



At Denbigh Farm in backcountry Greenwich, there's an orchard of apple and pear trees. Photo: Sotheby's International Realty

# fruits of the harvest

## PLANTING AND CARING FOR FRUIT TREES CAN PRODUCE DELICIOUS RESULTS

by Gretchen A. Peck

As a hint of autumn falls across the state, one's mind might wander to visions of brilliant changing leaves, hayrides and pumpkin patches, and other fruits of fall. To find out what it takes to grow and harvest fruit trees, or to create an orchard right at home, the Showcase team turned to Fairfield County's resident expert, Maggie Bridge.

"There are tons of options for our zone. We are in a sweet spot for fruits and berries," according to Bridge, who is a partner and manager of sales and marketing at Sam Bridge Nursery & Greenhouses on North Street in Greenwich. "If you have room for some shrubs, try blueberries and raspberries."

Among the trees southwest Connecticut homeowners might add to the landscaping are apple, pear, peach, cherry, plum, persimmon and apricot trees, Bridge suggested.

"In containers, you could try figs, citrus and olives," she added, but warned that these are not hardy and will have to be brought inside or "winterized" for the cold and snowy seasons.

"Fruit trees can be planted at any time," Bridge said. "Typically, the larger they are, the more fruit they will bear. Weather, watering, fertilizing and pollination also make a big difference."

Like with any "crop," the environment for fruit trees is critical.

"The most important thing to consider when planting edibles is sun," Bridge advised. "While space is also very important, sun is the one thing you cannot do without. You want an area that gets full sun — at least from 11 a.m. or noon on; eight hours is better."

"Next comes space," Bridge said. "This will be variety dependent. Look at what you want to grow, and consider the mature height and width of your trees, then plan accordingly. Most fruit trees can be 15- to 25-feet high and wide, depending on type. However, growing fruit trees is not limited to large spaces. You can grow in containers and small spaces. You may have to limit your choices or take extra consideration during the winter. Espaliered trees are a great option for along fences or walls. Some even have three varieties of fruit on one plant!"

Fruit trees and orchards require care throughout the year, depending on the variety.

"All trees and shrubs need a good soaking at least once per week during the first year to become established, and additional watering touch-ups during dry periods in the next two years after," Bridge said. "Fruit trees can require care against certain insects and other pests and animals in the landscape. However, that is specific to each unique situation and determinations should be made at the onset of any possible issues. Your trees will also need some pruning from time to time."

### The Luxury of Fresh Fruit

Hearst Newspapers reached out to several Fairfield County Realtors who have listed properties with fruit orchards already thriving.

Janet Milligan is a senior global advisor at Sotheby's International Realty in Greenwich and the listing Realtor for 591 Riversville Road in Greenwich's backcountry, also known as "Denbigh Farm."

Milligan refers to the property as a "quintessential English country estate," where the owners entertained in grand style. In addition to the seven-bedroom main house, the property comprises a bar, cottage, a playhouse, pool, tennis court, an entire building for a gym and gorgeous gardens. Currently listed for \$27.5 million, Denbigh Farm also has an orchard, with apple and pear trees.

The quince trees at Maple Hill Farm — at 187 Umpawaug Road in Redding — were ready for harvest in early September, according to Realtor Roni Agress, who is affiliated with the Ridgefield-Redding brokerage of William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty and the co-listing agent for Maple Hill Farm, along with Lisa Pompeo, a Realtor with Coldwell



The 17.20-acre "Denbigh Farm" at 591 Riversville Road in Greenwich's backcountry is on the market for \$27.5 million. Janet Milligan of Sotheby's Greenwich brokerage is the listing agent. Photo: Sotheby's International Realty



Banker in Ridgefield. The 47.16-acre Maple Hill Farm is currently on the market for \$13 million.

The main house on the property was built in 2014. It blends the character of a European-inspired country manor with interiors that are bright, fresh and luxuriant. There’s also a four-stall horse barn, paddocks, three guest houses, a professional recording studio and performance venue, a boathouse, tennis court, ball fields and hiking trails — and even an orchard.

“There are approximately 28 fruit trees,” Agress said, citing apple, peach, cherry, quince, Asian pear and plum varieties. “There are also maple trees that they tap and from which they make syrup.”

Steve Archino, a senior global real estate advisor with Sotheby’s International Realty in Greenwich, is the listing agent for 23 Carrington Drive in Stamford. It’s an equestrian compound, with a five-bedroom main house, a Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired three-bedroom companion house, a two-bedroom guest house, and equestrian amenities. It is currently offered to the market for \$8.95 million. The owners have also carved out some of the land for a fruit tree orchard.

On the 36-acre lot, the orchard presides next to the barn on the side of the farm that runs along June Road.

The property’s seller remarked how he created the orchard: “I planted the orchard in spring of 2011 from fruit plants that were stick,

each only about 24 inches tall. I was thinking of the future when hopefully one day we would have grandchildren and we could take them around to pick live fruit off the branches.”

“Originally, I had planted 28 fruit trees — four trees of each of seven varieties of fruit: apple, cherry, pear, peach, plum, nectarine and apricot,” the seller explained. “Over the years, a number of the trees succumbed to a black fungus disease and were replaced with more apples, as they are the heartiest. Later, I planted some grape vines to supplement them.”

Along the Carrington Drive side of the property, they planted a vegetable and herb garden, as well, with tomatoes, peas, cucumbers, squash, peppers, strawberries and other fresh produce.

Though this year’s drought presented challenges, the orchard at 23 Carrington Drive produces fruit for harvest from August to early October. ■

Left: With an orchard, equestrian amenities, a five-bedroom main house and two companion houses on the property, 23 Carrington Drive is truly a compound. It’s listed for \$8.95 million by Steve Archino, a Realtor with Sotheby’s in Greenwich. Photo: Sotheby’s International Realty ■ Right: The owner of 23 Carrington Drive in Stamford, planted an orchard in the spring of 2011. Annually, it produces fresh fruit from August to October. Photo: Sotheby’s International Realty



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