

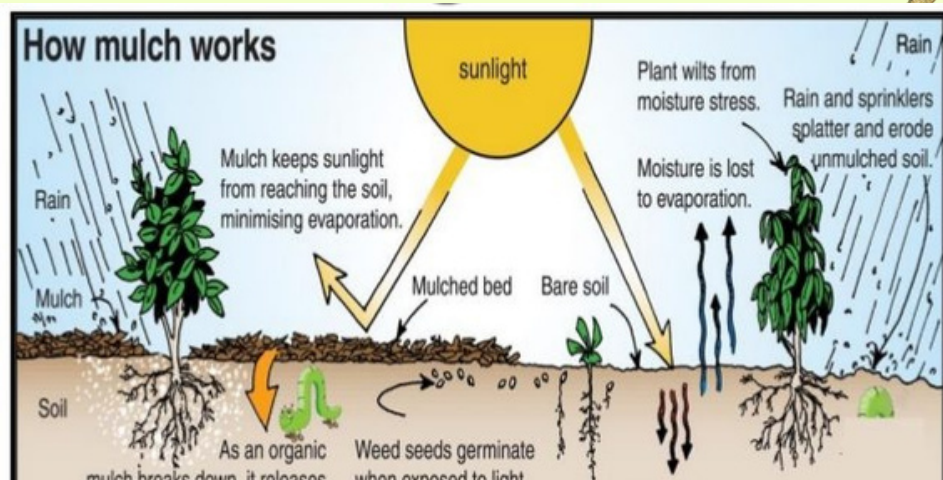
FOREST GARDENING

Basic Care Guide

**Spring 2025
Tree Giveaway**

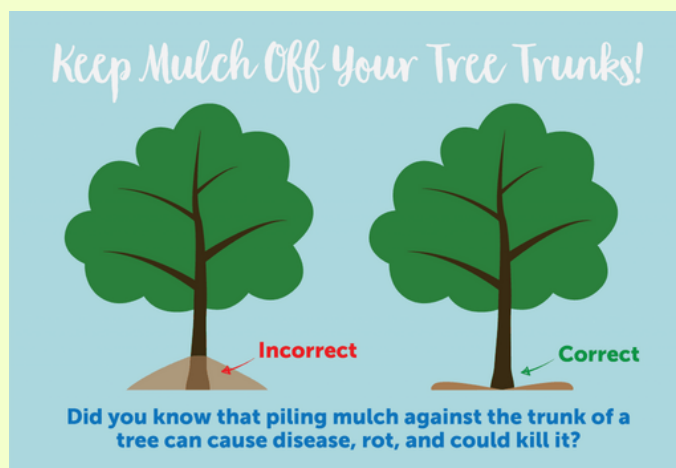


MULCHING



Many of the plants being given away are young perennials. Please mulch 1-2 times a year for 3-5 years depending on how quickly your perennials fill in your bed.

Mulch is essential to soil health because it acts as a barrier against water loss and heat, reduces weeds, improves soil structure, reduces erosion, and provides a habitat for animals.



CHOP AND DROP

Exactly how it sounds, taking perennial woody plants and leafy annual plants and chopping, and leaving them on the floor of your forest bed. Chopping and dropping is usually done annually in the fall.



BENEFITS:

1. Supports soil life.
2. Leaves the roots of the plants in the soil, which adds organic material deep in the soil as the roots decompose.
3. Reduces water loss from evaporation and reduces erosion.
4. Slowly releases nutrients back into your soil.
5. Saves you time and energy by eliminating the need to compost or haul the plant material away.

