

Tropicals

Tropical trees are easier to grow than one might think. They are often more pest and disease resistant than temperate species. Their only weakness is frost. Tomatoes and corn are also tropical crops. The basic idea is to prune the trees to an easy to cover bush. Some can be protected from frost with sprinklers. Others are more easily pruned and wrapped. Some like mangoes do best in cheap seasonal plant or row covers. Supplemental heat is rarely needed in my area. When needed, I like mini-bulb Christmas lights strung through the canopy and wrapped around the trunk. I've used jugs or barrels of water, lamps, oil lanterns, wood stoves, boilers, and space heaters. I like the Christmas light thing for home gardens.

Dwarf Pruning Techniques

Mangoes and Avocados can be pruned the same way. They both flower on the tips of mature twigs. The goal of pruning is to maximize the number of such twigs keeping height as low as possible.

Sapotes bloom on one to five year old branches. They need a giant form of renewal pruning from two main low arms. Each arm has heads along the length. Once a branch gets too tall and old, it can be pruned back to the head and renewal shoots selected.

Jak fruit and **Jaboticaba** are cauliflorous, meaning they bloom on the trunk and large branches. This makes pruning for size simple.

Many fruits like **Annona**, **Citrus**, and **Guava** bloom on new growth from less vigorous mature branches, but also occasionally from old wood. In general, horizontal growth blooms more than vigorous verticle shoots, sometime called suckers.

Frost Protection

The easiest method for one or a few trees is to keep it pruned low, cover with sheets and frost cloth, give supplemental heat if needed.

In cold climates, pit greenhouses are best. Your latitude determines the angle of the glass. Only the south side needs to be glazed. See the link section of www.quincynursery.com for links to pictures.

I have found sprinklers to work best for protecting blooms from late freezes or to protect the trunk and main scaffold branches in record freezes. It works only for short freezes and small plants.

