Month By Month Calendar: Fruits & Nuts

This month by month calendar should be used as a guide when caring for fruit and nut trees in the home garden of North Florida. Information in this publication focuses mostly on fertilization; additional information can be found by accessing the resources presented below. All fertilizer recommendations are for optimum growth and fruit production. Gardeners may choose to apply less fertilizer than the recommendation, but should never apply more. When referring to the age of a plant, we consider year 1 to be at planting, or the first year after planting.

January

- **Apples**: Fertilize during the dormant season using 10-10-10 with micronutrients, esp. Zinc and Boron; apply 1 pound (2 cups) of fertilizer for each year of age, up to 7.5 pounds total during January to March.

- **Blueberries (Newly Planted)**: The best time to plant blueberries is from mid-December to mid-February. Do not put fertilizer in the planting hole. After planting, when the soil is well settled from irrigation or rainfall, give un-mulched plants 1 ounce (2 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). Spread fertilizer evenly over a circle 2 feet in diameter with the plant in the center. *Note: Use ammoniacal nitrogen or nitrogen from urea or organic sources, rather than from nitrate sources. Chlorine levels should be as low as possible, preferably below 2%. A special formulation called "blueberry special" is available in Florida and meets these requirements. Another possibility is "camellia-azalea" fertilizers.*

- **Peaches/ Nectarines/Plums (Year 2+)**: Fertilize late this month using 1 to 1.5 pounds (2-3 cups) per tree of 12-4-8 fertilizer with micronutrients.

- **Pears**: Apply 1/2 pound (1 cup) of 6-6-6 or 8-8-8 per year of age, up to 5 pounds (10 cups) total. Excessive fertilization should be avoided as it may make the tree more susceptible to fire blight.
February

- **Blackberries**: Fertilize this month using 1/4 to 1/2 pound (1/2 to 1 cup) of 10-10-10 with micronutrients per plant or about 10 pounds (20 cups) per 100 foot row. (Newly planted blackberries should not be fertilized until late spring or summer.) *Note: Blackberries do not require much fertilizer in most soils in north Florida. Blackberry roots are located close to the surface and excess fertilizer can burn leaves or even kill plants.*

- **Blueberries (Established)**: *Year 2*: Fertilize using 2 ounces (4 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). Spread fertilizer evenly over a circle 3 feet in diameter with the plant in the center. *Year 3+:* Fertilize using 3 ounces (6 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). Spread fertilizer evenly over a 4 foot diameter circle, or broadcast in a continuous band 3 to 4 feet wide, centered on the plant row. *Note: These are general guidelines and should be adjusted based on plant performance. Slightly more fertilizer may be required if plants are heavily mulched. However, more often than not, cultivated blueberries suffer more from over-fertilization than from lack of fertilization. Use ammoniacal nitrogen or nitrogen from urea or organic sources, rather than from nitrate sources. Chlorine levels should be as low as possible, preferably below 2%. A special formulation called "blueberry special" is available in Florida and meets these requirements. Another possibility is "camellia-azalea" fertilizers.*

- **Chestnuts (Year 2+):** Apply 1 pound (2 cups) of 10-10-10 fertilizer for each year of age with a maximum of 7.5 pounds (15 cups) per tree this month.

- **Citrus**: Fertilization may begin this month for all types of citrus. Refer to Table 1 on page 10 for fertilizer recommendations.

- **Muscadine Grapes**: Prune January to mid-March; remove tendrils and branches not needed for spurs and fruiting arms, leaving 2 to 3 buds per spur.

- **Peaches/ Nectarines/Plums (Year 1)**: Fertilize this month using 1/8 pound (1/4 cup) per tree of 12-4-8 fertilizer with micronutrients.
March

- **Figs**: Fertilization may begin this month, although fig trees typically require only light fertilization. Excess fertilization can promote excessive vegetative growth and low yield. If the total amount of vegetative growth is less than one foot in length, then it is appropriate to apply fertilizer. If fertilizer is needed, three to five applications can be made during the growing season (March to August). For young trees, 1/2 pound (1 cup) of 10-10-10 with micronutrients can be applied; for large trees, 2 to 4 pounds (4-8 cups) of 10-10-10 with micronutrients can be applied.

