

Apple Tree

GROWING INSTRUCTIONS

We supply well developed 'feathered maiden' trees which will be between 18 months and two years old when you receive them. The trees are of 'professional' quality and are from the same plantations as those which supply the best commercial growers. Your trees have thus had every cultural care taken to enable them to establish rapidly and crop heavily in their early years. Your trees will have been carefully pruned and root pruned on the nursery before despatch and so are perfect for planting straight away.

Position

Fruit trees will grow well on most soil types provided the ground is not waterlogged. Plenty of sunlight is essential however and areas of deep shade should be avoided. Areas that have previously grown fruit should not be used as this removes the risk of 're-plant disease'.

Ground Preparation and Planting

Soil should be well cultivated a few days before planting to at least two spade depths and a generous amount of garden compost or well rotted manure incorporated. A dressing of bone meal at 105-140 gms per sq.m. (3-4oz per sq yd) may also be applied. We advise that your trees are planted as soon as possible after receipt. If this is not possible trees can be kept in a cool place such as a garden shed for up to a week provided the roots remain moist. If planting is not possible within this time, 'heel' the trees into a sheltered spot in the garden by digging a hole and firming soil over the roots.

When planting into final position a hole should be dug that is around 15cm (6") wider than the spread roots of the tree and deep enough to allow the tree to be comfortably planted at the depth that it was growing on the nursery (a soil mark on the stem should indicate this). Before planting the trees, roots should be soaked for about 4 hours. Plant by placing tree into hole, spreading out the roots. Fill using layers of soil, firming each one with the foot before proceeding with the next. Water in well after planting. Many fruit trees have relatively shallow root systems and we strongly recommend that a high quality stake is used that can be left in place for a number of years. To prevent damage use a purpose made soft tree tie that can be loosened periodically as the tree grows. If a tree stake is used this should be inserted before planting to avoid root damage.

Aftercare

Water regularly in hot dry weather and keep the area around your trees free from weeds.

Pruning

The basis of all pruning is to maintain a balanced tree with a pleasing shape and a good open structure that allows plenty of light and air to get to the ripening fruits. Poorly placed, damaged and diseased branches should be removed and a constant supply of new branches encouraged as the younger wood is far more productive and gives fruit of the highest quality.

The 'bush' is probably the most widely seen style of apple and, well grown, can be a highly productive method. The aim is to arrive at an open centred tree with a maximum of six main branches which form the 'backbone' of the tree for life. Sub branches of these will bear most of the fruit and these are removed, allowing replacements to grow, as they reach about four years old. This will maintain the bulk of the tree in a 'young' state to ensure maximum productivity. Bush trees can be planted about 3-3.5m (10-12') apart. Aim to limit the height of the tree to around 2.4m (8'). and expect your tree to be yielding up to 22kg (50lb) of fruit once it reaches 5 years of age.