



Linking Edible Arizona Forests

## Growing Edible Arizona Forests, An Illustrated Guide

Excerpt from *leafnetworkaz.org*

### Edible Tree Guide

#### LEARN Values, Characteristics of Edible Trees

- Arizona Elevations for Trees

**Arizona Elevations for Trees.** Many edible trees have an Arizona climate and altitude range suitable for good growth and the production of a reliable harvest. The LEAF network lists five general elevation categories where Arizona edible trees grow—Low Desert, Mid Desert, High Desert, High Plateau/Mountain and High Mountain, along with representative cities and towns within these elevation categories. The table **Elevation Areas, Water Needs and Chill Requirements for Selected Edible Trees in Arizona** summarizes this information for selected cities and towns in Arizona, as shown on the **Map of Selected Arizona City and Town Elevation Areas**. These elevations correlate with elevations shown below fruit photos at *leafnetworkaz.org* **LEARN: Edible Trees that Grow in Arizona**.

ELEVATION AREAS, WATER NEEDS AND CHILL REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTED EDIBLE TREES IN ARIZONA

TREE SPECIES	Low Desert Lake Havasu City, Phoenix, Yuma	Mid Desert Ajo, Casa Grande, Tucson	High Desert Globe, Kingman, Sierra Vista, Willcox	High Plateau, Mountain Page, Prescott, Winslow, Tuba City	High Mountain Flagstaff	WATER USE: low 12-20in/yr med 20-40 in/yr high 30-50 in/yr	CHILL: Hours between 32 - 45°F needed for proper bud growth, fruit set and growth
Almond	X	X	X			medium	yes
Apple	X	X	X	X	X	medium	yes
Apricot	X	X	X	X		medium	yes
Carob	X	X				medium	no
Cherry	X	X	X	X	X	medium	yes
Citrus	X	X				high	no
Date Palm	X	X				high	no
Elderberry		X	X	X	X	medium	no
Fig	X	X	X			medium	yes
Guava	X					medium	no
Hackberry			X	X	X	medium	no
Hawthorn	X	X	X	X	X	medium	yes
Ironwood	X	X				low	no
Jujube	X	X	X	X	X	medium	yes
Juniper			X	X	X	low	no
Loquat	X	X				medium	no
Mesquite	X	X	X			low	no
Mulberry		X	X	X	X	medium	yes
Oak			X	X	X	medium	no
Olive	X	X				medium	yes
Palo Verde	X	X				low	no
Peach	X	X	X	X		medium	yes
Pear, Asian		X	X	X	X	medium	yes
Pecan	X	X	X			high	yes
Persimmon	X	X	X	X	X	medium	yes
Pinyon Pine			X	X		low	no
Pistachio		X	X			medium	yes
Plum	X	X	X	X	X	medium	yes
Pomegranate	X	X	X			medium	yes
Quince		X	X	X		medium	yes
Saguaro	X	X				low	no
Sapote	X					medium	no
Walnut			X	X		medium	yes

The **Edible Tree Directory** at [leafnetworkkaz.org](http://leafnetworkkaz.org) provides detailed information about many Arizona edible trees and elevations suitable for their growth. Consult nurseries, the Cooperative Extension service, the Internet, and plant books for additional information on different edible tree species that thrive at specific elevation ranges.

For example, *capulin* cherries are a tropical species that will thrive in the low to mid desert areas. Traditional sweet cherries produce well in the mid desert region, sour cherries will produce a reliable harvest in the high plateau region, and the native black cherry will thrive and produce in high mountain areas.

In addition, different varieties of the same tree species can tolerate additional heat and cold. For example Rome Beauty is a reliable apple tree for mountainous areas with late spring frosts and Anna's Apple is a "low chill" variety that will produce in the low desert regions. While many fruit crops are best suited for mid elevations in Arizona, several—such as apple, peach and plum—have low chill varieties that can be grown in the desert. In addition to elevation ranges, see [leafnetworkkaz.org](http://leafnetworkkaz.org) **LEARN - Chill Requirements** to help choose trees for your location.

To assist with choosing trees, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA\*) and Sunset Magazine\*\* have mapped and described planting zones for the U.S. These zones are based on minimum winter temperatures and may be found on many websites by entering your zip code. Nursery tags often indicate which zones are best for a specific tree. Climates of adjoining zones grade into one another near the boundaries, which may affect the trees that can survive in these regions. While using elevations and zones as guidelines, keep in mind that average temperatures might change from year to year and extremes of heat or cold may affect your edible trees along with many other conditions.

\*USDA Planting zones <http://www.plantmaps.com/interactive-arizona-usda-plant-zone-hardiness-map.php>

\*\*Sunset Magazine planting zones <http://www.sunset.com/garden/climate-zones/sunset-climate-zones-arizona>

Selecting appropriate trees and placing them in beneficial environments will increase the likelihood that edible trees thrive and provide nourishing food resources to you and the community. Be ready to experiment!

MAP OF SELECTED ARIZONA CITY AND TOWN ELEVATION AREAS

