

Fruit Culture in Alabama

Ease of Culture

When selecting fruit types to plant, fruit producers should consider how difficult or how easy the fruit is to manage. Home gardeners, especially, may only have so much time for gardening activities and may be interested in planting the “easiest” fruits to grow.

How difficult or easy a fruit may be to grow depends on several factors: the need for pesticide sprays, special yearly training or pruning, and plant loss from difficult-to-control disease and insect problems, such as Pierce’s disease of grapes, fire blight of apples and pears, phony peach disease of peaches, and grape root borer of grapes.

Fruit crops for Alabama and their level of cultural difficulty are listed in Table 1. The estimated level of difficulty is based on the assumption that the fruit is adapted to the area and requires normal yearly care.

Climate is another factor in how difficult or easy fruit may be to grow in an area. Fruit that is easy to grow in one area of Alabama may be difficult to grow in another area because of extremely cold weather. Freeze damage is the most limiting factor to consistent fruit crop production.

The types of fruit that can be grown successfully in Alabama’s different climate or chilling zones (Figure 1) are shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Cultural Level of Difficulty in Fruit Production in Area of Alabama Where Adapted

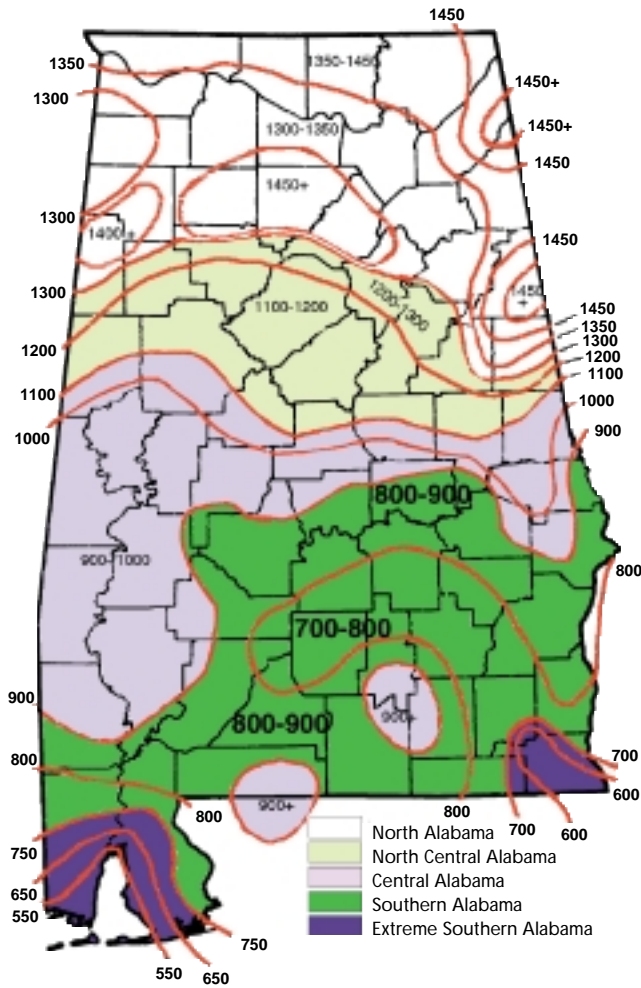
Fruit Type	Level of Difficulty
Tree Fruit	
Apple	considerable
Pear	light to moderate
Asian pear	light to moderate
Quince	light to moderate
Peach	moderate
Nectarine	moderate to considerable
Plum	moderate
Cherry, sour	light to moderate
Cherry, sweet	considerable (too difficult)
Oriental persimmon	light to moderate
Pomegranate	light
Fig	light to moderate
Small Fruit	
Bunch grape	moderate
Muscadine grape	moderate
Blackberry	light to moderate
Raspberry	moderate
Blueberry, highbush	moderate to considerable
Blueberry, rabbiteye	light to moderate
Strawberry	moderate
Subtropical and Exotic Fruit	
Satsuma	light to moderate
Kumquat	light to moderate
Kiwifruit, standard	considerable
Kiwifruit, hardy	considerable (adaptation questionable)
Feijoa	light to moderate (adaptation being examined)



Cultural systems can make freeze protection easier for strawberries than for other fruit.

