

Fruit Picker interview questions

careertips.com.au: common questions and what they're really testing

What to expect

Interviews for fruit picking roles are usually short and practical. Employers want to know you can work safely, keep up with the pace and turn up reliably. You may be asked about your physical fitness, your experience with different fruit and how you handle weather or equipment.

- **Practical and technical:** Questions about how you pick different fruit, use tools and maintain quality.
- **Safety:** Questions about ladder use, manual handling and following orchard rules.
- **Behavioural:** Questions about past harvest work, teamwork and meeting deadlines.
- **Physical fitness and reliability:** Questions about working outdoors, stamina and attendance.

The interview is often a short conversation on site or at a labour hire office. It may include a practical demonstration of picking or a walk through the orchard. You might speak with a grower, farm manager or crew leader. The focus is on your ability to do the job safely and consistently, not on formal qualifications.

1. Can you describe how you select fruit for picking?

Why they ask

This tests your ability to judge ripeness and avoid damaging the crop, which is central to the role.

How to structure your answer

Walk through the steps you take for a specific fruit, covering colour, firmness and how you detach it.

Example answer

"I look for fruit that is fully coloured, firm and easy to detach with a gentle twist. For apples, I check the background colour and give a slight lift to see if the stem separates easily. For stone fruit, I feel for softness and check for any blemishes. I always use clean hands and avoid pulling, which can damage the spur."

2. Tell me about a time you had to work quickly to meet a harvest deadline.

Why they ask

Employers need pickers who can keep up the pace without sacrificing quality when time is tight.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation, the task, the action you took and the result.

Example answer

"During a cherry harvest, rain was forecast for the afternoon. Our crew was asked to pick as much as possible before the weather turned. I stayed focused, kept my picking bag organised and worked steadily without bruising the fruit. We filled all the bins before the rain arrived, and the fruit was sent to the packhouse that day."

3. What would you do if you noticed a piece of fruit that looked diseased or damaged?

Why they ask

This shows whether you understand quality control and disease prevention in an orchard.

How to structure your answer

Assess the situation, state your immediate action, then explain how you would report it.

Example answer

"I would not pick it. I would leave it on the tree or place it in the reject bin if one is provided. I would inform my supervisor or crew leader so they can check nearby trees for signs of disease or pests. It's important to prevent the spread and keep the harvest clean."

4. How do you stay safe when working on a ladder or hydraulic platform?

Why they ask

Safety is a top priority on any orchard, and this checks your awareness of common hazards.

How to structure your answer

List the precautions you take before and during the task, including equipment checks and body positioning.

Example answer

"Before climbing, I check the ladder is stable and on level ground. I maintain three points of contact and never overreach. On a hydraulic platform, I wear a harness if required and keep tools secure. I also make sure I'm not working alone if the task is risky, and I follow all orchard safety rules."

5. This work is outdoors in all weather and can be physically demanding. How do you manage that?

Why they ask

Picking requires stamina and self-care, so employers want to know you can handle the conditions.

How to structure your answer

Describe your practical strategies for hydration, sun protection, pacing and rest.

Example answer

"I am used to physical work. I stay hydrated, wear appropriate clothing like a hat and sunscreen, and take short breaks when needed to keep my energy up. I pace myself and focus on steady work rather than rushing. I also make sure I eat well and get enough sleep during harvest."

6. Why do you want to work as a fruit picker?

Why they ask

This reveals your motivation and whether you are likely to commit for the whole season.

How to structure your answer

Give a genuine reason that connects to the work, then link it to your reliability.

Example answer

"I enjoy working outdoors and being part of a team that produces food for people. I like the variety of harvest work and the satisfaction of seeing a full bin at the end of the day. I am reliable and I understand that harvest is a busy time, so I am committed to seeing the season through."