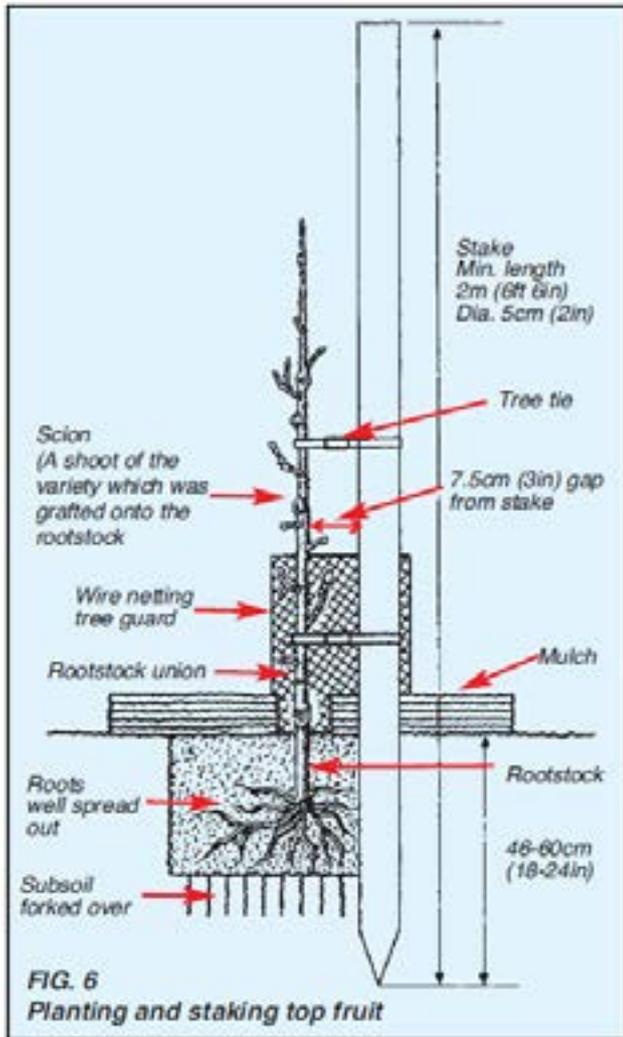


Guide to Planting & Staking Top Fruit

Correct planting and staking is important. Planting can be carried out between November and early April for bare-rooted trees provided the ground is not waterlogged or frozen. Container-grown trees can also be planted in the summer months but care should be taken that they are well watered. The ground should be well prepared beforehand for planting (click here for details on soil preparation).

MINARETTES, BUSH & PYRAMID TREES



A stake should be driven or planted 45cm (18in) into the ground. For Minarettes and pyramids the stake should be 1.5-1.8m (5-6ft) out of the ground and for bush trees 60-90cm (2-3ft). Use a telescopic tree stake made of 100% anti-corrosive materials (available from Ken Muir) or a pressure treated stake of minimum length 2 metres (6ft 6in) and 5cm (2in) in diameter. The tree should be planted on the side of the stake away from the prevailing wind.

A hole should be taken out wide and deep enough for the roots to be spread out evenly. Plenty of well-rotted manure, compost or peat should be forked into the bottom of the hole (particularly if on heavy or dry soils) and in addition a slow-release fertilizer, such as Vitax Q4 or Osmocote, should be mixed into the soil removed from the hole, at the recommended rate — usually about 105g/m² (3oz/yd²), before the soil is replaced.

The tree should be positioned in the hole 7.5cm (3in) away from the stake and the roots spread out carefully. The tree should be planted at the depth it was in the nursery making sure that the rootstock union is above soil level — usually between 15-30cm (6-12in). The soil should then be firmed thoroughly around the roots.

The tree should be secured to the stake using two ties for Minarettes and pyramids, one near the top of the tree and one about halfway down. For bush trees a tie should be positioned below the top four or five buds or just below the crotch of an older tree. It is best to use a cushion tree tie, which will form a figure of eight around the tree and the stake. If a simple tie is used, then a cushion should be placed between the tree and the stake. The tie should not be over-tightened and some excess should be left for adjustment. Ties should be checked each spring and adjusted or replaced as necessary.

A mulch of manure, compost or straw should be applied around the tree 7.5cm (3in) deep in a 45cm (18in) radius but not touching the stem.

TREES GROWN AGAINST WALLS OR FENCES

When planting trees against walls or fences, a semi-circular hole should be dug and the roots spread out away from the wall. Fan, espalier and cordon trained fruit trees should always be secured to a supporting framework of horizontal wires. These are either fixed to the wall or fence against which the trees are trained, or to a series of posts if they are grown in the open away from a wall. Galvanized wire has traditionally been used, but the 'Gripple Wire Tensioning System' (available from Ken Muir) now provides an alternative and probably the fastest way to support trees and is easy to use and does not rust. [Click here for further details.](#)

For trees trained against a wall or fence horizontal wires should be fixed 5-10cm (2-4in) away from the wall to allow for air circulation. This can be achieved by securing them to wooden battens fixed at 1.5-1.8m (5-6ft) intervals, or lead vine eyes can be used at 1.5-1.8m (5-6ft) intervals, or galvanized screw vine eyes can be used at 1.5-1.8m (5-6ft) intervals — these are particularly suitable for wooden fences. The spacing and gauge of the wires depends on the training system being used.

FANS

Fan-trained trees grown against a wall or fence should be planted about 15cm (6in) away from the wall and slightly inclined towards it. Fan-trained trees require closely spaced wires 15cm (6in) apart with the first wire at 38cm (15in) from the ground. Light straining wire (1.2mm [14 gauge]) is sufficient and straining bolts are not needed.

CORDONS, ESPALIERS & STEPOVERS

Espalier trees grown against a wall or fence should be planted about 15cm (6in) away from the wall and the arms should be secured to horizontal wires using soft string or chainlock ties. Espaliers require heavier wire than fans - 2.5mm (12 gauge) - and should be spaced further apart. Wires for supporting espaliers should be spaced to coincide with the arms, usually at about 38-45cm (15-18in) apart. Three wires are required for supporting cordons and should be spaced at about 60cm (2ft) apart with the first wire 60cm (2ft) from the ground. Stepovers only require one wire 30-60cm (1-2ft) off the ground.

For cordons, stepovers and espaliers, straining bolts should be used so that tension can be maintained over the years. 15cm (6in) straining bolts are suitable and can be fed through holes drilled in battens or posts, or can be slotted through screw vine eyes.

Oblique cordons should be planted out at an angle of about 45°. Care should be taken that the graft union is above soil level and that the scion is uppermost. The trees should be tied using soft string to canes fixed to horizontal wires.

