

“Super Dwarf” Trees Bear Sooner, But Require Extra Care

Research continues on making dwarf trees even smaller because they don't require as much space and the trees bear fruit as early as their second year. But smaller doesn't necessarily mean less work.

“You don't just plant them and walk away,” says Dan Smith, one of the owners of TRECO, an Oregon company that produces 60 percent of U.S. apple rootstock sold to nurseries and orchardists, who graft and develop their own trees.

“The anchorage isn't as good as bigger trees, and wind or even heavy fruit affects them. They can easily get uprooted,” he says.

Commercial orchards often use post and wire trellises, says Bruce Barrett, a researcher at Washington State University who evaluated rootstock for many years and is now breeding dwarf apple varieties. Growers who just have a couple of trees in the backyard can support them by tying the trees to a 2 or 3-in. stake pounded in the ground. Besides staking, dwarf apple trees need spraying, pruning and fertilizing just like larger varieties.

By definition, dwarf trees average 5 to 12 ft. tall, and researchers continue to work on new varieties for other fruits as well. Apple varieties are the most common, however, for commercial and home orchards.

Because the trees are smaller, it's easier to care for them and to harvest the fruit. And despite assumptions by some, dwarf trees can live as long as standard size trees, Barrett says. Apples from dwarf trees also are the same size and have the same characteristics as apples from larger trees. Barrett notes that because apples on dwarf trees tend to be shaded less, he believes the dwarf apple varieties can be sweeter because they get more sunlight.

Go to high-end nurseries in your area or search for dwarf trees on the internet, suggests Barrett.

One popular company is Stark Bro's in Louisiana, Mo.

Stark Bro's sends a tree care guide with each order with recommendations to not let the tree bear fruit until the third year to establish stronger roots.

While dwarf and semi dwarf apple varieties are most common, Stark Bro's offers a variety of other dwarf fruits such as apricots, cherries, pears and plums. They also have

Trouble-Free Air Filter Cleaner

Cleaning dirty air filters is an easy job with this new air filter cleaner that uses a blast of air to instantly clean filters.

“The Filt-O-Kleen is designed to clean dirt from paper air filters,” says Clifton Wilbourn of Versailles, Mo. The big issue here is keeping your engines running with horsepower and fuel economy at its peak performance. “If you go through a lot of filters, it'll pay for itself in no time,” says Wilbourn. “It's not intended to permanently replace the purchase of new air filters. It'll just make them last longer.”

Each tank comes with instructions and a diagram for easy assembly. Tanks are powder coated inside and outside and are pressure tested at 300 psi.

To clean a filter, the tank is placed on top of the filter with the gasket side up toward the base plate. The volume of air pressure cleans the filter of dirt and debris instantly.

“It's a safe and efficient way of cleaning paper filters at an affordable price. It does an amazing job of cleaning dirt from filters,” says Wilbourn. “The air tank can be pressurized and used on filters ranging in pressure from 70 to 110 psi, depending on size of filter.”

One Missouri study found replacing extremely dirty filters increased fuel efficiency by as much as 20 percent.

“You can spend a lot of time cleaning filters other ways and possibly damage the paper in the filter. The Filt-o-Kleen works much better and it takes less time, too.”

One model is available. A 10-gal. model sells for \$340.00 plus S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Clifton Wilbourn, 22875 Highway TT, Versailles, Mo. 65084 (ph 573 378-5723 or 573 789-1017). Or you can contact Don Wilbourn P.O. Box 1255, Westcliff, Co. 81252 (ph:



“It's a safe and efficient way of cleaning paper filters at an affordable price,” says Clifton Wilbourn about his Filt-O-Kleen air filter cleaner.

719 783-0651 or 719 276-4235; email: Info@FiltOkleen.com; website: www.filtokleen.com). **Reader Inquiry No. 10**

mini versions of peaches and nectarines that fruit the second year, grow 4 to 6 ft., and are suitable for patio pots.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, TRECO (www.treco.nu); Stark Bro's Nurseries & Orchards Co., P.O. Box 1800, Louisiana, Mo. 63353 (ph 800 325-4180; www.starkbros.com).

Gene Yale grows about 100 dwarf apple trees in his back yard. He's a member of MidFEX (Midwest Fruit Explorers) which has a website, www.midfex.org, with information on how to graft and grow very small dwarf trees.

