

Your newly grafted tree aftercare guide.

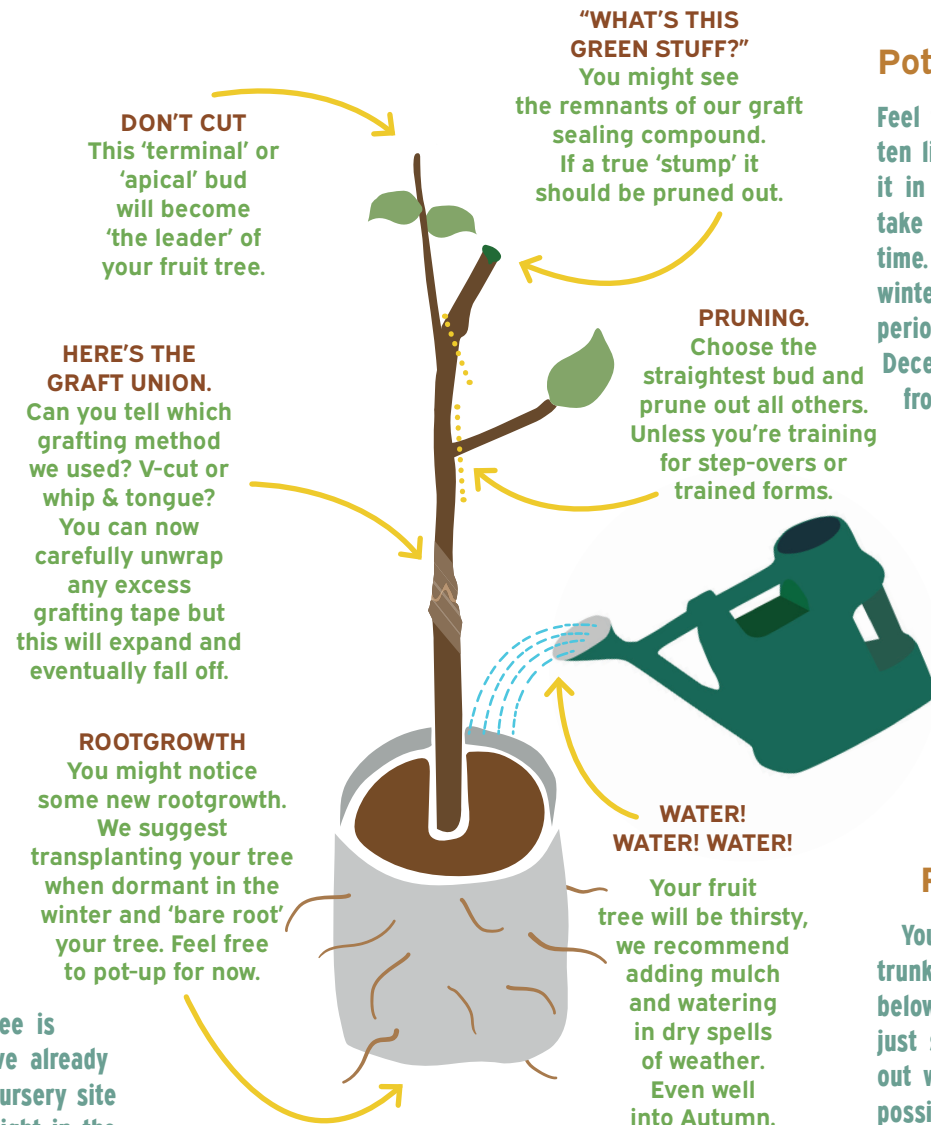
Congratulations you've got a lifetime - and possibly more - of fruit ahead of you. Just look at the original Bramley, it's been going strong since first being sold in 1859. However, you're not out of the woods (or should that be orchard) just yet.

Tree Loving Care:

Firstly, your newly grafted tree needs some T.L.C. (Tree Loving Care). Secondly, over the coming months and years you've got some important steps to ensure that you get the shape of tree that you want through careful 'formative' pruning.

Your tree so far:

First things first. You'll notice your fledgling tree is housed in a small tree nursery bag. It may have already started breaking down. We chose these as our nursery site wasn't quite ready for the saplings to grow straight in the ground. Nor did we want to add to potential plastic waste of potting up thousands of trees... we also didn't have the space at Woodbank for that many pots...yikes!



Potting Up / Plating Out:

Feel free to pot-up your tree until winter transplanting. A ten litre pot or bigger would be ideal and you could leave it in this for another year's growth, while training. Don't take off bag or soil it's already in, this will biodegrade in time. If you want to, you can then transplant your tree this winter to its final resting place. Just wait until the growth period is over and the tree is dormant: usually between December and early March. Carefully remove your tree from the soil, wash the roots and pot-up or plant out.