- **Mulberries**: Fruit begins to mature this month; other than harvesting fruit mulberries require almost no care.

- **Muscadine Grapes (Year 2)**: Fertilize late this month using 1 pound (2 cups) of 8-8-8 or 10-10-10; apply the fertilizer in bands about 1 foot to either side of the vine. *Note: It is sometimes beneficial to apply fertilizer that has micronutrients added.*

- **Muscadine Grapes (Year 3+)**: Fertilize late this month using up to 3 pounds (6 cups) of 8-8-8 or 10-10-10; apply the fertilizer in bands about 1 foot to either side of the vine. *Note: It is sometimes beneficial to apply fertilizer that has micronutrients added.*

- **Pecans (Newly Planted)**: A soil fertility test should be conducted prior to planting and no fertilizer should be placed in the planting hole during installation. *Year 1*: Fertilize early this month using 10-10-10 with micronutrients, 1 pound (2 cups) per tree. *Year 2*: Fertilize early this month using 10-10-10 with micronutrients, 2 pounds (4 cups) per tree. *Note: Fertilizer should contain Zinc (Zn) to prevent nutrient deficiencies. Do not apply fertilizer in a clump around the base of tree, instead spread out the fertilizer in a circle with a 3- to 5- foot diameter around the trunk of the tree. Avoid putting any fertilizer directly against the trunk.*

- **Pecans (Established)**: Fertilize this month using 10-10-10 with micronutrients, 2 pounds (4 cups) per inch trunk diameter, measured one foot above the soil (2-4 lbs for bearing trees). Large trees (30 inches or more in diameter) may require 60 to 120 pounds of fertilizer. *Note: Fertilizer should contain Zinc (Zn) to prevent nutrient deficiencies. Some growers prefer to bury fertilizer at 10 or more sites below the tree canopy to reduce runoff and increase fertilizer use efficiency compared to a broadcast application.*
○ **Persimmons:** Apply first of three applications of fertilizer; fertilize using 1/2 to 1 pound (1-2 cups) of 10-10-10 with micronutrients per year of age. All three applications should not exceed 10-15 pounds (20-30 cups) per year and therefore no more than 10 cups per application.

○ **Pomegranate:** Fertilize this month using 8-8-8 or similar: young trees need 2 to 2.5 pounds (4-5 cups) per tree and mature trees need 4.5 to 6.5 pounds (9-11 cups). *Note: Excessive or late applications of fertilizer tend to delay fruit maturity and reduce color and quality.*

**April**

○ **Blueberries (Newly Planted):** Fertilize using 1 ounce (2 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). If plants are mulched heavily, use 1.5 ounces (3 TB) per plant per application rather than 1 ounce. Spread fertilizer evenly over a circle 2 feet in diameter with the plant in the center. *Note: Use ammoniacal nitrogen or nitrogen from urea or organic sources, rather than from nitrate sources. Chlorine levels should be low, preferably below 2%. Special formulations such as "blueberry special" and "camellia-azalea" fertilizers are available in Florida and meet these requirements.*

○ **Blueberries (Established):** Year 2: Fertilize using 2 ounces (4 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). Spread fertilizer evenly over a circle 3 feet in diameter with the plant in the center. Year 3+: Fertilize using 3 ounces (6 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). Spread fertilizer evenly over a 4 foot diameter circle, or broadcast in a continuous band 3 to 4 feet wide, centered on the plant row. *Note: These are general guidelines and should be adjusted based on plant performance. Slightly more fertilizer may be required if plants are heavily mulched. However, more often than not, cultivated blueberries suffer more from over-fertilization than from lack of fertilization. Use ammoniacal nitrogen or nitrogen from urea or organic sources, rather than from nitrate sources. Chlorine levels should be as low as possible, preferably below 2%. Special formulations such as "blueberry special" and "camellia-azalea" fertilizers are available in Florida and meet these requirements.*

○ **Loquats:** Fertilize this month using 6-6-6, only as needed.

