

Digging and filling of pits

Marking of pits and planting should always be done with the help of planting board. The guide pegs are installed at both the ends. One meter deep pits of one meter diameter should be dug. Top 30 cm soil should be kept on one side, which is used for refilling the pits as it is fertile soil. Bottom 70 cm soil should be kept on other side, which is discarded. The pits should be left exposed for a few days before actual planting. These pits should be refilled with mixture of topsoil, 2-3 baskets of silt and 2-3 baskets of well-decomposed farmyard manure. The refilled pits should be watered a few days before planting the tree. To each pit add carbofuron (25g) for control of white ants.

Method of planting

Bore holes of suitable size are made in the centre of the filled pits with the help of planting board. Place the earth ball of a plant in it in such a way that the upper surface has the same level as ground. Fill loose earth around the ball and press it firmly with the handle of a spade or khurpi. Apply water soon after planting the plants in the pits.

Planting distance of fruit plants:

The spacing given to the fruit trees is generally governed by the different factors like climate and soil, choice of varieties, growth habit of tree, rootstock used, nature of irrigation and pruning technique followed. The spacing may vary according to different systems of planting. Provision of optimum spacing to fruit trees is one of the most important aspects of successful fruit culture. Optimum spacing regulates the proper utilization of sunlight, avoids competition in the uptake of nutrients caused by the collision of root systems and facilitates proper irrigation. The latest technology on high-density plantation system where trees are planted at critical spacing for maximum utilization of space is becoming popular. It will be very difficult to suggest exact spacing for fruit trees, which will suit every locality or soil.

Planting season:

The planting season of different fruit crops vary on the basis of their evergreen or deciduous nature.

Evergreen fruit plants: There are two planting times for evergreen fruits i.e., beginning of monsoon and end of rainy season in heavy rainfall areas. The fruit plants such as citrus, mango and litchi should preferably be planted during September or in the beginning of October when the weather becomes mild and more favourable and there is enough moisture in the soil. Guava can also be planted bare-rooted during February-March or August-September. The plant should be defoliated and the roots covered with moist material. Most of the sub-tropical and tropical evergreen fruit plants are suitably transplanted during the rainy season when the atmospheric humidity is high and sufficient supply of soil moisture is obtained. During this active period of growth, the plants easily penetrate their roots in the soil and get established. High atmospheric humidity during the rainy season helps them to minimize the transpiration loss.

The evergreen plants can also be transplanted during the onset of spring with equal success provided an ample quantity of irrigation water is available. Early regeneration of

rootlets due to high temperature and available moisture during this period helps in early establishment of the plants in most of the cases.

Deciduous fruit plants: The deciduous fruit plants are planted during winter when they are dormant. Their planting must be completed before the start of new growth i.e., up to middle January in case of peach and plum and up to middle of February in case of pear and grapes.

It would be wise, if the planting operation in deciduous fruit plants could be done well before the dormancy is broken and the plants start their growth afresh during subsequent period.

Planting should be avoided during hot and dry spells of weather. The fruit trees should preferably be planted in the afternoon and on cloudy and humid days rather than in bright sunshine and dry weather.

-----000-----