

Caring for your new apple tree

Your heritage apple tree was grafted back in March 2024 onto a M27 Dwarfing rootstock, meaning it will be a small tree with a maximum height of 6ft. Ideal for a small space. This care plan will help you give your tree the best start - with a little patience, in a few years you'll be rewarded with a good crop of apples year after year.

Planting

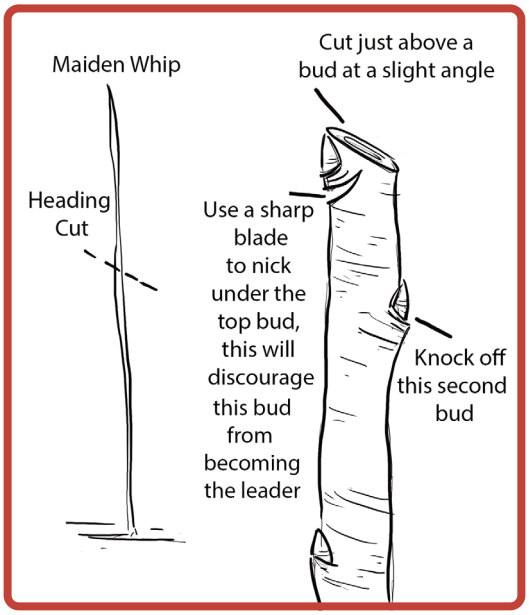
Your tree has been provided in a small pot, and will need to be replanted - preferably before Early March while it's still dormant. You can plant your tree in the ground or in a pot. Container-grown trees will require closer supervision throughout the year.

Planting in the ground: Plant in a sunny but less exposed spot, with some compost, and mulch after. Your tree will not like a waterlogged area so make sure it's free draining. Stake your tree for support.

Planting in a container: Look for a pot that's around 60cm in diameter or with a volume of 40-60 litres. Avoid containers with a narrow base which can be blown over easily. Put some large pebbles or broken clay pieces at the bottom for drainage. Pure compost will dry out too quickly, so use normal soil and include 20-30% grit. You can use a decorative mulch to help keep moisture in. Stake your tree for support. Over Winter and early Spring, protect from frost by wrapping your container in sacking or bubble wrap and raising it off the ground. You can also store your potted tree in a frost-free garage or shed, but don't bring it into a heated house.

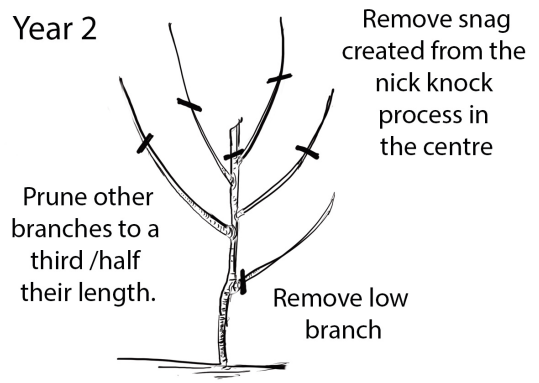
Pruning - Year 1

- Formative prune your apple tree when it's completely dormant; we recommend February.
- Before you make the heading cut you will need a clear stem of 40-80cm to create a bush form for your small tree. If your whip isn't tall enough, prune off some lower lateral branches to encourage more upright growth and wait another year before making the cut.
- When formative pruning your maiden whip, cut two buds above where you want 4 or 5 framework branches to develop. This will be your heading cut. (see diagram on the right)
- To prevent the top bud becoming the leader and encouraging branching out at a wider angle use a sharp blade to nick under the top bud and remove the second bud completely.



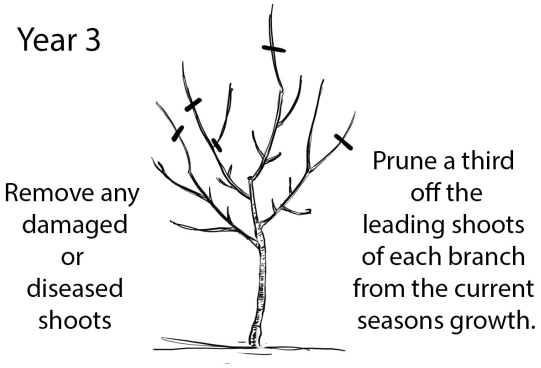
Pruning - Year 2

- Remove the snag created from the nick knocking process. (see diagram on the right)
- Look at the framework branches, 4 or 5 evenly spread branches is ideal.
- Remove any branches which are damaged, cause congestion in the centre of the tree, or are too low.
- Prune all other branches between a third and half their length cut back to a bud that is facing outwards for vertical branches and upwards for horizontal branches.



