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NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF:

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FRUITING PLANTS NEED DRAINAGE

For productive, long-lived fruiting plants, a well-drained soil is needed. Unfortunately, the average home owner only has a small plot, and must work with what he or she has. In deciding whether or not fruiting plants are adaptable to an area, some general observations are useful:

1. Does water stand for long periods of time?
2. What is the area's native vegetation?
3. Are there many yellow (iron deficient) plants around?

If a yard has an area where water stands for long periods after rains, or the soil stays wet for a prolonged time, avoid these areas and soils for fruit, because most fruiting plants do not tolerate wet roots. Standing water or wet soil actually causes root death from lack of oxygen. A quick check for suitable water drainage is to dig a hole 30 inches deep, and fill it with water. If the water is gone within 24 hours, drainage is usually acceptable. Any soil that does not drain within 48 hours is considered unacceptable for most fruiting plants. If the soil so poor that it is not acceptable for the plants you wish to grow, raised beds can be used with limited success. Remember that plants, especially trees, will not live as long, planted in this manner, as they would if planted in a good soil at ground level. Raised beds for fruit trees such as peaches should be at least 8 feet square and 12 inches deep. Do not use highly organic soils to make beds, as the trees may grow later in the year and be more subject to freeze injury. Construct raised beds with a frame of railroad ties or edging timbers, or simply mound the soil, and plant atop the mound.

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