

How to use the Stray Arrow Ranch Orchard Bloom Chart

Species/cultivar	Date	3/29	3/30	3/31	4/1	4/2	4/3	4/4	4/5	4/6	4/7	4/8	4/9	4/10	4/11	4/12	4/13	4/14	4/15	4/16	4/17	4/18	4/19	4/20	4/21	4/22	4/23	Density	
<i>Apple/Gravenstein</i>			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x												4	
<i>Apple/Braeburn</i>						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x									3
<i>Apple/Golden Russet</i>										x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			4	
<i>Apple/Gala</i>													x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	5	
<i>Peach/Elberta</i>								x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x											4	
*D = bloom density rating (5 = very heavy, 4 = heavy, 3 = moderate, 2 = light, 1 = very light - none)																													

Good orcharding practice calls for regular observation and record-keeping, so we created a simple chart that you can print out and take into the field on a daily or weekly basis to record bloom times.

Begin by noting the date and variety that blooms first. As the season progresses, add each variety in turn. Continue to observe the earlier blooming trees and mark the petal fall date. Some orchardists will want to make daily observations; others will be satisfied with less frequent data collection. You can use these data to evaluate whether you have sufficient cross-pollination across your season and to estimate fruit thinning that may be required, as well as developing a long-term record of seasonal and cultivar variability in your orchard.

We suggest using Washington State University's range of 5-0 to estimate bloom density (5 = very heavy, 4 = heavy, 3 = moderate, 2 = light, 1 = very light - none).

Those using a holistic spraying program may want to chart the entire bud and bloom cycle from first quarter inch, early pink, full bloom, and petal fall) rather than using simple check marks shown in the example. A suggested key (1/4 = first quarter inch, EP = early petal, 100% = full bloom, and PF or a downward arrow = petal fall).

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