Pruning - Year 3

- Remove any branches which are damaged, cause congestion in the centre of the tree, or are too low.
- Remove any damaged or diseased shoots.
- Prune the leading shoots of each branch by around a third of this current season's growth. Cut back to a bud that faces the direction of preferred growth.



Branches that grow upwards tend to grow more and fruit less.

Branches that grow outwards tend to grow slowly and fruit more.

Branches that grow downwards tend to grow slow and fruit prolifically.

General care

Trees planted in containers will take a little more work than those planted in the ground. In either case, it's a good idea to regularly check your tree for signs of pests and make sure it stays secure with a large enough stake. Some general-purpose fertiliser at the start of the growing season (early Spring) will help provide the nutrients your tree needs.

Container-grown trees will need to be watered at least twice a week from Spring-Autumn and daily in hot, sunny weather to make sure the soil doesn't dry out. It's a good idea to replenish the soil every few years, and move to a bigger pot if you feel it's needed - this should be done in the dormant period. You may wish to anchor your stake to a nearby fence if you're worried about the tree falling over in windy conditions.

Pollination

The label on your pot will say whether your variety of apple tree is partially self-fertile, not self-fertile or a triploid. Partially self-fertile trees may produce some fruit on their own but a pollination partner will help increase the likelihood of a good crop. Those that are not self-fertile will need at least one pollination partner nearby, while triploids need two pollination partners to fruit.

Your label will also tell you the pollination group. Pollination partners need to be another variety of apple tree from the same group or an adjacent one. For example, Beauty of Bath is a group C variety, so pollination partners can be in group B, C or D.

A great option for small spaces is a crab apple in group C, which can be a pollination partner for group B, C or D.

The attached table lists many apple varieties, their groups and uses to help you choose a pollination partner to suit you. For example, if your heritage apple tree is an eater, you might choose a cooking variety. Or you might choose a variety that's ready to harvest earlier or later to have fresh apples for longer.

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Name	Use	Harvest	Pollination Group	Fertility and Tasting Notes
Bountiful	Cooker / Eater	Late Sept	A/B	Long flowering period - will cross pollinate with trees in Groups B & C Fairly sweet
Ballerina Samba	Eater/Cooker/Juice	October	B	Crisp & juicy sweet and sharp
Bardsey Island	Eater/Cooks/Juice	Late Sept	B	Extraordinary lemon scent & has a fine refreshing flavour
Bright Future	Eater	October	B	Excellent flavour with a good balance of sweetness and acidity.
Broadholme Beauty	Cooker / Eater	September - Dec	B	Smooth juicy flesh with sweet flavour
Christmas Pearmain	Eater	Early Oct	B	Reliably Self Fertile Sweet with some richness and sharpness
Core Blimey	Eater	Oct	B	Wonderfully aromatic, juicy and crisp. A highly flavoured Cox that is easier to grow
Egremont Russet	Eater	Late Sept - Early Oct	B	Partially Self Fertile Nutty, delicate flavour, quite sweet
Foxwhelp	Cider	Sept	B	Bitter/sharp flavour
Greensleeves	Eater	Oct	B	Partially Self Fertile. Incompatible with: Lord Lambourne Hard & sharp early season, mellows later with sweetness
Irish Peach	Eater	Mid Aug	B	A good balance of sweetness and acidity
Keswick Codlin	Cooker / Eater	Mid Aug - Sept	B	Partially Self-Fertile A good, tart, 'apple-y' flavour, as it ripens it becomes sweeter, and can then be eaten fresh.
Reverend W Wilks	Cooker	Late Aug - Early Sept	B	Reliably Self Fertile Large juicy acidic apple
Rosette	Eater	Aug	B	Sweet, perfect with a cheese board or in salad
Slack ma Girdle	Cider		B	Crisp, dry, refreshing citrus flavours
Tremletts Bitter	Cider	Early Oct	B	Hard, bittersweet flavour high in tannin.
Admiration	Crab apple		C	Good pollinator
Adams Pearmain	Eater	Early Oct	C	Rich, aromatic and nutty flavour
Allington Pippin	Eater/Cooker	Oct	C	Partially Self-Fertile Aromatic and juicy with bittersweet flavour
Arthur Turner	Cooker	Late Aug - Nov	C	Partially Self-Fertile Sweet – tart flavour good for baking and sauce
Ballerina Flamenco	Eating	Mid-October	C	Excellent flavour with slight tang, crisp and juicy
Beauty of Bath	Eater	Early Aug	C	Good sharp flavour, gets sweeter as it ripens, pick & eat (not a keeper)
Catshead	Cooker	Oct	C	Triploid. Tender, juicy & sweet with a pleasant, acid & slightly perfumed flavour
Charles Ross	Eater / Cooker	Mid Sept	C	Partially Self-Fertile. Sharper at first, sweeter as it matures in storage
Christmas Pippin	Eater	Late Oct	C	Hint of sharpness cuts through honey sweet flesh
Cobra	Eater / Cooker	Sept-Oct	C	Refreshing, acidic & tangy
Coxs Orange Pippin	Eater	Late Sept - Early Oct	C	Incompatible with: Jupiter & Sunset. Crisp, Juicy, subacid, with hints of cherry & anise becoming milder with age
Crispin	Eater	Mid Oct	C	Triploid. Incompatible with: Golden Delicious. Sweet honeyed flavour

