Gary Crawford: [00:00:00] You are in the supermarket or the farmer's market and you buy some nice plums to take home but maybe you wonder if you might could grow your own plums. Is it possible.

Kayla Johnson: [00:00:08] Yes.

Gary Crawford: [00:00:08] Yes. Well that's good enough for me round at the Agriculture Department's Farmer's Market in Washington as the Veg-U-cation tent Veg-U-cator Kayla Johnson. And I assume you mean, Kayla, yes, if we have the yard space and all of that to accommodate a couple of small trees right.

Kayla Johnson: [00:00:24] Yes.

Gary Crawford: [00:00:25] Yes. Well I can see this is going to be an interesting interview.

Kayla Johnson: [00:00:28] Yes.

Gary Crawford: [00:00:29] OK Kayla! Now I've read that no matter where you live there's a plum tree variety out there that will do well for you so what's the first step for us?

Kayla Johnson: [00:00:37] Go to your local nursery to find the best variety for your region. Because there are so many different varieties.

Gary Crawford: [00:00:44] Some people recommend that you buy two trees of different varieties because many of them require cross pollination to produce fruit although there are some that produce on their own. As to where in your yard to plant a plum tree?

Kayla Johnson: [00:00:55] It's going to require well drained fertile soil and full sun.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:00] Try not to plant down in low areas because frost is more likely to settle down in lower places and a late spring frost can really do damage to your plum trees when they are trying to bloom and set fruit it happens even to professionals like Brad Woerner of Woerner's Orchards in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:18] The east coast had a very late freeze this year and Brad told us.

Brad Woerner: [00:01:21] We lost about half of our plums this year due to the freeze. Luckily the tops of the trees we don't trim any of our plum trees this year because all of our farms are at the top of the tree is where it was. They weren't quite as far along on the blooming stage.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:35] And not as close to the ground so you need well-drained soil knocked down in a hollow and if possible in a place somewhat sheltered from the wind which can also cause problems when you plums. Water the trees heavily every week during their first growing season keep watering in mid-October so the trees got enough moisture for the winter.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:50] Now Brad you heard mentioned trimming Kayla says yes plum trees require less work and attention than some fruit trees but pruning those trees every year very important.

Kayla Johnson: [00:02:01] Prune your trees in the spring when they're young and in the summer
when they're older. And you should follow the printed directions depending on which variety you choose because some of them might require a little more if the branches are a little heavier for the fruit or some might require less.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:02:17] Now the pros do a lot more work on their plum trees because their living depends on maximizing production. So Brad Woerner says.

**Brad Woerner:** [00:02:25] You've got to fertilize them four times a year you trim them three times a year. You've got to thin plums because there are too many plums on the tree. They'll be on there like grapes and they need to be about three inches apart. So you can get good size and good color flavor.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:02:39] But as a backyard project chances are you won't have to do everything the Woerners do for their plum trees. There's a lot more we haven't talked about but talk to your local nursery experts for the types of plum trees for your area. There's lots of online information out there too. Of course contact your local ag extension office they can put you in touch with their experts in Washington. Gary Crawford for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.