

Southern Utah Fruits, Nuts, and Berries

Bloom Horticulture Specialists www.bloomhorticulture.com

STONE FRUITS: Peaches, nectarines, plums and apricots are all considered stone fruits because of the giant seed at their center. They all do well in the desert, albeit with some heat stress. Management plans include proper pruning, fertilization, sulfur soil treatments to combat our high pH and protection from sun damage.

POME FRUITS: Apples, Pears, and Quince fall into this category and prefer higher altitudes but some varieties do well here. In fact some hard apple varieties that make the best cider do very well here.

Fruits recommended in Southern Utah

- Almond: Do well in our area. I suggest 'Garden Prince'.
- Apples for cider: Desert-grown sweet apples just don't make the grade as far as I am concerned. However if you want to make some cider, these russeted apples will do well here I suggest 'Gold Rush', Winesap, and Pippin types.
- Apricots: Most apricots do well in Southern Utah and are flavorful. I recommend 'Harcot', 'Early Gold', 'Floragold', and 'Royal'.
- Aprium: An apricot/plum hybrid that does excellent in Southern Utah. Try 'Flavor Delight'
- Figs: Most do well here at lower elevations, but they need more water than most fruit trees. Try 'Brown Turkey', 'Olympian', and 'Chicago Hardy'
- Goji Berry: juicy, bright red fruits that resemble small peppers. They grow sweeter as they mature on the plant. Southern Deserts have many relatives to Goji. Use 'Lifeberry'
- Grapes: Both table and wine grapes do well here, though they might require netting. I recommend 'Thompson Seedless', 'Golden Muscat' and the 'Alden'. Stay away from the concord varieties for juicing.
- Jujube (aka Chinese date): It's drought-resistant and known for its medicinal qualities. 'Chico', 'Honeyjar'
- Nectarines: The best variety for Southern Utah is the 'Arctic Star'
- Mulberry: This is a no brainer but WILL it cause a mess. No matter how diligent you are of picking your berries, it attracts birds which

make plenty of mess on their own. 'Dwarf Everbearing', 'Issai', 'Shagri La', and 'Peruvian'.

- Peaches: A winning choice for Southern Utah gardens. Use 'Desert Gold', 'Indian Blood', 'PeachCot', and 'Early Grand'
- Asian pears: Their trees do well in our heat but produce smaller fruit here than higher elevations. 'Shinsiki' is the best option.
- Pecans: Most pecans will produce a light crop of nuts with just a single tree and above average moisture. For a larger harvest, plant two of these trees and water the heck out of them. As trees get 60 feet tall this may not be the best option for your garden. 'Western Shley', 'Mahan' and 'Wichita'.
- Persimmon: Excellent quality but requires extra care and water. 'Fuyu', 'Giant Fuyu', and 'Coffee Cake' will grow well here if they are planted correctly in amended soil with organic mulch.
- Pine Nuts: Native to our area is Pinyon pine but the Italian Stone pine also produces pine nuts and they both do well here.
- Pistachio: They need both a male and female trees for pollination. The 'Peters' is the most commonly planted male tree; the 'Kerman' the best female variety.
- Plums: Requires protection from borers. 'Santa Rosa' is also a great pollinator for Pluots.
- Pluot (sweet apricot-plum hybrid). Try 'Flavor Grenade' and 'Flavor Supreme'
- Pomegranate: It can be grown here as a trunk or a tree. Some say "it's a mess of a tree" Use 'Utah Sweet' or 'Wonderful'
- Quince: Does well in our climate. Apple like fruit with high pectin qualities for cooking flavors and for jams and jellies. However, it is a tough sell usually because it is not edible off the tree. Best options are 'Orange' and 'Smyrna'
- Walnut: Arizona and Texas Walnuts are best suited to our climate they are related to the Black Walnut family. English walnuts require more water and rich soils.

Give it a try in Southern Utah (most will need some added care)

- Sweet Apples: Specifically “Dorsett Golden’, ‘Pink Lady’, ‘Mutsu’, ‘Fuji’, ‘Granny Smith’ and ‘Sundowner’. Personally, I prefer buying apples in a grocery store. They taste better than what we can produce here, but these are the best varieties for low deserts.
- Blackberries: Of the brambles blackberries will do best here. Stay away from the thornless varieties and try 'Rosborough', 'Womack', and 'Brison' for our area.
- Elderberry, Blue/cerulea Native to the southwest deserts. European varieties like Black Lace may need afternoon shade.
- Hardy Kiwi: protect the vines from late afternoon sun and provide at least 5 hours of direct sun. You will need a male and female variety so use ‘Vincent’ ‘Tomuri’ or ‘Issai’.
- Hazelnut: Filbert is a type of a hazelnut which could grow here as a large shrub with afternoon shade. Higher elevations such as Cedar City, Springdale, Pine Valley, and Dammaron Valley would have fewer problems with this species.
- Pear: varieties in southern Utah produce tasty smaller fruit but the heat tends to deform the appearance. ‘Kieffer’, Red Bartlett, Bosc, and Flemish beauty are worthy trial plants.
- Raspberry: ‘Dorman Red’ is the best option for our area. Afternoon shade or shade cloth for late afternoon heat. Use lots of organic amendments in the soil and never try to grow these in a pot or raised bed.
- Strawberry: Use east facing sun and at least 5 hours of direct sunlight each day. Everbearing varieties like ‘Ogallala’ and ‘Ozark Beauty’ will do best in this area. Higher elevations can get into the day neutral varieties.

Plants to avoid in Southern Utah

- Avocado: Too cold and too hot, They prefer a Zone 9 moderate climate.
- Banana: Too cold, they need lots of room and care.
- Blueberry: Too hot, The soil pH chemistry is not compatible.
- Cherry: “Not reliable” here; it’s too dry and warm to provide a descent fruit set.
- Citrus: Too cold, they need a warm winter spot and Q-tip pollination.
- Honeyberries: Too hot, Can’t develop fruiting buds during extreme heat.
- Paw Paw: Too cold, soil pH chemistry is not compatible

GENERAL PITFALLS for our climate

- Fruit trees are thirsty creatures. But can also easily be overwatered in heavy soil types.
- Do not plant woody plants too deeply allow the root flare to start above grade so you may add a sufficient amount of organic mulch on top of the soil to hold moisture and keep the roots cool.
- Sunscald is rampant on heavily watered tree trunks. Use White latex paint to limit this scaring.
- Beware of external attacks. Your Garden of Eden will also be a paradise for insects, birds and rats. Covering fruit in organza bags will help protect them.
- Be ready to pick up fallen fruit and to deal with more fruit than you can handle.
- Diseases caused by stressed plants increase and spread. Protect trees with copper fungicides and remove heavily infested trees.

Tony McCammon is the founder of Bloom Horticulture Specialists; individuals dedicated to helping landowners connect to the responsibility and stewardship of working with the natural world. Bloom Horticulture offers a full design studio, corporate and HOA consultation division, and community education.