○ **Muscadine Grapes (Year 1):** Fertilize this month after growth begins using 1/4 pound (1/2 cup) of 8-8-8 or 10-10-10; apply the fertilizer in bands about 1 foot to either side of the vine. *Note: It is sometimes beneficial to apply fertilizer that has micronutrients added.*
May

- **Apples:** Fruit ripens this month; begin harvesting in late May.
- **Blackberries:** During their establishment year, newly planted blackberries can be fertilized late this month using 1/4 pound (1/2 cup) of 10-10-10 with micronutrients per plant or up to 5 pounds (10 cups) per 100 feet of row.
- **Chestnuts (Year 1):** Apply 1 pound (2 cups) of 10-10-10 fertilizer per tree.
- **Peaches/Nectarines/Plums (Year 1):** Fertilize late this month using 1/4 pound (1/2 cup) per tree of 12-4-8 fertilizer with micronutrients.
- **Peaches/Nectarines/Plums (Year 2+):** Fertilize this month using 1 to 1.5 pounds (2-3 cups) per tree of 12-4-8 fertilizer with micronutrients.
- **Pineapple Guava:** Flowers appear in early May and have attractive thick, fleshy edible petals that are sweet and tasty. This plant doesn’t require much fertilizer, and fertilizer should be low in nitrogen to maximize fruit production and avoid excessive vegetative growth.

June

- **Apples:** Fruit harvest continues this month.
- **Apples:** Fertilize this month using 10-10-10 with micronutrients, esp. Zinc and Boron; apply 1 pound (2 cups) of fertilizer for each year of age, up to 7.5 pounds (15 cups).
- **Blueberries (Newly Planted):** Fertilize using 1 ounce (2 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). If plants are mulched heavily, use 1.5 ounces (3 TB) per plant per application rather than 1 ounce. Spread fertilizer evenly over a circle 2 feet in diameter with the plant in the center. *Note: Use ammoniacal nitrogen or nitrogen from urea or organic sources, rather than from nitrate sources.* Chlorine levels should be low, preferably below 2%. Special formulations such as "blueberry special" and "camellia-azalea" fertilizers are available in Florida and meet these requirements.
- Blueberries (Established): *Year 2*: Fertilize using 2 ounces (4 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). Spread fertilizer evenly over a circle 3 feet in diameter with the plant in the center. *Year 3+:* Fertilize using 3 ounces (6 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). Spread fertilizer evenly over a 4 foot diameter circle, or broadcast in a continuous band 3 to 4 feet wide, centered on the plant row. *Note: These are general guidelines and should be adjusted based on plant performance.* Slightly more fertilizer may be required if plants are heavily mulched. However, more often than not, cultivated blueberries suffer more from over-fertilization than from lack of fertilization. Use ammoniacal nitrogen or nitrogen from urea or organic sources, rather than from nitrate sources. Chlorine levels should be low, preferably below 2%. Special formulations such as "blueberry special" and "camellia-azalea" fertilizers are available in Florida and meet these requirements.

- Chestnuts (Year 2+): Apply 1 pound (2 cups) of 10-10-10 fertilizer for each year of age with a maximum of 7.5 pounds (15 cups) per tree this month.

- Figs: Pruning should occur only as needed and after fruit ripening (early in the summer) to allow for flower-bud initiation for the next year. For late-maturing cultivars, pruning may result in a significant reduction in yield the next year.

- Loquats: Fertilize this month using 6-6-6, only as needed.

- Muscadine Grapes (Year 1): Fertilize this month using 1/4 pound (1/2 cup) of 8-8-8 or 10-10-10; apply the fertilizer in bands about 1 foot to either side of the vine. *Note: It is sometimes beneficial to apply fertilizer that has micronutrients added.*

- Pears: Apply 1/2 pound (1 cup) of 6-6-6 or 8-8-8 per year of age, up to 5 pounds (10 cups) total. Excessive fertilization should be avoided as it may make the tree more susceptible to fire blight.

