

# Arizona

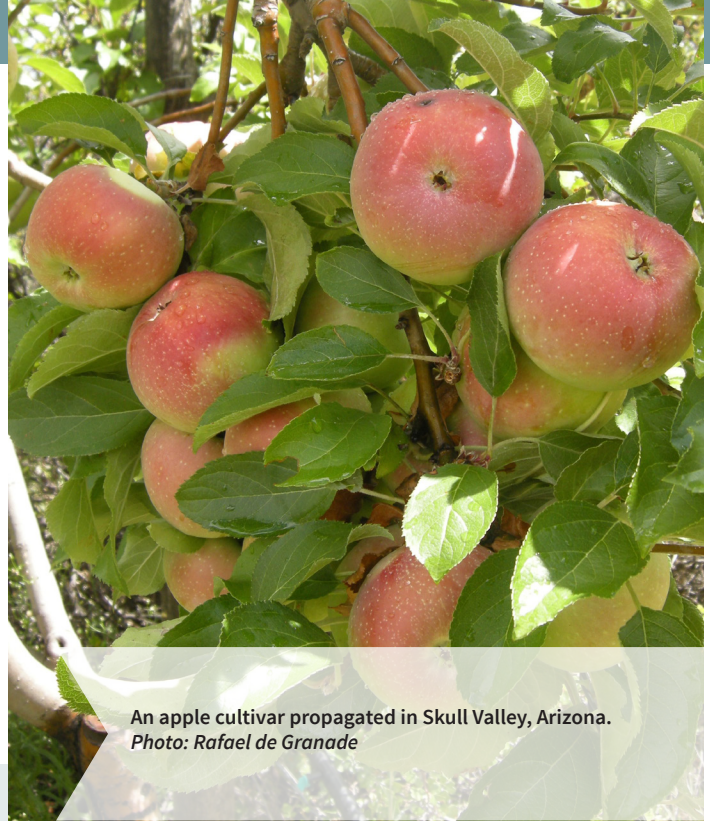
## ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE MANAGEMENT

Incorporating trees that produce edible products often presents challenges for municipalities because of distribution equitability or pest concerns. However, many of the associated “issues” related to edible trees can be easily overcome when information is readily available. This project has encouraged the LEAF Network to produce materials that help bridge this information gap, and further encourages the use of edible trees in public spaces (public parks, right-of-ways, and neighborhood greenways) as well as on private property.

Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) has partnered with other nonprofits and educational institutions to facilitate the development of a statewide LEAF Network (Linking Edible Arizona Forests; <http://leafnetworkaz.org/>). The LEAF Network’s mission is to link people with the benefits of edible trees and support edible trees with people’s stewardship. A secondary benefit is that people have a better understanding of the value and benefit that all trees provide to individuals, neighborhoods, and to the very fabric of American culture.

The LEAF Network connects people and places, allowing for the exchange of ideas and best management designs and practices as they relate to the use of edible trees in the Southwestern United States. Through major funding provided by the USDA Forest Service, the LEAF Network has produced an edible tree guide, *Growing Edible Arizona Forests, An Illustrated Guide*, that helps people learn, choose, plant, care for, and harvest edible trees. The *Guide* provides detailed illustrations and text that describe climate considerations as they pertain to the survival and production rates for trees that produce edible products.

A wide variety of Southwest-appropriate trees have been identified and described in the *Guide*, including both native and non-native cultivars used by multiple cultures over time. Through the common language of trees, the LEAF Network makes connections between traditional cultures and the use of edible native trees (like mesquite, ironwood and oaks) to the harvesting and preparation techniques brought to the United States by refugees and immigrants (like for date palms, jujubes, pomegranates, Seville oranges, and quince).



An apple cultivar propagated in Skull Valley, Arizona.  
Photo: Rafael de Granade

The LEAF Network serves as a hub for a much broader understanding of trees in both urban and rural landscapes, which will ultimately lead to healthier trees and more livable communities.

Trees provide multiple benefits to people, including well-known benefits like oxygen production and storm water retention, as well as the less known benefits of edible products (especially from native trees like mesquite and ironwood). Use of edible trees in communities can add value by creating a gathering place where people come to care for and to harvest, as well as create a sense of place for refugee or immigrant populations that recognize a tree from their homeland.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management  
Urban/Community Forestry Program  
<https://dffm.az.gov/forestry-community-forestry/urban-community-forestry>