

# Small Fruit Cultivar Recommendations for Arkansas

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The commercial success of a fruit orchard is highly dependent on the selection of cultivars which will perform reliably for the selected site and location and meet market demands. When selecting cultivars for your orchard, you must consider the following:

## Climatic Adaptability of the Cultivars

The cultivars you select must be adapted to the climatic conditions for your geographic location. Pay close attention to the information given by the nursery catalogs such as USDA winter hardiness zones and chilling requirements. Arkansas has six hardiness zones (6a-8a). If your orchard is located in a colder area of the state (USDA hardiness zones 6a or 6b), select cultivars that are adapted to the colder winter temperatures. If you are in the southern part of the state, you must select cultivars with lower chilling hour requirements.

## Time of Bloom and Days to Harvest

You can select early-, mid- and late-season cultivars to extend or concentrate the season to match your time constraints and specific market demands. However, care must be taken to make sure you do not select cultivars that bloom too early in your area if the danger of frost damage to the blooms is a problem. Pay close attention to pollination requirements of your crop. The time of bloom of the

cultivars must coincide in order to have successful cross-pollination among the cultivars.

## Pest Resistance

Growing fruit requires high horticultural and pest management inputs. The first step to reduce the amount of time and effort in growing your fruit is to buy cultivars that have low susceptibility to pests prevalent in your area. For example, orange rust is a disease of blackberries, and most University of Arkansas blackberry releases have been tested for their level of susceptibility to this disease. Buying plants that have pest resistance does not mean you will not have to spray your plants at all. It only means you will decrease the number of sprays you have to apply. Or, in some instances, such as when the disease cannot be easily overcome by a regular pesticide spray schedule, planting disease-resistant cultivars can save you some economic losses.

## Selecting a Nursery

Careful consideration needs to be given when buying your plants. Plant quality from the nursery has an impact on the lifelong productivity of the planting. Choose a nursery carefully. Ask other growers for suggestions on where to buy your plants. They can give you positive or negative comments about a nursery. Remember, bargain or low-priced plants may be more costly in the long run if they are of poor quality.

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Fruit	Cultivar	Notes
<b>BLUEBERRIES</b>		
<b>Northern Highbush (Central and Northern Arkansas)</b>	Bluecrop	High-yielding; good flavor; tends to overproduce if not pruned properly; mid-season harvest.
	Bluejay	Rapidly-growing, upright bush with moderate yields of medium-size fruit. Slightly tart fruit. Ships well.
	Blueray	Large fruit, consistently productive, but tends to overproduce if not pruned properly; excellent flavor; mid-season harvest; upright-spreading, vigorous growth habit.
	Duke	Consistent production; early-season harvest, blooms relatively late. Bush upright and open.
	Elliot	Very productive, but fruit is small with bland flavor; late harvest season. Upright and somewhat bushy growth habit.
<b>Southern Highbush (Central and Southern Arkansas)</b>	Legacy	High-yielding plant with vigorous and upright growth habit. Bud break is earlier than Ozarkblue and Summit. Early harvest season with superior flavor.
	Ozarkblue*	High-yielding and consistent cropper; adapted to traditional Rabbiteye production areas. It breaks bud and blooms later than other Highbush and Rabbiteye cultivars; mid-season harvest.
	Summit*	A cooperative release with North Carolina State University and the USDA. Area of adaptation similar to Ozarkblue. Excellent flavor, large-size berries. High-yielding and consistent cropper. Mid-season harvest.
<b>Rabbiteye (Central and Southern Arkansas)</b>	Brightwell	Upright, vigorous growth; very productive; large, excellent quality fruit; ripens mid-season over a long period.
	Climax	Ripens early over a short period. Fruit size is medium and flavor is good. Growth is upright and spreading. High frost risk.
	Premier	Ripens early. Growth is vigorous and upright. The fruit is large with excellent quality. Plant is very productive.
	Tifblue	Older, traditional variety; very productive plant; small to medium berry size; mid- to late-season harvest.

\*Denotes University of Arkansas release.

Fruit	Cultivar	Notes
<b>BLACKBERRIES</b>		
	Chickasaw*	Thorny. High-yielding with large fruit. Disease resistant to anthracnose and orange rust. Mid-season harvest with medium storage potential. Requires approximately 500 chill hours.
	Choctaw*	Thorny. High-yielding cultivar; medium fruit size. Disease resistant to anthracnose and orange rust. Early ripening. Low storage potential.
	Shawnee*	Thorny. High yield with medium to large fruit size. Disease resistant to anthracnose and orange rust. Early to mid-harvest season with low storage potential.
	Apache*	Thornless. High yield with large fruit. Disease resistant to anthracnose and double blossom. Late harvest season with high storage potential. Requires approximately 800-900 chill hours.
	Arapaho*	Thornless. Moderate yield with medium fruit size. Disease resistant to anthracnose and double blossom. Early to mid-harvest season. High storage potential. Requires approximately 400-500 chill hours.
	Kiowa*	Thorny, erect; very large fruit. Ripens over a long period, the longest fruiting of the Arkansas varieties. Storage and handling potential very good, among the best of the thorny varieties. Requires approximately 200-300 chill hours.
	Navaho*	Thornless. Moderate yield with small- to medium-size fruit. Excellent, consistently rated the highest of the Arkansas varieties. Disease resistant to anthracnose and double blossom; susceptible to orange rust. Late harvest season with very high storage potential. Requires approximately 800-900 chill hours.
	Ouachita*	Thornless, very erect canes. Early to mid-season ripening. Resistant to double blossom/rosette. High storage potential. Requires approximately 400-500 chill hours.
	Prime-Jim*	Primocane-fruiting; thorny, erect. Floricane yields comparable to floricane-fruiting thorny and thornless varieties. Primocane yields vary greatly by location, best in north Arkansas. Floricanes susceptible to double blossom/rosette, but primocanes avoid this disease since the disease does not appear until the second season on the canes. No orange rust observed, and only slight anthracnose observed. Low storage potential. Recommended only for home garden use and very limited commercial trial.
	Prime-Jan*	Primocane-fruiting; thorny, erect. Similar to Prime-Jim.