- Pecans (Newly Planted): A soil fertility test should be conducted prior to planting and no fertilizer should be placed in the planting hole during installation. *Year 1*: Fertilize early this month using 10-10-10 with micronutrients, 1 pound (2 cups) per tree. *Year 2*: Fertilizer early this month using 10-10-10 with micronutrients, 2 pounds (4 cups) per tree. *Note: Fertilizer should contain Zinc (Zn) to prevent nutrient deficiencies.* Do not apply fertilizer in a clump around the base of tree, instead spread out the fertilizer in a circle with a 3- to 5- foot diameter around the trunk of the tree. Avoid putting any fertilizer directly against the trunk.
o **Pecans (Established):** June 1<sup>st</sup> – Commercial pecan growers should submit leaf samples for nutrient testing; sample 25 leaflet pairs from fully expanded leaves in the mid-portion of the terminal growth.

o **Pecans (Established):** Fertilize this month according to nutrient test results. Otherwise, use general recommendations: Apply 10-10-10 with micronutrients, 2 pounds (4 cups) per inch trunk diameter, measured one foot above the soil (2-4 lbs for bearing trees). Large trees (30 inches or more in diameter) may require 60 to 120 pounds of fertilizer. *Note: Fertilizer should contain Zinc (Zn) to prevent nutrient deficiencies. Some growers prefer to bury fertilizer at 10 or more sites below the tree canopy compared to a broadcast application.*

o **Persimmons:** Apply second of three applications of fertilizer; fertilize using 1/2 to 1 pound (1-2 cups) of 10-10-10 with micronutrients per year of age. All three applications should not exceed 10-15 pounds (20-30 cups) per year and therefore no more than 10 cups per application.

**July**

o **Blackberries:** Fertilize after harvest using 1/4 to 1/2 pound (1/2 to 1 cup) of 10-10-10 with micronutrients per plant or about 10 pounds (20 cups) per 100 foot row.

o **Muscadine Grapes (Year 2):** Fertilize June or July using 1 pound (2 cups) of 8-8-8 or 10-10-10; apply the fertilizer in bands about 1 foot to either side of the vine. *Note: It is sometimes beneficial to apply fertilizer that has micronutrients added.*

o **Muscadine Grapes (Year 3+):** Fertilize June or July using up to 3 pounds (6 cups) of 8-8-8 or 10-10-10; apply the fertilizer in bands about 1 foot to either side of the vine. *Note: It is sometimes beneficial to apply fertilizer that has micronutrients added.*

o **Peaches/Nectarines/Plums (Year 1):** Fertilize this month using 1/2 pound (1 cup) per tree of 12-4-8 fertilizer with micronutrients.

o **Pomegranate:** Fruit matures this month and continues through November.
**August**

- **Blueberries (Newly Planted):** Fertilize using 1 ounce (2 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). If plants are mulched heavily, use 1.5 ounces (3 TB) per plant per application rather than 1 ounce. Spread fertilizer evenly over a circle 2 feet in diameter with the plant in the center. *Note: Use ammoniacal nitrogen or nitrogen from urea or organic sources, rather than from nitrate sources. Chlorine levels should be low, preferably below 2%. Special formulations such as "blueberry special" and "camellia-azalea" fertilizers are available in Florida and meet these requirements.*

- **Blueberries (Established):** *Year 2:* Fertilize using 2 ounces (4 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). Spread fertilizer evenly over a circle 3 feet in diameter with the plant in the center. *Year 3+:* Fertilize using 3 ounces (6 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). Spread fertilizer evenly over a 4 foot diameter circle, or broadcast in a continuous band 3 to 4 feet wide, centered on the plant row. *Note: These are general guidelines and should be adjusted based on plant performance. Slightly more fertilizer may be required if plants are heavily mulched. However, more often than not, cultivated blueberries suffer more from over-fertilization than from lack of fertilization. Use ammoniacal nitrogen or nitrogen from urea or organic sources, rather than from nitrate sources. Chlorine levels should be low, preferably below 2%. Special formulations such as "blueberry special" and "camellia-azalea" fertilizers are available in Florida and meet these requirements.*

- **Muscadine Grapes (Year 1):** Fertilize this month using 1/4 pound (1/2 cup) of 8-8-8 or 10-10-10; apply the fertilizer in bands about 1 foot to either side of the vine. *Note: It is sometimes beneficial to apply fertilizer that has micronutrients added.*

- **Persimmons:** Early season cultivars are ready for harvest this month. In general, crops can remain on the tree a month after marketable color develops, becoming softer with greater colors and sugar.

**September**

- **Citrus:** Last month to fertilize young citrus (1 and 2 year old trees) until February. Refer to the Table 1 on page 10 for fertilizer recommendations.

