

Bark Grafting

Grafting consists of inserting a SCION (a section of a shoot of a desired variety) to the rootstock of another variety. Generally speaking, apples to apples, pears to pears, etc. Some exceptions are listed on the back of this sheet. There are many types of grafting, classified according to the position of the scion on the rootstock, or the method used to place the scion on the rootstock.

Bark Grafting

Bark grafting is a relatively easy and very successful method done only in the spring after the bark begins to slip and the buds are opening. In our area this normally at the end of March through mid-April.

Selection and Storage of Scion Wood

branches from last years growth must be collected from disease free trees during the dormant season (preferably January). Grafting can only be successful with leaf buds not fruit buds. Apples have more fruit buds near the ends of new growth, some other fruits have more fruit buds at the beginning of new growth. So the mid-section is the best place to insure leaf buds. The scion wood is cut in 12" to 18" lengths, covered with damp (not wet) moss, sawdust, or paper-toweling and placed in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator. Storage temperature just above freezing is best. If buds start to grow the scion wood **cannot** be used for grafting.

Required Tools and Materials

- Scion wood
- Hammer
- Grafting compound
- White latex paint
- Knife
- Wire nails, #19 flat head 3/4" long or #20, 1" for thick bark

Grafting Procedure-Scion preparation

Cut 1/2" from bottom of each scion.

Finished scion will have three buds, the lowest bud will be the outside bud.

Make outside diagonal cut a little below and opposite the outside bud.

Make inside diagonal cut little below and opposite the outside bud.

Remove excess scion wood by slightly angled cut 1/4" above top bud.

If not immediately ready to insert scion on the rootstock, place scion in wet cloth to prevent any drying.

Rootstock Preparation

If the branch on which the scion is to be placed has been previously cut off, it must be cut off another 2" to have a fresh live end exposed.

The Graft

There must be a scion every 2" around the circumference of the rootstock. This is necessary to form a callus to eventually grow over the exposed rootstock. Later all growing scions but one will be removed.

- 1.) Make two vertical cuts in the bark, the width of the scion apart and just long enough so you can push the scion in without splitting the bark. Raise the strip between the cuts and remove 1/2"
- 2.) Insert the scion under the bark so only a little of the inside cut surface extends above the stock. The front strip must completely cover the outside diagonal cut.
- 3.) Drive upper nail into scion. Drive lower nail through bark and scion. Be very careful not to damage the lower bud or the strip.
- 4.) A scion should be inserted approximately every 2" of the outside circumference of the stock.
- 5.) Cover all exposed cuts and top of stock with grafting compound. Be careful not to cover the lowest (outside bud). Cover the tops of the scions.
- 6.) Paint scions and stock with the white latex mixture. This is necessary to prevent sunburn.

Post Care

Frequently check to see if grafting wax is showing signs of cracking. If so, cover with more wax. In mid summer, select the strongest scion and cut back all others about in half, so most of the energy goes to the strong scion, yet, some leaves are left to make food. Next year cut back secondary scions to insure the callus is developing all around. When a callus (bark growth) is well established then all but one scion can be totally removed (may be 2 years).

Exceptions Japanese plums onto European plums, but not the reverse. Almonds onto peach, Apricot onto plum (Marianna 2624) rootstock.

***Note** Some scion stock may be so small that nails are not practical. Two wraps of narrow gardeners plastic tape will suffice. It will be necessary in two months to slit the knot as the tape could strangle. This, all must be covered with grafting compound.

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