

# Pears

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Pears are attractive, long-lived trees that are adapted to all areas of Texas north of the line from Corpus Christi to Laredo. Although there are three basic types of pears grown in the United States, only the Oriental hybrids and some Asian pears are adapted to Texas.

## 🌱 Grow it

### Varieties

- 'Orient' and 'Kieffer' are the most adapted varieties for Texas.
- Because pears are not self-fruitful, two varieties are needed for good fruit production. Be sure companion varieties have a similar chilling requirement and that they are planted within 40 feet of one another.

### Soil Preparation

- In the year before planting, remove existing vegetation to reduce weed competition.
- If soil is compacted, thoroughly work the soil with a shovel or a rototiller.

### Planting

- Select a healthy, 3- to 4-foot tree with a trunk diameter of at least ½ inch. Do not purchase trees if the roots are not moist.
- Plant soon after purchase to prevent root drying.
- Plant pear trees while they are dormant in winter or early spring. Trees can be spaced at a minimum of 16 feet apart.
- Before planting, soak the roots for 30 minutes to an hour, then trim off broken or mutilated root parts.
- Dig a hole big enough to spread the root system in a natural position and plant the tree at the same depth at which it was grown in the nursery.
- Firm the soil around the tree when planting and water it in after planting to eliminate air pockets. If the tree settles, lift it gently to the proper planting depth.
- To compensate for the roots lost when the tree was dug up at the nursery, cut off the newly planted tree at 24 to 30 inches and remove all side branches.

### Training and Pruning

- Remove the suckers that grow from the base of the trunk as soon as they appear in the summer.
- Tie down upright, vigorously growing shoots in the first 2 or 3 years of the tree's life.
- Refer to the pear factsheet on the Aggie Horticulture website for specific training instructions.

### Fertilizing

- Fertilize newly planted trees only after growth begins. Apply ½ cup of fertilizer (21-0-0) in a 2-foot circle around the tree.
- Each spring after growth starts, apply ½ cup of 21-0-0 per year of age through year 4. After year 4, continue to apply about 2 cups per tree each spring.

### Watering

- Water young trees at least once a week.
- Even though mature pear trees can tolerate drought, they produce better if they are watered weekly or biweekly.

### Fruit Thinning

- Pear trees grown under favorable conditions will overbear, resulting in small fruit and often broken limbs. Thin fruit to one pear every 6 inches during the spring or early summer.

### Harvest

- Pears will begin bearing fruit as early as the fourth growing season.
- Most pear varieties are ready for harvest in August and September. Allow Oriental hybrids to ripen off the tree. Harvest them when they change from hard to firm (similar to that of a softball) and when the color turns slightly from green to yellow.

### Insects and Diseases

- Fire blight is a common disease in pears that causes infected tissues to turn black and die. If you see signs of this disease or other problems, contact your county Extension agent for more information.



**Sun:**  
Full or nearly full



**Soil:**  
Well-drained, but tolerate poorly-drained



**Planting:**  
Winter-Early spring



**Harvest:**  
Aug.-Sept.



**Life Cycle:**  
Perennial

## Buy it

- Pears should be firm when purchased and should be checked daily at the neck to see if they are ripe. They are ready when the neck gives slightly to pressure.

## Use it

### Roasted Pears with Crumble Topping

Course: Dessert  
Serves: 8

#### Ingredients:

##### Pears

- 4 pears, cored and halved
- 1 Tbsp olive oil

##### Nut Oat Crumble

- ¼ cup rolled oats
- ¼ cup pecans, chopped
- 2 Tbsp honey
- 2 Tbsp almond slivers
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar

#### Instructions:

Place pears flesh-side up on an ungreased baking sheet.

Brush flesh side of pears with olive oil and bake in oven at 350°F for 10 minutes.

While pears are cooking, combine oats, pecans, honey, almonds, and brown sugar in a bowl until well combined.

Remove pears from the oven and evenly distribute topping over the pear halves. Bake in the oven for an additional 5 minutes. Remove and enjoy!

## Store it

- Store ripe pears in the refrigerator. Keep unripe pears in a paper bag at room temperature.
- For canning and preservation instructions, visit [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu).

### Fruity Oat Muffins

Course: Dessert  
Serves: 12

#### Ingredients:

- 4 ripe bananas
- 1 tsp vanilla or coconut extract
- 3 cups old-fashioned rolled oats

#### Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray cooking spray in regular muffin pans and set aside.

Mash 4 medium-ripe bananas in a large bowl. Stir extract into mashed bananas.

Add oats to bowl and mix well with a spoon.

Scoop mixture into muffin molds, fill to the top. Add favorite fruit toppings for extra flavors.

Bake in oven for 20 to 25 minutes.

Enjoy warm or store in refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Ideas for toppings: diced apples, berries, diced pears, diced peaches, unsweetened coconut flakes.

**Make it your own recipe!**  
Use your favorites to create the flavor of your muffins. The recipe is the basis for your creation. The banana and oats are the mold for the muffin.

## Learn about it

- Pears are free of fat, saturated fat, sodium, and cholesterol.
- They are an excellent source of dietary fiber and a good source of vitamin C.

*Information gathered by Aggie Horticulture*

