

**Please explain the difference between standard, dwarf, and semi-dwarf varieties of fruit trees.**

That huge old apple tree in Grandpa's back yard is a standard. They can grow 25' or more if left un-pruned. Standards live longer and bear more fruit than dwarf varieties. The tree should begin bearing fruit in 5-8 years and can live 50 years or longer.

With a few exceptions, dwarf and semi-dwarf fruit trees are grafted onto hardy root stock that produces the dwarfing characteristics.

Dwarf trees are small trees for small spaces. They are easy to prune and harvest because they don't grow as tall. The fruit is the same size as a standard but the yield can be less due to the smaller size. Most dwarfs also begin bearing fruit in 3-5 years.

Semi-Dwarf trees are somewhere in between the other two. They can range from 10-16' tall and need pruning to keep the shape balanced. They are considered very productive. Contrary to popular belief, their fruits are the same size as standards. Fruit bearing generally begins in 3-5 years.