

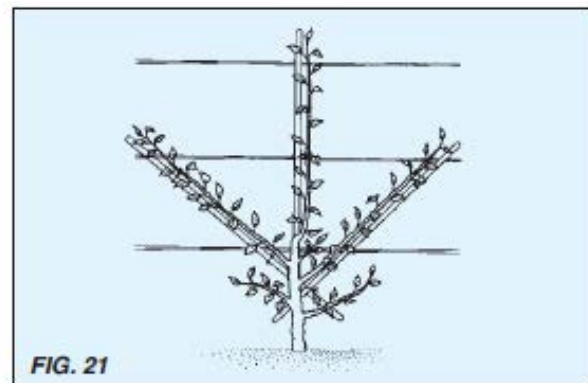
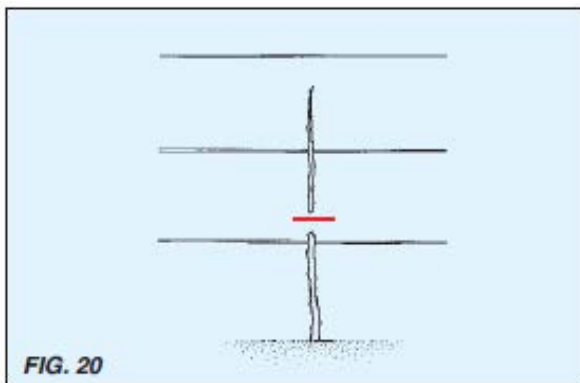
GUIDE TO PRUNING & TRAINING ESPALIERS & STEPOVERS

Espaliers can be trained against fences or walls or on freestanding posts and wires. They consist of a central stem with a series of horizontal tiers of branches at intervals of 38-45cm (15-18in). Stepovers are in effect one tier espaliers which are trained along wires at the front of a border to form an original and attractive edging. Both espaliers and stepovers require a space of 3.6m (12ft) wide. For information on planting and supporting trained trees click [here](#).

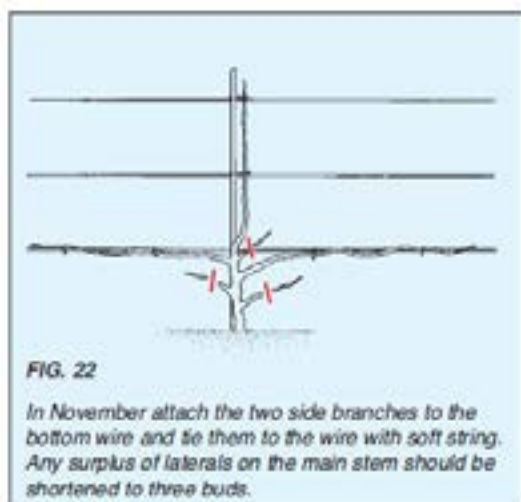
FORMATIVE PRUNING

FIRST YEAR

It is best to start off with a maiden whip (a one year old tree without side shoots). In April following planting cut back the central stem to a bud at about 37cm (15in) from the ground, ensuring there are two more good buds below on either side facing parallel with the wall. These will form the first two ribs (see fig. 20). In the summer, three shoots should be produced. The topmost should be trained vertically to a cane and the other two to canes at 45°. Any other shoots should be summer pruned to three leaves from the basal cluster of leaves, in early to mid-August (see fig. 21).



Where a feathered maiden is used, if there are two suitably placed side shoots one on each side at around 37-45cm (15-18in) from the ground, these can be used to form the first tier and tied horizontally. The leader should be pruned to three good buds at 37-45cm (15-18in) above this tier. All other side shoots should be shortened to about three buds. Using a feathered maiden effectively saves one year of training but the results might not be so good.



SECOND YEAR

In the second winter the leader should be pruned back to the second wire to three good buds (normally 37-45cm [15-18in] above the first tier). The side branches should be lowered to the horizontal (see figs. 22 & 23). With stepover trees where only one tier is required the main stem leader can be removed in late spring.

For espaliers the second horizontal tier should be trained in the same way as in the summer of the first year. Any other laterals should be summer pruned to three leaves from the basal cluster of leaves if they arise from the main stem and one leaf from the basal cluster if they arise from

an existing spur. This process is repeated until the required number of tiers has been produced (see figs. 24-26).

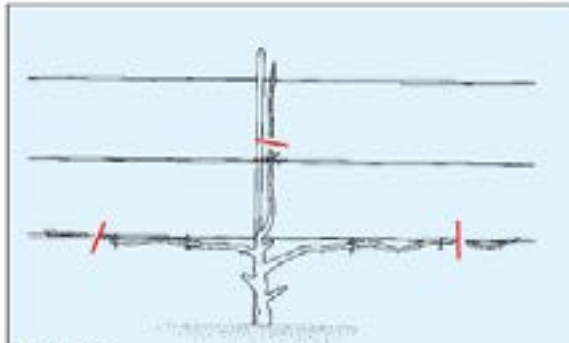


FIG. 23

At the same time, prune back the main stem leader to within 45cm (18in) at the middle wire, ensuring that three good buds are left to form the main leader and two new horizontal branches. If the side branches have not grown well, they should be cut back to one third to downward pointing buds.

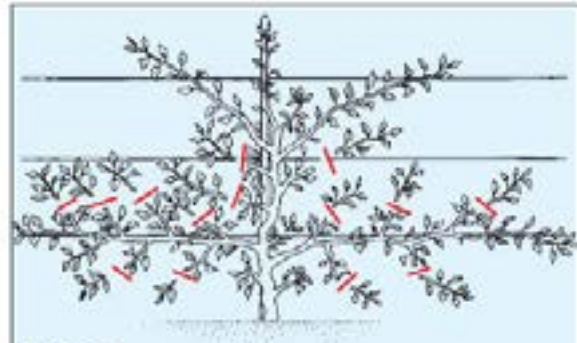


FIG. 24

From July to September, the second tier of branches are trained in the same way as in the previous year. Any growths arising from the main side branches should be pruned back to three or four leaves above the basal cluster. Growth arising from the main stem should be shortened back to three leaves.

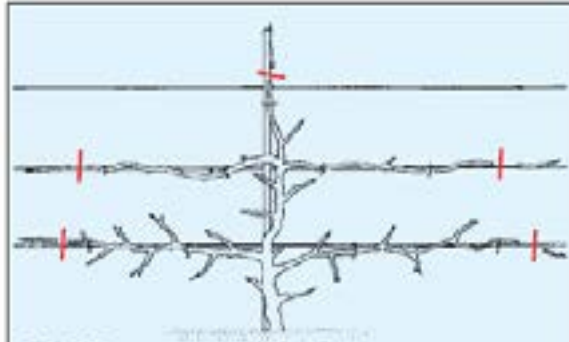


FIG. 25

In the autumn cut back the main stem leader to within 45cm (18in) of the uppermost side branch, ensuring that three good buds are left to form both a new leader and two horizontal branches. Continue as before.



FIG. 26

In late spring, when the last of the tiers have been formed and the tree has covered the space allotted to it, the new terminal growths of the vertical and horizontal branches should be cut back to their origins. Thereafter the side branches should be pruned as if they were cordons.