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Fruit	Cultivar	Notes
<b>STRAWBERRIES (not for plasticulture production)</b>		
For matted-row production	Earliglow	Superior dessert quality and disease resistance. The medium-small size berries are very attractive with a glossy, deep red color. The plants are very vigorous and productive. Earliest of the recommended varieties for Arkansas. Major disadvantage is small fruit size on nonprimary berries. Some resistance to red stele and leaf spot.
	Noreaster	Early-ripening variety with red stele root rot resistance. The fruit is large, firm and ripens just after Earliglow. The berries possess a strong flavor and aroma when fully mature and are recommended for eating fresh or for freezing.
	Surecrop	Widely adapted, high-yielding. Resistant to red stele, high resistance to verticillium wilt.
	Cardinal*	Vigorous, productive variety developed by the University of Arkansas. It produces large, deep red berries. Resistance to leaf spot and leaf scorch.
	Ozark Beauty	Very productive, hardy. Resistance to leaf spot and leaf scorch.

<b>MUSCADINES</b>		
<b>Black</b>	Black Beauty	Large-fruited, imperfect flower, early mid-season harvest; excellent flavor. High vine vigor with fair winter hardiness.
	Ison	Medium-size fruit, perfect flower; early-season harvest for fresh market. Good muscadine flavor; very high vine vigor with low level of winter hardiness.
	Nesbitt	Consistent performer. Perfect flowers with large black berries maturing in mid-late season. High vine vigor with good winter hardiness. Very good flavor for fresh eating.
	Nobel	This variety is popular with juice and wine makers. Perfect flowers, small fruit size with excellent flavor and high yields. Late-season maturity. High vine vigor, good winter hardiness.
	Sugargate	Very-large fruited variety popular for the fresh market. Imperfect flowers. Early-season maturity. Excellent flavor, but inconsistent yield. Moderate vine vigor with good winter hardiness.
	Supreme	Very large fruit of excellent quality. Imperfect flowers. Mid-late season maturity. Moderate vine vigor with undetermined winter hardiness.
<b>Bronze</b>	Carlos	A productive variety used for processing into juice, jelly and white wine. Early-season, perfect flowers. High yield with medium-size berries. High vine vigor and good winter hardiness.
	Fry	Yields well. Imperfect flower. Good flavor, large fruit. Mid-season harvest. Moderate vine vigor with fair winter hardiness. Standard for fresh market. Susceptible to fruit rot.
	Granny Val	Perfect flowers with large, good-flavor berries and high yields. Late harvest. Good disease resistance. Poor to fair winter hardiness and low-medium vine vigor.
	Summit	Large-fruited variety popular with fresh markets. Imperfect flower, good-flavor fruit maturing in mid-season. High vine vigor. Good disease resistance and winter hardiness.
	Sweet Jenny	Imperfect flowers. Large, excellent flavor fruit with early-season maturity. High vine vigor with fair winter hardiness. Imperfect flowers. Large, excellent-flavor fruit with early-season maturity. High vine vigor with fair winter hardiness.

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Fruit	Cultivar	Notes
<b>GRAPES (cont.)</b>		
<b>Wine (Red)</b>	Chambourcin	Blue-black cultivar with large clusters of medium-size berries. Only red, French-American hybrid recommended for Arkansas. Vigorous-spreading growth habit. Large clusters can lead to overcropping. Good resistance to downy mildew, powdery mildew and phylloxera.
	Cynthiana/ Norton	Blue-black to deep purple cultivar with small berries and very small clusters. Requires soils with good drainage for optimum growth and productivity. Birds find the small fruit very attractive.
<b>Wine (White)</b>	Cayuga White	Makes a fruity wine of mild intensity similar to Riesling. Noted for hardiness and bunch rot disease resistance. Fruit somewhat susceptible to splitting if rainfall occurs during harvest period.
	Chardonel	A hybrid of Seyval Blanc and Chardonnay. Noted for superior cold-hardiness. Requires good locations (low tolerance of poorly drained soils) with long growing season. Can make high-quality dry wine.
	Seyval Blanc	Yellow-white cultivar with large compact clusters of medium berries. Can have serious bunch rot problems due to the tight clusters. Medium to low vigor and medium hardiness. Moderate susceptibility to downy mildew and powdery mildew. Makes excellent white wine. Requires cluster thinning.
	Traminette	Vine has high vigor, requires no spraying against powdery mildew, but may need a couple of sprays for protection against downy mildew if season is unusually wet. This white wine variety is claimed to be superior in its balance of sugar, acid and pH levels similar to one of its parents ('Gewürztraminer') and also has less bitter phenols. Very vigorous on rootstocks.
	Vidal Blanc	White-yellow cultivar with large clusters. Moderately hardy and ripens late. Resistant to bunch rot. Makes semi-sweet, Riesling-like wines with fruit, floral flavors and good balance. It usually needs cluster thinning to achieve superior results.
	Vignoles	White-yellow, extremely fruity cultivar with small, compact clusters of small berries. Tends to have bunch rot problems due to compactness. Medium vigor and good hardiness. Ripens two weeks before Concord. Slightly susceptible to downy mildew and powdery mildew. Currently very popular as high-quality dessert wine because of its fruitiness, high acid and good balance.

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