Alabama Chilling Zones for Southern Counties

Hours of 45°F and lower from October 1 through February 15 based on a 10-year average (1984-85 to 1992-93)



Alabama Chilling Zones for Central and Northern Counties

Hours of 45°F and lower from October 1 through February 28 based on a 10-year average (1984-85 to 1992-93)

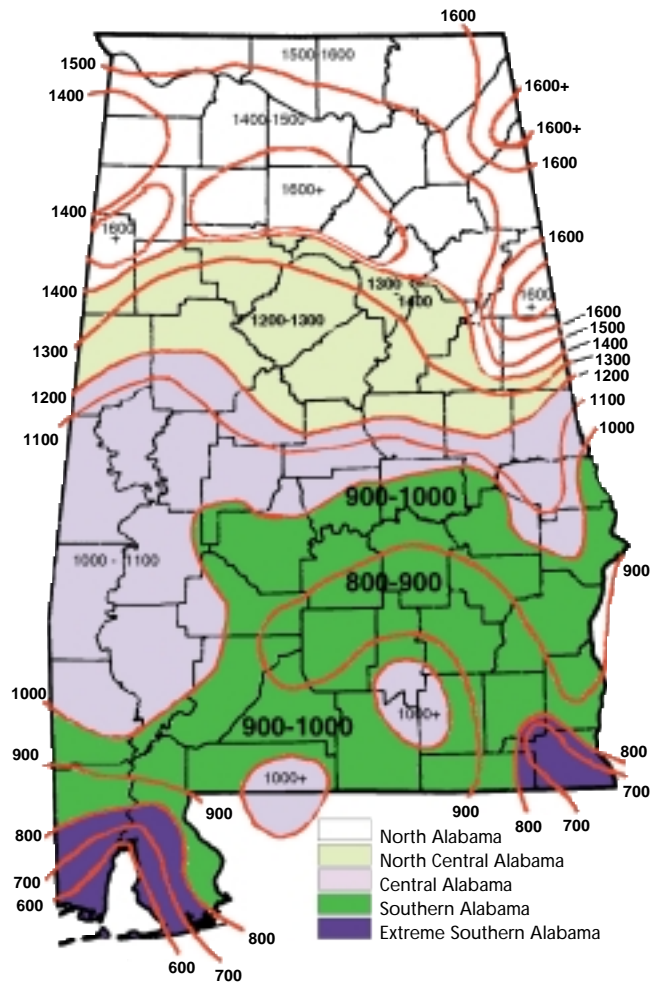
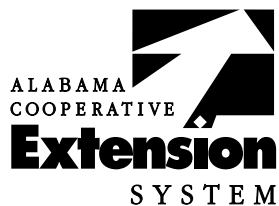


Figure 1. Fruit-growing regions of Alabama based on fall and winter temperatures

Table 2. Adaptation of Fruit Types in Alabama

Fruit Type	Adaptation by Area of State		
	South and Extreme South	Central	North
Tree Fruit			
Apple	marginal	good	excellent
Pear, European and European hybrids	marginal	good	good
Pear, common (hard)	good to excellent	good	marginal to good
Asian pear	marginal to good	good	marginal
Peach	marginal to good	good	marginal
Nectarine	marginal to good	good	marginal
Plum, Japanese	marginal to good	marginal to good	marginal
Plum, European (prune)	marginal to good	good	marginal to good
Apricot	not adapted	not adapted	not adapted
Cherry, sweet	not adapted	not adapted	not adapted
Cherry, sour	not adapted	marginal	good
Oriental persimmon, astringent	good to excellent	good	not adapted
Oriental persimmon, nonastringent	good	marginal to good	not adapted
Pomegranate	good	marginal to good	not adapted
Fig, common	good	marginal to good	marginal
Fig, Smyrna and San Pedro types	not adapted	not adapted	not adapted
Small Fruit			
Bunch grape, European	not adapted	not adapted	not adapted
Bunch grape, European × American	marginal	marginal to good	good
Bunch grape, American	marginal to good	good	good
Muscadine grape	excellent	good to excellent	marginal to good
Blackberry, erect (thorny)	good	good to excellent	good
Blackberry, erect (thornless)	good	good to excellent	good
Blackberry, trailing (thorny)	good	good to excellent	good
Blackberry, trailing (thornless)	marginal	marginal	marginal to good
Raspberry	marginal	marginal	marginal to good
Blueberry, northern highbush	not adapted	marginal	marginal to good
Blueberry, southern highbush	marginal to good	marginal to good	not adapted
Blueberry, rabbiteye	good to excellent	marginal to good	marginal
Strawberry	excellent	good to excellent	good
Subtropical and Exotic Fruit			
Satsuma	marginal to good	not adapted	not adapted
Kumquat	marginal to good	not adapted	not adapted
Tangerine, lemon, limequat, and calamondin	marginal to good	not adapted	not adapted
Kiwifruit, standard	marginal to good	marginal to good	not adapted
Kiwifruit, hardy	marginal	marginal	marginal
Feijoa	marginal	marginal	not adapted



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