The book- “Fruit production in Ethiopia” is the first one to appear dedicated to this subject in Ethiopia. It presents a wealth of knowledge regarding growing fruit crops. Overall, the book is organized in 19 chapters illustrated with figures and tables, glossary of technical terms and an index. The orderliness of the book chapters conforms to an academic curriculum, starting from general principles and practices of horticulture and/or fruits to specific fruit crops.

Specifically, the Chapter 1 is devoted to discussing the operational definitions, scientific boundaries, classifications, and the importance of horticulture at large and fruits in particular to society. This discussion is preceded by a brief account of present status, problems and prospects of fruit production in Ethiopia. The success of fruit tree growth and development depends very much on the planting material, produced either by seeds or sexual methods (Chapter 2), and vegetative or asexual methods (Chapter 3). The sexual mode of reproduction is the principal means by which biological variation is generated (through recombination) while propagation that circumvents the sexual mechanism (asexual, or vegetative, propagation) results in true-to-type or no genetic changes. Hence, the principles, techniques, and advantage and disadvantage of each technique and their best time of use are discussed in detail on chapters two and three. Moreover, how and where such planting materials are raised in their early stage at the nursery is crucial; therefore, Chapter 4
is devoted to the principles and practices of nursery establishment and management. Just as in locating a greenhouse, a nursery site should be selected after careful analysis, considering both economic and environmental factors. However, since production is largely under open-air environments (i.e., not controlled like a greenhouse), the factors are more critical for nursery than when considering the location of a greenhouse. These factors and management required at the nursery are discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Planting a fruit orchard is a long-term investment, usually taking 1 – 4 years to bear a commercial crop and then continuing economic production for another 8 – 30 years. Thus, it needs thorough planning, site selection and preparation that go into it. Any mistakes committed during planning and site selection reflect greatly on the orchard production, productivity, and long tree life. Once an orchard site is selected and fruit trees are planted, appropriate management of fruit trees (watering, fertilization, pruning, training and pest and disease management) is vital. Thus, Chapter 5 details the factors associated with orchard establishment and fruit trees planting after care. The section of the book focusing on general fruit crops production is rounded out with a discussion on harvest and postharvest handling of fruit crops (Chapter 6).

Post-harvest physiologists distinguish three stages in the life span of fruits: maturation, ripening, and senescence. Maturation is indicative of the fruit being ready for harvest. At this point, the edible part of the fruit is fully developed in size, although it may not be ready for immediate consumption. Ripening follows or overlaps maturation, rendering the produce edible, as indicated by taste. Senescence is the last stage, characterized by natural degradation of the fruit, as in loss of texture, flavor, etc. (senescence ends at the death of the tissue of the fruit). The instant a fruit is separated from its parent plant, it begins to deteriorate. Post-harvest handling and treatment (cleaning, cooling, sorting, packaging, storing, processing) largely determines the final fruit quality. While chapters seven to eighteen cover botany and production practices of major individual fruits (citrus, banana, grapes, avocado, mango, papaya, pineapple, guava, passion fruit, strawberry, apple, pear, peach and plum). Apart from these major fruit crops, a brief description of some of the economically viable but currently underutilized fruit species in Ethiopia are highlighted on chapter nineteen.

Though fruit industry is relatively new to Ethiopian agriculture system, promising progress has been made during the last ten years as due emphasis has been given by the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to develop research and development strategies in horticulture at large and fruit production in particular. Since then information regarding fruit-culture has been published in different research journals. It is essential, however, to go through this information to use it for successful orcharding, which is practically difficult since the information is scattered. Moreover, reference and/or textbooks in horticulture are written by foreign scientists and are more relevant to foreign conditions. Nevertheless, there is lack of readily available or standard references and/or textbooks relevant to the local conditions of the Ethiopian tertiary level agricultural education institutions, which have left scientists and practitioners in the field of horticulture handicapped as they lack practical and locally pertinent guideline and reference.

The publication of the book on “Fruit production in Ethiopia” is, therefore, very timely and demand-oriented. Its contents have focused on and given special consideration to the Ethiopian situation. It is written based on decades of teaching and research experience of the authors as well as compilation of others’ research and data, which makes it a reliable source of information and a valuable contribution to the literature on fruit-culture. The authors have made a commendable job in writing this book by incorporating state of the art of fruit-culture with due emphasis to the local conditions, while discussing the overall fruit husbandry, cultivation of major tropical, subtropical, and temperate fruits as well as under-and un-exploited fruit crops. As pointed out by the authors, the information of the book is useful as a reference for under- and post-graduate students of horticulture, fruit growers, nurserymen, subject matter specialists, and development and extension workers engaged in the field of fruit-culture.

Overall, the book is comprehensive, well-illustrated, timely and demand-driven reference guide for teaching and practical orcharding purposes. Nevertheless, the account on temperate fruits and under-utilized fruit crops of tropical and subtropical origin is brief and shallow in depth and breadth, which can be made the subject of detailed study for further utilization and information generation.