

Pear – *Pyrus communis*

Climate								Soil						
Min Optimal Temp (°F)	Max Optimal Temp (°F)	Min Absolute Temp (°F)	Max Absolute Temp (°F)	Growing Degree Days (°F base)	Chilling Hours (32-45 °F)	Min Rainfall (in/year)	Max Rainfall (in/year)	Min pH	Max pH	Optimal Soil Texture	Absolute Soil Texture	Optimal Soil Drainage	Absolute Soil Drainage	Soil Depth (in)
-18 ^{f,h,o}	95 ^{b,f,i}	-31 ^{f,h,o}	100 ^{b,f,i}	N/A	N/A	36 ^{f,o}	83 ^{f,o}	5.1 ^{f,i,o}	7.5 ^{f,i,o}	clay loam, silty clay loam, sandy clay loam, loam, silt loam, sandy loam ^{f,i,o}	clay, sandy clay, silty clay ^{f,i,o}	well drained, moderately well drained ^{f,g}	somewhat excessively drained, somewhat poorly drained ^{f,g}	30 ^o

	Key Months for Crop Development and Thresholds												
	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	
Stage of growth (under current conditions)	Dormant	Dormant	Dormant	Dormant	Budbreak, Flowering ^{c,d,e}	Flowering ^{c,d,e}	Fruit Development ^{c,d,e}	Fruit Development ^{c,d,e}	Fruit Ripening, Harvest ^{c,d,e}	Fruit Ripening, Harvest ^{c,d,e}	Leaf Drop ^{c,d,e}	Dormant	

Key Cultivars: ^{l,m,n}

The following are European pear varieties. Asian pear is not cold hardy enough for Wisconsin. Select pear rootstock carefully as not all pear rootstocks are hardy enough for Wisconsin. Avoid *Pyrus calleryana* and quince rootstock as they are not hardy enough for Wisconsin. The OHxF series has been recommended, but they have not yet been widely tested throughout the state.

Early season (late July to mid-August)

- ‘Harrow Delight’ (moderately cold hardy)
- ‘Summercrisp’ (extremely cold hardy, fire blight resistant)
- ‘Parker’ (extremely cold hardy, good for jams and jellies, doesn’t store well)

Mid-season (late August to early September)

- ‘Harvest Queen’ (moderately cold hardy, fire blight resistant)
- ‘Honeysweet’ (somewhat self-fruitful, moderately cold hardy, moderately fire blight resistant)
- ‘Bartlett’ (standard commercial pear, moderately cold hardy, susceptible to fire blight)
- ‘Gem’ (moderately cold hardy, fire blight resistant)

Late season (mid- to late September)

- ‘Gourmet’ (extremely cold hardy, fire blight tolerant, great in storage)
- ‘Patten’ (extremely cold hardy, moderately fire blight resistant)
- ‘Harrow Sweet’ (moderately cold hardy, fire blight resistant, tends to overbear so fruit thinning may be necessary)
- ‘Luscious’ (extremely cold hardy, fire blight tolerant)

Climate Risk Notes: ^{a,j,k}

Asian pears are not cold hardy enough for Wisconsin winters. Wisconsin’s growing season is typically too short for Asian pears to fully ripen. In addition, Asian pear tends to flower too early and would be damaged by late spring frosts.

European pears can be grown in the state, and certain cultivars are extremely cold hardy (rated to zone 4b). Fruit needs to mature by mid-October to avoid the first frosts. Even so, pears may flower too early and yields can vary year to year.

Fire blight is the main disease for pears in Wisconsin. Select cultivars carefully for fire blight resistance.

References

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- ^g Kaiser, C., & Ernst, M. (2018). *Asian and European pears*. University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Cooperative Extension Service. https://ccd.uky.edu/sites/default/files/2024-12/ccd-cp-003_pears.pdf
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- ⁱ Plants For A Future. (n.d.). *Pyrus communis* - L. <https://pfaf.org/user/Plant.aspx?LatinName=Pyrus+communis>
- ^j Roper, T. R., Mahr, D. L., & McManus, P. S. (2010, July 5). *Growing pears in Wisconsin*. University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension. <https://fruit.webhosting.cals.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2011/06/Growing-Pears-in-Wisconsin-1.pdf>
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- ^l Schwabe, P. (2025, March 26). *Summercrisp pear*. Johnson's Nursery. <https://kb.jniplants.com/summercrisp-pear-pyrus>
- ^m Smith, B. R., & Roper, T. R. (2005). *Home fruit cultivars for northern Wisconsin*. University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension. <https://barron.extension.wisc.edu/files/2023/02/Home-Fruit-Cultivars-for-Northern-Wisconsin.pdf>
- ⁿ Tree Health Management. (2023, October 31). *Fruit trees for southern Wisconsin*. <https://treehealthmgmt.com/fruit-trees-for-southern-wisconsin/#:~:text=If%20you%20plan%20to%20grow,area%20nurseries%20is%20very%20rare.>
- ^o U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service. (2021). *Pyrus communis* L. PLANTS Database. <https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/plant-profile/PYCO>