

CHERRY TREE CARE SCHEDULE

When choosing and planting trees, follow the guidelines in our Healthy Home Orchards handout. Also:

- Cherries often get large! When you plant, pay attention to rootstock and have a pruning plan. Trees over 10 or 12 feet are impractical for home growers to spray, and may need professional treatment.
- Closely related landscape plants like English laurel, flowering cherries and flowering plums can harbor pests and diseases. Avoid planting them, monitor existing ones.
- Cherries are very tempting to birds and squirrels; you can choose generosity, or you can keep the tree small enough to net and use scare tactics.
- Cherries, like other stone fruits, should be pruned in dry weather to avoid bacterial infections. In our climate, summer pruning is recommended.

In our area, Western *cherry fruit fly*, spotted wing drosophila (SWD), brown rot blossom blight (*blossom blight*), *bacterial canker*, and *shothole fungus* are the most common issues with cherries, though other pests do occur. Many of the best practices below are just good hygiene and can help prevent problems and keep them from getting out of hand. Others are reactive treatments to pests. Before applying treatments, talk with our staff, the Extension Service, or an experienced friend to verify the pest or disease in question.

TIMING	CARE AND MONITORING
DORMANT PHASE After leaf drop through mid-winter (Nov-Feb)	• Rake and remove leaves soon after leaf fall. <u>Apply</u>: lime within the dripline of the tree, and then mulch to contain fungal spores. (<i>shothole</i>, <i>cherry leaf spot</i>) Dense mulch (or weed barrier cloth) can also reduce the ability of <i>cherry fruit fly</i> larvae to burrow and pupate successfully underground. • <u>Apply</u>: copper after leaf fall and before rain. (<i>blossom blight</i>) • <u>Apply</u>: horticultural oil in late winter. (<i>aphids</i>, <i>leafrollers</i>)
DELAYED DORMANT PHASE Buds are swelling, but don't show green (March-April)	• Release mason bees, provide clean housing. • Plant seeds and starts of beneficial insect-attracting plants. • As leaves start to open, fertilize young trees according to directions. Overfertilizing can attract pests and disease. (<i>aphids</i>, other pests and diseases) • <u>Apply</u>: If <i>aphids</i>, <i>leafrollers</i>, <i>mites</i>, or <i>scale</i> have been a problem, a second spray of horticultural oil.
PREBLOOM Flower buds are growing, no blooms open	• Watch young trees (especially their first two years) for <i>bacterial canker</i>; note which stems to prune out when there is dry weather. • Remove leaves that are hosting <i>leafrollers</i>, and those most damaged by <i>shothole</i>.

TIMING	CARE AND MONITORING
BLOSSOM	- If you see <i>blossom blight</i>, prune out affected parts (in a dry period) and <u>apply</u>: fungicide (copper or sulfur*) to help prevent re-infection. - Avoid spraying insecticides during bloom.
PETAL FALL THROUGH SHUCK SPLIT Tiny green fruitlets form	- Put out yellow sticky traps for <i>cherry fruit fly</i>. - Put out several vinegar traps for <i>SWD</i>, which looks like a kitchen fruit fly (vinegar fly). Identification can be difficult once you catch them; Portland Nursery or your county Extension Agent can help. <u>Apply</u>: sulfur* if <i>blossom blight</i> has been a problem.
BEFORE RIPENING Fruits start to get cherry sized	- Hang decoy cherries (shiny red balls) in the tree a couple of weeks before the fruit is ripe to discourage some <i>birds</i>. - Get bird netting over some portion of your tree before fruit ripens. (<i>birds</i> and <i>squirrels</i>) - Monitor traps for <i>cherry fruit fly</i> and <i>SWD</i>. Treatment should be applied within seven days of capturing the first adult or when the ripest fruit has taken on a slight blush. <u>Apply</u>: Spinosad[✓] every seven days, stopping at least seven days before harvest.
HARVEST TIME	- Harvest fruit promptly, as soon as it is ripe. Clean up all fallen fruit, and if you can, leave none on the tree. (<i>cherry fruit fly</i>, <i>SWD</i>, <i>blossom blight</i>) - Monitor fruit for <i>blossom blight</i> spots, remove affected fruit. Damaged fruit will be infected easily and spread infection. <u>Apply</u>: nematodes to the soil within the dripline to counteract larval <i>cherry fruit flies</i> before they pupate.
POST HARVEST Late summer into fall	- Before the end of August, prune tree to encourage a strong, open, accessible structure. Prioritize air circulation, access, and production. Look for flagging or dead leaves to find cankers from <i>blossom blight</i>. (<i>blossom blight</i>, <i>SWD</i>, etc.) - Remove all fruits from the tree and the ground around the tree, including any “mummy” fruits, and destroy. (<i>blossom blight</i>, <i>cherry fruit fly</i>) - Remove used traps.

* Do not spray sulfur if temperatures on that day will exceed 85°F. Leave at least 2 weeks between applications of sulfur.

✓ Note: even organic insecticides can harm beneficial insects, use with caution and do not spray while flowers are blooming.