GUIDE TO TRAINING & PRUNING CORDON FRUIT TREES

PRUNING & TRAINING OF CORDON APPLE & PEAR TREES

Cordons are usually grown as oblique cordons at an angle of about 45° (see fig. 9). They are trained to canes fixed to horizontal wires 60cm (2ft) apart (three wires for a 1.8m [6ft] fence). Cordons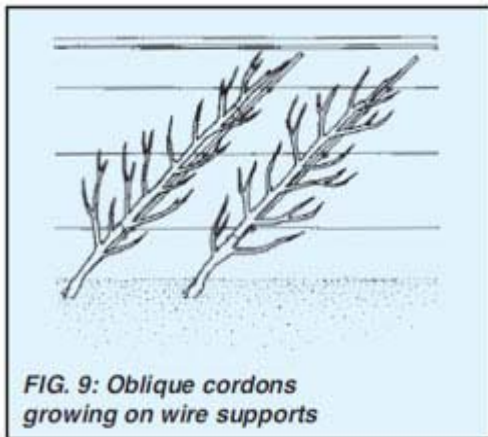 can be trained against fences, walls or on freestanding posts and wires in which case ideally they should be orientated north-south. The tree should be planted with the top of the cordon towards the north so the sun reaches all along its length. If an east-west orientation is unavoidable, the cordon should be inclined towards the east. The tree should be planted at an angle with its scion uppermost; the leader should be pruned by one third to a suitable bud and any side shoots greater than 15cm (6in) in length should be pruned to three or four buds beyond their basal cluster. Formative pruning is largely the same as for Minarette apples and pears (Click here for further information).

FIG. 9: Oblique cordons growing on wire supports

PRUNING & TRAINING OF CORDON STONE FRUITS
(Plums, Gages, Damsons, Cherry Plums & Cherries)

Unlike Minarettes, cordons may need some initial pruning and training. Cordons should be planted at an angle of around 45° with the scion uppermost and should be spaced 75cm-90cm (2½-3ft) apart (see fig.9). They are trained to canes fixed to horizontal wires 60cm (2ft) apart (three wires for a 1.8m [6ft] fence). They should ideally be orientated north-south. The trees should be planted with the top of each cordon inclined towards the north so the sun reaches all along their length. If an east-west orientation is unavoidable the cordons should be inclined towards the east.

Pruning should be delayed until March or April when the leading shoot should be pruned by one third to a suitable bud and any side shoots greater than 15cm (6in) in length should be pruned to three or four buds. Formative pruning is largely the same as for Minarette stone fruits (Click here for further information).

For further information on planting and supporting cordon trees click here