Name	Use	Harvest	Pollination Group	Fertility and Tasting Notes
Delcorf	Eater	Late Sept	C	Seriously sweet, complex, fruity, aromatic flavour that hints berries and anise
Discovery	Eater	Late Aug	C	Sweet; hint of strawberry. Good tangy tartness of early varieties: refreshing & crisp
Early Victoria	Cooker	Aug	B / C	Partially Self-Fertile. Long flowering period. Mild flavour, tart and sweet
Elstar	Eater/Juice	Late Oct	C	Pleasantly sweet and sour
Fortune	Eater	Sept	C	Partially Self-Fertile Sweet and citrus aromas
Grenadier	Cooker	Mid Aug	C	Partially Self-Fertile Crisp, floral and fruity
Granny Smith	Cooker / Eater	Late Oct	C	Self-Fertile Crisp, tart and tangy
Herefordshire Russet	Eater	Oct	C	Crisp with pear and citrus notes
James Grieve	Cooker / Eater	Early Sept	C	Partially Self-Fertile Acidic and refreshing, gets sweeter when stored. Good with cheese
Katy	Eater	Early Sept	C	Mild flavour, refreshingly acidic, with a hint of strawberry
Lord Lambourne	Eater	Mid Sept	C	Partially Self Fertile. Incompatible with: Greensleeves. Sweet, aromatic, hint of strawberry
Morgan Sweet	Cider	Sept	B / C	Triploid. Long flowering period. Produced naturally sweet sparkling cider
Norfolk Royal Russet	Eater	Sept	C	Classic English russet flavours, sweet & pear-like, soft-chewy slightly dry flesh
Oaken Pin	Eater	Oct/Nov	C	Rich and aromatic, Juicy, tangy, good balance of sweetness.
Paradice Gold	Eater/Juice	Oct	C	Sweet and crisp
Peasgood Nonsuch	Eater Cooker	Mid Sept	C	Partially Self-Fertile Acid sweet flavour, cooks to a froth.
Red Falstaff	Eater	Early Oct	C	Partially Self-Fertile Dense, crunchy sweet and juicy
Red Windsor	Eater	Oct	C	Sweet, aromatic and honey flavour
Ribston Pippin	Eater	Late Sept - Early Oct	C	Triploid intense flavour, crisp, sweet & aromatic
Rosemary Russet	Eater	Mid-October	C	Firm, juicy, sweet and sour very good flavour
Santana	Eater	Late Sept	C	Powerful, strong sweet and sour flavour
Saturn	Eater	Late Sept	C	Reliably Self-Fertile Very crisp and juicy, sweet and fruity.
Scotch Bridget	Cooker	Early Oct	C	Rich and acidic, good keeper/stores well
Scrumptious	Eater	Sept - Oct	C	Reliably Self-Fertile Sweet, tart flavour
Sops in Wine	Cider/Eater	Aug-Oct	C	Well balanced, aromatic
Spartan	Eater	Early Oct	C	Reliably Self-Fertile Crisp, juicy, sweet with a hint of tartness
Sunset	Eater	Late Sept	C	Reliably Self-Fertile. Incompatible with: Cox's Orange Pippin & Jupiter. Crisp and sweet
Surprise	Eater	Sept	C	Tart, and tannic flavour, over time sweetness develops with floral and berry notes
Tickled Pink	Eater/Cooker	Sept - Oct	C	Tart but pleasantly mild
Tom Putt	Cooker/Cider	Early Sept	C	Triploid Crisp, juicy and sharp, cooks well with a light sweet taste
Worcester Pearmain	Eater	Mid Sept	C	Partially Self-Fertile Can have a delicious sweet strawberry flavour

