Extending Your Fall Fruit Harvest

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While planning your fall edible garden this year, you may want to consider some of the many trees and shrubs that can extend your fruit harvest well into the fall months. Fall and winter are excellent times to install your fruit and nut trees such as apple, pecan, and fig. Planting during the dormant season will allow the soil to settle and roots to become established before the spring growth starts.

When selecting your plants, be sure to choose recommended varieties for North Florida. Homeowners who fail to select the right plant for the location will likely fail and give up on fruit growing. For more information on growing a variety of fruits at home, read the UF publication, ‘Deciduous Fruits for the Home Gardner in North Florida’. (http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/MG/MG21100.pdf)

The common persimmon makes a beautiful small to medium sized dooryard tree. In addition to being easy to grow, this native tree has an irregular, natural shape and bright red fall foliage. If that isn’t enough to tempt you, consider the fall fruits that are nutritious and a great source of vitamin A.

There are several varieties of cold-hardy tangerine and orange trees that are lovely in the yard all year with their evergreen foliage. Just make sure you are buying research-recommended varieties for our area. Kumquats are one of the hardiest citrus trees with delicious fruit and wonderful ornamental qualities.

Peaches, nectarines, and plums don’t fruit in the fall but you may still want to plant a few. These are called stone fruits because the seed is in a heavy pit or stone. Certain cultivars of these fruits can be grown successfully in Florida.

Apple, pear, and mayhaw are examples of pome fruits that will grow in North Florida when the right selections are made. A couple nut trees worth considering because of their nutty ornamental appeal are Chinese chestnuts and pecans.

If an additional tree is in your fall plans, consider the value of extra fresh fruit as well as beauty and shade. Call the UF Master Gardeners with your questions. 752-5384. Or call for their “visiting” hours.