



Celebrating 21 Years!

ask the landscape professional
Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

Welcome to my weekly series!

Feel free to send me questions you'd like to have me answer and I will do my best to address the ones of most general interest.

EMAIL OR MAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO:
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Thank you Readers for Voting Sprigs & Twigs Best Landscape Company and Best Tree Service Every Year!
Give us a call if we can be of service!

Question this Week: Linda, My cherry trees always blossom and produce small fruit every spring, but the fruit dries up and falls off the tree. Do you know why this might happen? Thank you. Amanda in Mystic

Linda's Answer:

Dear Amanda, There are actually several possible reasons why cherry trees drop their fruit too early:

- 1) The flowers are not being cross pollinated properly – Some varieties of cherry need a nearby pollinating source, whereas others are self-pollinating. A tree may make small fruits without a pollinator, but the fruits will fall off before they mature because the blossoms were not pollinated properly. If you know the variety of tree that you have, you can choose and plant a different variety and that may do the trick. If you don't know the variety, go by the blossom color - if you have white blossoms, plant another tree that has pink or vice versa. The second tree provides viable pollen that honeybees or other insects can bring to the flowers on your tree, pollinating them so fruit can form.
- 2) Not enough (or too much) water – Cherry trees require water regularly, thoroughly and deeply during their fruiting period. Infrequent, shallow watering can deprive the fruit of much needed water, causing the fruit to dry up and drop. On the other hand, make sure your cherry tree isn't sitting in boggy, overly wet soil. Too much water is just as bad as not enough water. When the soil is saturated, the trees roots cannot breathe depriving the tree of much needed oxygen.
- 3) Not enough fertilization– Cherry trees benefit from regular fertilization throughout the year. An abundance of energy is needed to form flowers and fruit on a tree, therefore fertilizing provides the required nutrients necessary for proper growth.
- 4) Poor weather conditions during the flowering stage- a late frost can damage the flowers during the blooming period causing a diminished amount of fruit to form. Once the cherries have started forming, a late frost can also cause them to drop. Low temperatures (or extremely high temperatures), dry winds or cloudy days during the flowering stage and early stages of fruit development can also contribute to early fruit drop.



Since your fruit drop is occurring every year, my sense is that your tree needs a second tree as a cross pollinating source. Good Luck.

Linda K. Lillie has been President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc. for the last 21 years. She is a graduate of Connecticut College in Botany, an accredited NOFA Organic Land Care Professional, a Connecticut Master Gardener and a national award winning landscape designer for her design and installation projects.

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