- **Loquats:** Fertilize this month using 6-6-6, only as needed.
o **Persimmons:** Mid-season cultivars are ready to harvest this month. In general, crops can remain on the tree a month after marketable color develops, becoming softer with greater colors and sugar.

o **Persimmons:** Apply last of three applications of fertilizer early this month; fertilize using 1/2 to 1 pound (1-2 cups) of 10-10-10 with micronutrients per year of age. All three applications should not exceed 10-15 pounds (20-30 cups) per year and therefore no more than 10 cups per application.

o **Pineapple Guava:** Fruit ripens this month and is ready for harvest.

### October

o **Blueberries (Newly Planted):** Fertilize using 1 ounce (2 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). If plants are mulched heavily, use 1.5 ounces (3 TB) per plant per application rather than 1 ounce. Spread fertilizer evenly over a circle 2 feet in diameter with the plant in the center. *Note:* Use ammoniacal nitrogen or nitrogen from urea or organic sources, rather than from nitrate sources. Chlorine levels should be low, preferably below 2%. Special formulations such as "blueberry special" and "camellia-azalea" fertilizers are available in Florida and meet these requirements.

o **Blueberries (Established):** *Year 2:* Fertilize using 2 ounces (4 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). Spread fertilizer evenly over a circle 3 feet in diameter with the plant in the center. *Year 3+:* Fertilize using 3 ounces (6 TB) per plant of 12-4-8 with 2% magnesium (Mg). Spread fertilizer evenly over a 4 foot diameter circle, or broadcast in a continuous band 3 to 4 feet wide, centered on the plant row. *Note:* These are general guidelines and should be adjusted based on plant performance. Slightly more fertilizer may be required if plants are heavily mulched. However, more often than not, cultivated blueberries suffer more from over-fertilization than from lack of fertilization. Use ammoniacal nitrogen or nitrogen from urea or organic sources, rather than from nitrate sources. Chlorine levels should be low, preferably below 2%. Special formulations such as "blueberry special" and "camellia-azalea" fertilizers are available in Florida and meet these requirements.

o **Persimmons:** Late season cultivars are ready to harvest starting this month and into November. In general, crops can remain on the tree a month after marketable color develops, becoming softer with greater colors and sugar.
Strawberries: Plant October 1st to November 15th for a Spring harvest. Two pounds (4 cups) of a 10-5-10 or similar garden fertilizer with micronutrients (i.e. zinc, copper, iron, manganese and boron) per 10 feet of row should be incorporated into the bed before planting. It is recommended that one-third to one-half of all the N fertilizer should be provided in a commercially available slow-release form to increase nutrient absorption. Incorporate one-fourth of the fertilizer evenly across the top of the bed with a rake. Apply the remainder of the fertilizer in a narrow band approximately 1 inch deep down the middle of the bed (above the drip line or soaker hose, if they have been placed in the bed).

November

Pomegranate: Fertilize this month using 8-8-8 or similar: young trees need 2 to 2.5 pounds (4-5 cups) per tree and mature trees need 4.5 to 6.5 pounds (9-11 cups). Note: Excessive or late applications of fertilizer tend to delay fruit maturity and reduce color and quality.

December

REST – You Deserve It!

Table 1: Citrus Fertilization Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tree Age</th>
<th>Cups of Fertilizer per Application</th>
<th>Applications per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-6-6</td>
<td>8-8-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5-1.5 cups</td>
<td>.5-1.25 cups</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2-4 cups</td>
<td>1.5-3 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5-7 cups</td>
<td>2.75-5.5 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.5-11.25 cups</td>
<td>6.5-8.25 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>12-15.5 cups</td>
<td>9-11.5 cups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Year 1 starts at planting.*
Resources

Apples:


Blackberries:

Blueberries:

Chestnut:

Citrus:

Ferguson, J.J. 2002. Your Florida Dooryard Citrus Guide – Bearing Trees (Years 3 to 5+). Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and

Figs:

Peaches, Nectarines, Plums:


Pears:

Pecans:

Persimmons:
**Pineapple Guava:**

**Loquats:**

**Muscadine Grapes:**

**Pomegranate:**

**Strawberries:**

* Any use of trade names is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee of warranty of the products names and does not signify they are approved to the exclusion of others of suitable comparison.