Fruit Pollination Guide

In order for fruit to develop on fruit trees and shrubs, pollination must occur at blossom time. Some types of fruit may be pollinated with their own pollen and are considered self-fruiting or self-pollinating. Other types require pollen from a different variety of the same tree or shrub for fruiting, known as cross-pollinating. Cross-pollination is essential for apples, pears, most sweet cherries, blueberries and most Japanese plums. Cross-pollination is not essential, but does improve the number of fruit that form on apricots, European plums/prunes, sour cherries, peaches, and nectarines.

The honeybee is the most important carrier of pollen in fruit pollination. Trees and plants placed more than 100’ away may result in poor pollination. Bees work best when temperatures are above 65 degrees. Cool weather, rain or winds during flowering can also lessen pollination.

Apples
Most apple varieties need pollination from another variety that is blooming at the same time. Others are pollen sterile, which means they will not pollinate other varieties, but still need a pollinator to produce fruit such as Winesap, Stayman, Summer Rambo & Jonagold. Self-pollinating apples include Golden Delicious, Red Rome, Jonathon, & Golden Grimes.

Plums & Prunes
Most European prunes & plums are self-pollinating. Most Japanese plums are self-pollinating, but European and Japanese plums will not cross-pollinate. Plumcots and Pluots can be pollinated with Japanese plums.

Cherries
Most tart or sour cherries are self-pollinating, and also are capable of pollinating sweet cherries, however they often bloom too late and not reliable. Most sweet cherries need a pollinator, but there are a few that are self-pollinating (Stella).

Pears
Most European and Asian pears need pollination from another variety. Seckle and Bartlett will not cross pollinate. Most Asian and European pears are not compatible. Self-pollinating varieties include Honeysweet, Hosui & Kieffer.

Peaches, Nectarines, Apricots
All are self-pollinating.

Small Fruits and Berries
Most small fruits such as strawberries, raspberries, most grapes, blackberries, and figs are self-pollinating. Most blueberries need two different varieties for best production.