Watering & Mulch:

Do keep your tree moist, especially in dry/hot weather. A good 'ramial' (woody) mulch is essential for new whips to retain moisture in the soil. To know when to water - as a guide - if you stick your fingers down into the soil, under the woodchip that's breaking down and if that feels dry to the touch, then you know it's time to water. Also don't let the mulch touch the base of the tree, leave a clear donut of bare soil.

Pruning:

Your sapling should have one main 'leader' (central trunk) growing straight up, above the graft union. Anything below this point needs to be pruned off. Or if it's only just starting to bud-break and burst, this can be rubbed out with clean fingers. This will be the case in year one, possibly year two if your tree doesn't put on much height. This leader needs to be ideally trained against a cane to ensure that your tree grows straight and true. If growing in an open space and susceptible to wind you may decide that your tree needs a full stake to keep it in place until mature.

SUMMER GRAFTING TECHNIQUE

Step One:
Cut bud from the bud stick



Step Two:
Remove chosen bud, hold by the petiole and don't touch cut surface



Step Three:
Measure and cut rootstock to same length cut



Step Four:
Slide in your bud using the petiole



Step Five:
Wrap graft carefully and cut tape off after six weeks



Tree Formation

You now have the decision as to where you cut this 'leader' once you have decided what form your tree will finally take. Do you want a traditional 'crown' with 3-5 main branches growing outwards, radiating from your trunk? Perhaps you'll Cordon or Espalier your tree AKA 'trained form'. If you decide this then a great skill to go away and research is 'notching', so that you get branches growing out where you want them.

Fruit trees, especially apples, are easily trained. In days gone by, fruit tree nurseries would use trained forms to spell out their names at the entrances to their sites, they are that trainable! You could also consider a 'step-over' where you train your tree to grow lower to the ground, horizontally. Thus creating a nice edging or border to an area in your garden, allotment or greenspace. You really can let your creativity take over here, bend your tree to your will and shape to your desire: arches, multi-stemmed, fan. You get to decide and we'd love you to send us pictures in the years to come of your heritage fruit trees.

So for now you need to train that one leading shoot ('the leader') and not make any heading cuts, i.e. removal of the top-most or 'terminal' bud. Removing side shoot growth is especially key if you want a taller tree with a crown. Note that all our apples and pears have been grafted onto either MM106 or Quince A rootstock. So their possible eventual height could be 3.5-4m plus in size with the equivalent width of canopy. So remember that fruit trees like light, air and space around them. That's unless you're going for one of the trained forms already mentioned.

Labelling & Signage

While your tree should have a robust nursery label this will in time outgrow your tree or break. We recommend using your imagination and creativity to create a robust tag with the variety name of your tree e.g. Ashmead Kernal. Especially if you're taking home more than one variety. This means that you or anyone who may care for your tree in the future knows what it is. That will help should we come knocking one day asking if we can take scions to propagate more of the same variety.

These labels and signs can be hung from the tree, as long as they don't restrict tree growth or damage the bark. Or perhaps create a hand-painted sign or etch some metal to live at the base of your tree. Use your creativity and let us know what you've done.

Aftercare & Pruning

There are a myriad of free resources available and we'd recommend the following sites. If you've really got the bug why not consider finding out where your nearest community orchard is?

www.rhs.org.uk

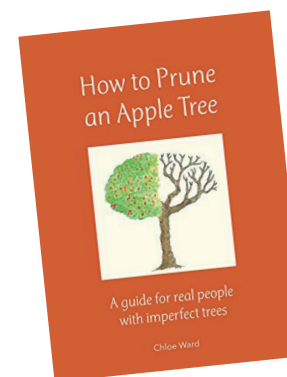
www.theorchardproject.org.uk

www.ptes.org

Plus: Look out for further fruity training opportunities at:
www.kindling.org.uk

More Information.

If your tree does lose it's way, a great book is "How to Prune an Apple Tree. A guide for real people with imperfect trees" by Chloe Ward. It's a short read and will guide you in taking further care of this and any other fruit tree your come across at home or in the wild.



What's next?

You can keep up to date with The Agroforestry Team and even download a copy of this guide at:

www.kindling.org.uk/agroforestry-project

We may even come knocking on your inbox one day should we need to collect fresh scion material to graft more of the variety that's in your care.

We have loved creating these fruit trees for you and we hope that they give you many years – if not generations of fruit – stories and maybe the odd apple pie.

Green Recovery Challenge Fund