DO'S AND DON'T'S:

- *Do not chop and drop seeds of undesirable plants.*
- *Do chop and drop wild flowers and annual veggies.*
- *Do not uproot plants of desirable plants.*
- *Do uproot and relocate undesirable or suckering plants.*
- *Do not cut all trees and shrubs to the soil level. Care links are provided per plant in your customized plant list for reference.*
- *Do chop and drop trimmed branches from trees and shrubs.*
- *Larger material can be cut smaller for a neater appearance.*

TRIMMING TREES

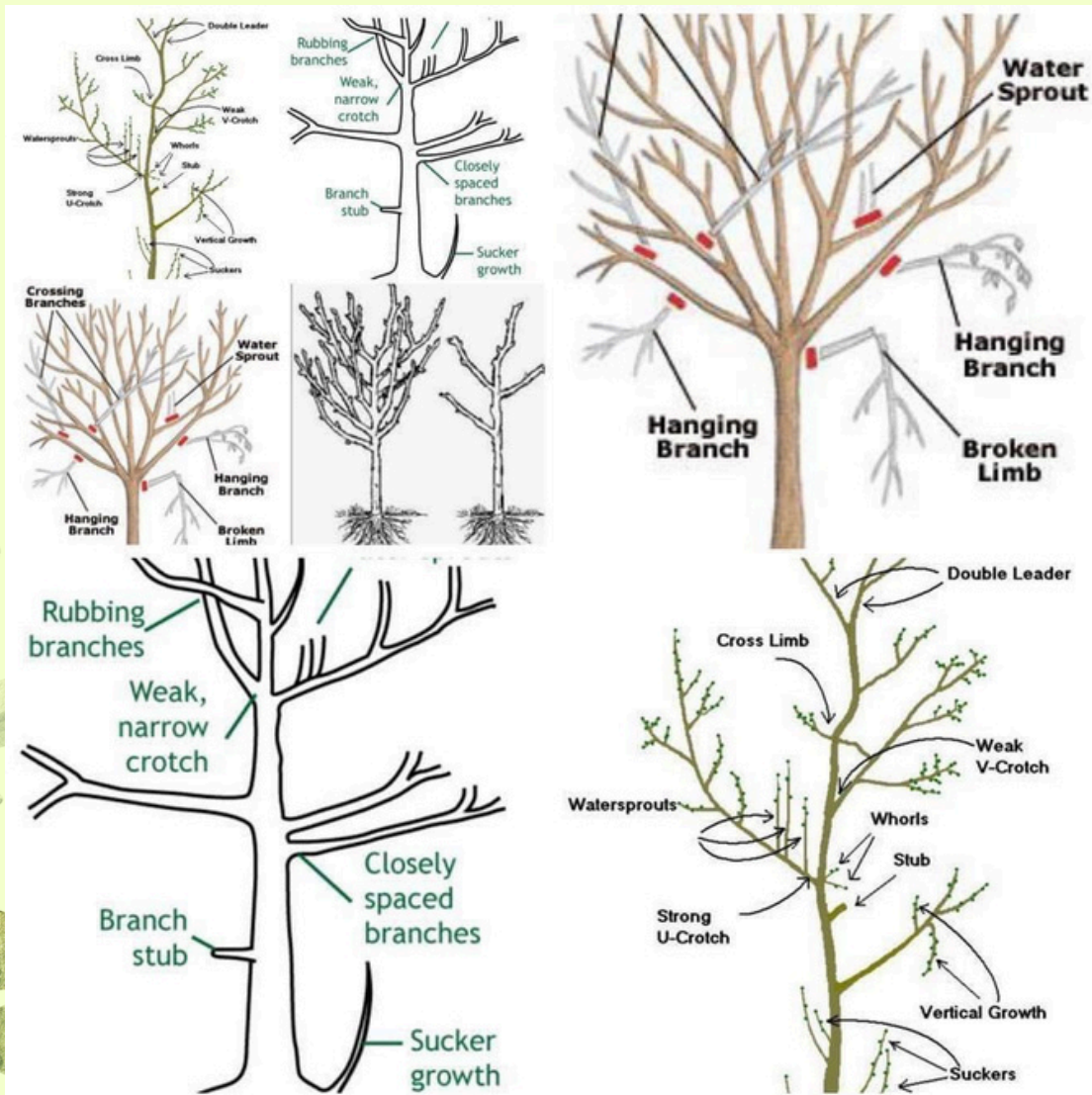
Most plants go dormant during the winter. This is the time of year when they've halted active growth and have hunkered down for the cold weather. Because of this dormancy, late winter and early spring are typically the best times to make any adjustments to the shapes of many trees and shrubs.



