



Linking Edible Arizona Forests

Growing Edible Arizona Forests, An Illustrated Guide

Excerpt from *leafnetworkaz.org*

Edible Tree Guide

HARVEST the Abundance

- Safety First

Safety First

KNOW WHAT YOU PICK! Make sure fruits, nuts, seeds and pods are correctly identified by knowledgeable people. Never eat anything that is not properly identified.

LOOK UP for power lines, roofs and overhead obstacles. Locate any wires or cables that run through the tree canopy and stay clear of those areas even if you need to leave fruit unpicked.

LOOK DOWN for holes, tools, cactus, rattlesnakes, and other hazards. If you will be digging, locate and mark underground utilities and do not dig near these.

WEAR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING. Sturdy gloves, eye coverings, long-sleeve shirts, long pants and closed-toed shoes can protect you from scratches, pokes, and insects.

WATCH OUT FOR BEES. Any honeybee you encounter in Arizona could be an aggressive “*Africanized bee*.” If you encounter a feral beehive around trees, get all people out of the area immediately and consult with a professional beekeeper or licensed pest control company on next steps.

KEEP FIRST AID AT HAND. Have easily accessible and well-equipped first aid kits at the site and discuss safety practices before starting work. Ask if anyone has health or safety issues, such as allergies to bee stings or to the fruits or nuts being picked.

PRACTICE TOOL SAFETY. Use the right tools and equipment for the job. Lean tools against trees rather than setting them on the ground where they could become tripping hazards. Watch your sides and back when swinging tools around. Understand and use proper lifting techniques. Use lifting and moving equipment for heavy containers.



When using a ladder, as in this olive harvest, work in pairs with someone standing at the base of the ladder to stabilize it.

LADDERS. If ladders are used, they should be well built, sturdy and safe. Only physically able people should be on a ladder, with a person standing at the base (spotter). Do not over-reach to pick fruit too far above or to the side of the ladder. Instead, move or extend the ladder to safely reach the fruit.

CAUTION. Bacteria, mold, fungus, bird droppings and other materials can contaminate fruits, nuts, seeds and pods. DO NOT collect off the ground. DO NOT harvest food with dark spots, mold or other problems. This is especially important for mesquite pods.