds. No flowers. No shrubs and no veggies growing within 10 square feet (1 square metre) of your tree.

# **the moral of the story** WHEN IT COMES TO FRUIT TREES, THERE IS ALWAYS MORE TO LEARN!



o many people assume that growing fruit trees is easy. You just plant your tree, water it, and wait for the harvest. The truth is that once your tree is in the ground there still is some work to do to keep it healthy. Make an effort to learn the key fruit tree care skills – including how to evaluate your site and research your trees, correct planting and young tree care, winter and summer pruning, pest and disease prevention, and soil and nutrition management.

What you will discover is that the better you care for your trees, the more they will give back to you – by providing you and your family with an abundant harvest that you can enjoy for many years to come.

- Investigate the websites of your local extension office (in the USA) or your provincial ministry of agriculture (in Canada).
- Check if your local community orchard or fruitharvesting project holds workshops or organize one yourself!
- Sign up for a comprehensive series of fruit tree care workshops online. Visit <u>Learn.OrchardPeople.com</u> for more information and to register today!

# YOUR ACTION PLAN

## start here

These courses are ideal for both beginner or intermediate level growers.



### **Certificate in Fruit Tree Care**

Learn fruit tree pruning, feeding, planting, young tree care as well as pest & disease prevention. Learn to select a fruit tree for you climate and conditions. Eight hours of training for beginner and intermediate level growers.



### **Researching Fruit Trees**

Are you buying a new tree or designing an orchard? Delve deeper into how to select fruit trees that will thrive in your unique location. Explore orchard design options including espalier and high density plantings. Two hours of training.

Buy Now

### Buy Now



Courses on Pruning, Pests and Diseases and Soil.

To save up to \$200 in tuition, explore our money-saving bundles at <u>Learn.</u> <u>OrchardPeople.</u> <u>com.</u>



### Fruit Tree Pruning Masterclass

Dig deeper into the science behind pruning and explore different pruning styles including central leader, espalier fences, high density plantings and fruiting walls. Four hours of training.

Buy Now



### Managing Fruit Tree Pests & Disease

Learn how to protect fruit trees like the experts do. These effective techniques are perfect for organic growers and for those who want to minimize toxic sprays. Seven hours of training.

Buy Now



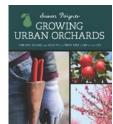
### Unlocking Soil Potential

Healthy soil is essential if you want healthy fruit trees. Help plants thrive by unlocking your soil's potential. Learn to support the partnership between soil organisms and your plants. Five hours of training.

Buy Now

# books

Order Susan's books from your local Amazon store (affiliate links).



### Growing Urban Orchards

Fruit trees are delicate and need specialized care, especially when they?re planted in an urban environment, which comes with its own unique challenges. Whether you want to plant a single fruit tree or an entire orchard, this book will show you how to save time and money and be successful right from the start.



### **Grow Fruit Trees Fast**

Dig deeper into the science behind pruning and explore different pruning styles including central Are you thinking of growing fruit trees? Are you in a hurry to enjoy a delicious organic harvest? Fruit trees don't grow overnight, but the choices you make and the care you give them can speed up the processsity plantings and fruiting walls.

Buy Now

Buy Now



# author

Susan Poizner: Director, OrchardPeople.com Fruit Tree Care Education

Susan is an urban orchardist, ISA Certified Arborist® and the author of two fruit tree care books, <u>Growing</u> <u>Urban Orchards</u> and <u>Grow</u> <u>Fruit Trees Fast</u>. She is the creator of the award-winning fruit tree care training website <u>OrchardPeople.com</u> and trains fruit tree growers around the world through her online courses at <u>Learn.</u> OrchardPeople.com.

Susan is also the host of <u>The Urban Forestry Radio</u> <u>Show and Podcast</u> where she interviews experts on fruit trees, food forests, permaculture and arboriculture. Her fruit tree care YouTube channel can be found <u>@OrchardPeopleTraining</u>.

Susan lives in Toronto, Canada.

Contact Susan at <u>Info@</u> <u>OrchardPeople.com</u>

# FAQ

### Are these courses appropriate for beginners?

Yes, all the courses are appropriate for both beginner and intermediate level growers.

### What types of trees will I learn how to grow?

Our premium online courses will teach you how to grow deciduous fruit trees including apples, pears, Asian pears, plums, cherries, apricots, nectarines and other fruits.

### Are these courses appropriate for my climate?

Our courses are designed for growers around the world. If you can grow apples, pears and cherries where you live, these courses will be good for you!

### How long will I have access to my course for?

You will have lifetime access to your course. You will also have unlimited course upgrades in the years to come.

### What if I don't enjoy the course?

We offer a 100% refund within 30-days of purchase, no questions asked.

### Will I be able to ask my teacher questions?

Yes! You will have the ability to post your questions in the course discussions. Most courses also come with 30-minutes of free 1:1 consulting.

### How are Susan's books different from the courses?

Growing Urban Orchards and Grow Fruit Trees Fast are both packed with useful and empowering information. Our courses delve even deeper and are more interactive.

### How can I get started?

Go to Learn.OrchardPeople.com and select your course or bundle. Go through the lessons in order. And then you'll be ready to enjoy healthy and productive fruit trees!

# AWARDS



OrchardPeople.com Gold award of Achievement, Website: Individual (Overall) GardenComm 2021

- The Urban Forestry Radio Show, Silver Award of Achievement, Radio Program Overall, GardenComm 2021
- Growing Urban Orchards, Silver Award of Achievement, Book Writing, General Readership, Garden Writers' Association 2014

To see more of our awards, visit OrchardPeople.com.