Tips:

- *Cut at 30 degree angle to prevent fungal infection.*
 - *Prune on a mild, dry day. Not only is this more pleasant for you, the gardener—it also helps to prevent the spreading of waterborne plant diseases or damage from cold temperatures.*
 - *Never prune too early in the winter, as incisions can dry out if the temperature drops well below freezing.*
 - *When pruning, first prune out dead and diseased branches, especially those caused by the winter's snow and ice.*
 - *Unwanted lower branches on all evergreen shrubs and trees should also be removed in late winter.*
 - *Remove overgrown and smaller branches to increase light and air at the crown of the tree.*
 - *In general, your goal is to keep the branches that develop or maintain the structure of the tree.*
- Cut branches at the node, the point at which one branch or twig attaches to another.*

TRIMMING TREES



THINNING BEDS



Within 7-10 years of your forest system you may find that your perennials are over crowding one another. This is when you get to start thinning your beds and adding them to other beds on your

property or sharing them with employees and / or neighbors.

Thinning perennials means removing about half of the crowded stems. To do this, prune the weakest of the plants' stems back to the ground. The remaining, stronger stems, will be more vigorous and less disease-prone.



However, if you'd like to take it a step further, thick clumps of perennials can often be divided. This is best done in early spring before the plants get too large, or in fall after you've cut them back during your fall clean-up.

Simply dig up the plant, and divide the clump, making sure that each section you've divided the plant into has both a bit of root and some crown sections. Then, plant the divisions around your garden. You've not only made your plant healthier but earned more plants, as well!

STARKSPUR® RED ROME BEAUTY APPLE TREE

Description

About the Starkspur® Red Rome Beauty Apple Tree

For baking enthusiasts and home gardeners alike, the Starkspur® Red Rome Beauty Apple Tree is a must-have for its exceptional culinary qualities and heavy production. Known as the best baking apple, these shiny red fruits are just tart enough to elevate pies, crisps, cobblers, and even sautéed apple slices. Their firm texture ensures they hold their shape beautifully when cooked, making them a standout choice for kitchen creations.

A Stark Bro's Exclusive, this unique variety is precocious and productive, earning the nickname "mortgage maker" for its reliable and abundant yields. Thanks to its spur-bearing habit, this tree produces fruit along each limb, from the trunk outward, maximizing harvest potential. Cold-hardy and self-pollinating, the Starkspur® Red Rome Beauty begins bearing fruit just 2-3 years after planting and delivers a heavy crop of bright red apples in mid-October.

How to Grow the Starkspur® Red Rome Beauty Apple Tree

The Starkspur® Red Rome Beauty thrives in USDA Zones 4-8 and requires full sun and well-drained soil for optimal growth. Its self-pollinating nature allows it to produce fruit on its own, though planting it alongside another apple variety can enhance yields. This late-blooming variety also provides some natural protection against spring frost damage.

Perfect for fresh eating and an unbeatable choice for baking, this tree is a testament to Stark Bro's commitment to quality and innovation. Dwarf mature size 8 - 10' tall x 8 - 10' wide. Spacing 8-10'.

Characteristics

Bloom Color	White
Bloom Time	Mid - Late
Chill Hours	700 - 1000
Fruit Color	Red
Fruit Size	Large
Hardiness Zone Range	4 - 8
Pollination	Self-Pollinating
Ripens/Harvest	Mid October
Shade/Sun	Full Sun
Soil Composition	Loamy
Soil Moisture	Well Drained
Soil pH Level	6.0 - 7.0
Taste	Sweet, Tart
Texture	Firm
Years to Bear	2 - 3

RULE OF THIRDS

To really fill out your forest beds, only harvest $\frac{2}{3}$ of all annual crops in order to allow the rest to go to seed. This means not chopping off $\frac{1}{3}$ of your scapes and allowing $\frac{1}{3}$ of your annual plants to go through their natural seed cycle.



SELF SEEDING ANNUALS



All annual food plants and all native wild flowers should be chopped and dropped after their seed cycle. When chopping and dropping please sprinkle the seeds around in areas you would like the plants to reseed. This will replace the plants harvested and will thicken your beds as to need less mulching and weeding throughout the following grow season.