Name	Use	Harvest	Pollination Group	Fertility and Tasting Notes
Yellow Ingestrie	Eater	Early Sept	C	Subtle sweet taste and juicy
Ashmead's Kernel	Eater / Cider	Early - Mid Oct	D	Triploid Highly aromatic, sweet, yet slightly acidic
Blenheim Orange	Eater / Cooker	Late Sept - Early Oct	D	Triploid Lovely eaten with cheese, nutty, quite sweet taste with a crumbly texture.
Bramley	Cooker	Early Oct	D	Triploid Tart, sour and tangy
Cornish Aromatic	Eater	Dec	D	Quite rich with a hint of pineapple, resistant to many apple diseases
Court of Wick	Primarily Eater	Late Sept	D	Somerset 1790. Intense, juicy, fruity and crisp can be used for juice and cider
Dunkerton's Late	Cider	Early Nov	D	Makes a sweet cider considered by some to qualify for vintage status
Ellisons Orange	Eater	Mid Sept	D	Partially Self-Fertile Complex, crisp and juicy with an intense unique aniseed taste
Fiesta	Eater	Late Sept	D	Partially Self-Fertile Rich, aromatic and sweet
Frederick	Primarily Cider	Mid Oct	D	Makes an aromatic sharp cider can be cooked
Gala	Eater	Oct	D	Sweet to taste, pear like in aroma
Golden Delicious	Primarily Eater	Late Oct	D	Incompatible with: Crispin. Sweet to taste can be dessert or cooked.
Hoary Morning	Eater / Cooker	Early Oct	D	Origin Somerset 1800's. Sweet, sharp, aromatic and juicy
Howgate Wonder	Cooker	Early Oct	D	Partially Self-Fertile Firm, juicy and quite sweet, cooks well
Jonagold	Eater	Mid Oct	D	Triploid Nice balance of sweet and tartness, honey like smell with tangy aftertaste.
Jupiter	Eater	Early Oct	D	Triploid Incompatible with: Coxs Orange Pippin & Sunset. Firm and sharp, strong flavour
King of the Pippins	Eater	Early Oct	D	Partially Self-Fertile Crisp, juicy, aromatic flavour with a hint of nut.
Kingston Black	Cider	Early Nov	D	Makes an intensely fruity bittersweet cider
Lanes Prince Albert	Cooker	Mid Oct	D	Partially Self-Fertile Best apple for tarte tatin, acidic and full flavoured.
Laxton Superb	Eater	Early Oct	D	Partially Self-Fertile Firm, Cox like apple but slightly sweeter
Limelight	Eater	Sept	D	Crisp, rich and refreshing in flavour, very disease resistant.
Lord Derby	Cooker	Late Sept	D	Partially Self-Fertile Excellent Victorian cooker, rich and sharp, makes good puree
Newton Wonder	Cooker	Mid Oct	D	Partially Self-Fertile Sharp, acidic, cooks to a puree
Pitmaston Pineapple	Eater	Early Oct	C / D	Powerful nutty flavour, honey sweet yet also sharp.
Somerset Redstreak	Cider	Oct	D	Makes a refreshing crisp medium cider
Sweet Alford	Cider	Late Oct - Early Nov	D	Makes a lovely fruity cider
Sweet Coppin	Cider	Late Oct - Early Nov	D	Sweet, marginally tannic and slightly tart flavour
Taunton Cross	Eater	Mid Sept	D	Sweet and sharp
Topaz	Eater	Mid Oct	D	Sweet-tart taste with robust spice, acidity, and sugar nuances.
Tydemans Late Orange	Eater	Mid Oct	D	Rich and aromatic, quite sharp

Name	Use	Harvest	Pollination Group	Fertility and Tasting Notes
Winter Gem	Eater	Oct	D	Firm, crisp, aromatic and tasty, with a good balance of sugar and acidity
Annie Elizabeth	Cooker	Nov	E	Partially Self Fertile. Retains shape when cooked and sweeter than other cooking varieties.
Braeburn	Eater	Late Oct	E	Sharp, refreshing with a good balance of sweetness
Browns Apple	Cider	Mid Oct - Early Nov	E	Makes a crisp tangy fruity cider
Red Pixie	Eater	Mid Oct	E	Sweet, mild sharp flavour. Sharp rather than acidic
Old Somerset Russet	Eater	Early Oct	E	Crisp with a sweet/sharp flavour with a hint of pineapple
Ashton Brown Jersey	Cider	Nov	F	Makes a fruity and balanced cider
Major	Cider	Late Sept-Early Oct	F	Makes a full bittersweet vintage cider

Good luck with your new apple tree!

Whether you're looking forward to making pies and crumbles, cider, juice, chutneys... or just enjoying a hand-picked apple straight from the tree, we'd love to know how you're getting on.

Feel free to tag Frome Town Council in your social media posts or send us an email: info@frometowncouncil.gov.uk

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