

# הקשר היהודי שלך

## Your Jewish Connection - Add a Piece of Israel to Your Garden

Brought to you by the TBA Lifelong Learning Committee – By Linda S Trapasso

Israel is described as “a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey” (Deut. 8:8). These seven species were the staple foods consumed in Israel during biblical times.

The praise of the Land of Israel for its fruit trees is a deep environmental lesson in itself, testifying to the importance of nature and trees in Judaism. The Torah paints the shade of the grape vine and fig tree as a metaphor for the idyllic world peace we await. Our ultimate trust in G-d is expressed through the serene environment where “Judah and Israel will sit securely, each person under his vine and fig tree...” (I Kings 5:5).



The flowering and fruiting of the seven species take place during the period between Pesach and Shavuot, a season depending on the balance between contradictory forces of nature. It is characterized by climatic contrasts - dryness and heat on one hand - cold, wet storms on the other.

Though not one of the seven species, one of the earliest spring plants to flower in Israel is almond trees. They have wonderful pink blossoms and scent. I'm not sure you can plant almond trees in New Hampshire, but I do know you can plant a flowering almond bush. It, too, has wonderful pink blossoms reminiscent of almond trees. Go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and search on flowering almond and you'll find many sources for procuring your own bush(es).

Another fruit tree popular in Israel is the peach tree. There are some hardy varieties that grow in New England ([peaches.pdf](#)). Apples and citrus are also popular in Israel. We certainly can grow apple trees here, but citrus trees probably do best indoors in containers. Check out [home-features/citrus](#) for information on growing citrus in containers.

One of the seven species and the national tree of Israel is the olive tree. Olive trees are evergreens and mature slowly. Which makes them perfect for container gardening here in New Hampshire. When it's warm, the olive tree can be outside. With a container, you can move the olive tree inside for the colder months. You can check out how it's done in New Jersey ([olive-trees-new-jersey.html](#)) and then go to [growing-olive-trees.html](#) for more information.



Another of the seven species perfect for container gardening is the fig tree. My paternal grandfather had a fig tree which produced wonderful fruit. When the cold weather came, he would bury the tree to protect it from the chilly temperatures and snow. In the spring, he would uncover it and the tree thrived for many years. You may or may not have luck with the “bury method”, as this author describes ([growing-fig-trees#](#)), so growing in a container is a better choice.

Grapes are another of the seven species. Go here to read the story of the Concord grape: [mr-bulls-perfect-grape](#). If you're interested in growing grapes, go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), search grapes in New England.

When I was in Israel many years ago, I was surprised to discover that one of my favorite flowering plants, lantana, grows everywhere in Israel! Here you can find them in the spring and summer at most gardening centers. They often have variegated colors, pretty and festive. Hang some lantanas around your deck or porch to brighten things up.



Did you know that cyclamen is the national flower of Israel? Here in New Hampshire, you can grow cyclamen indoors and outdoors. Generally we see these plants in the fall and keep them indoors through the colder months.



Hardier varieties exist that bloom outdoors in spring and summer. For more details about gardening with cyclamen, go here: [cyclamen.htm](#).

Now's the perfect time to think about your garden and how you can add a piece of Israel to it.

