Grapes Make a Good Backyard Crop

NEWARK, Del. — If your yard has a spot with full sun and welldrained soil, consider growing grapes, says University of Delaware Extension Horticultural Agent Dave Tatnall. A grape vine will produce a large quantity of delicious fruit in a relatively small space. One well-managed vine can produce about 15 pounds of fruit.

Grapes do well in our climate,

fertilize in the spring, spray regularly for disease control, and prune once a year.

February or March, when the worst of the winter is over but the The main trunk of the vine is plants are still dormant. This trained up to the top wire, with one pruning will pay off in bigger and arm allowed to extend off in each better grapes, Tatnall says.

The easiest and most common

and are not difficult to grow. Just method of pruning grape vines is called the four-arm Kniffin system. Basically, the vines are trained to form a double T along The best time to prune is in two parallel wires, one at a height of 30 inches, the other at 60 inches.

direction at the apper and lower wires, giving each plant a total of four arms. Everything else is pruned away, except for one renewal spur at each intersection. The renewal spurs will develop canes that will bear fruit the following year.

Do not apply a dry fertilizer around newly planted grapes, Tatnall recommends. In early spring of the second year, fertilize

each plant with one cup of 5-10-10 or 5-10-5 fertilizer, scattering it on the ground no closer than one foot from the trunk. Increase the amount of fertilizer each year until you reach the maximum application rate of four cups per plant

For more information about growing or pruning grapes, contact your County Extension office in Newark, Dover, or Georgetown

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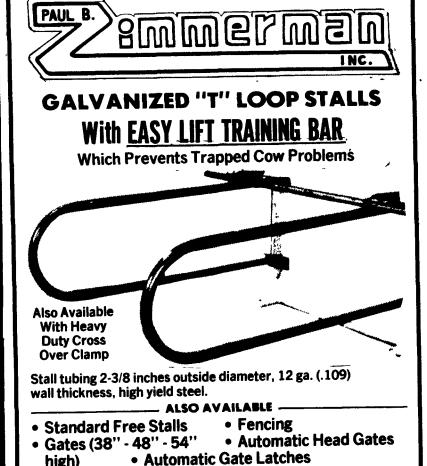
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