



How to graft

By Scott Hininger



Any fruit tree can be grafted. First, select some of last year's growth. This has to be dormant wood, in early spring before buds start to swell. Grafting can be onto an existing tree or rootstock, which can be purchased from some nurseries.



The next step is to select the dormant wood to graft either onto another fruit tree or, in this case, some rootstock. The stems need to be close to the same diameter.



Close-up of the grafting wax



There are several methods of cutting grafting wood. This particular method involves straight-angle cuts that match up with the rooting stock.

fruit trees



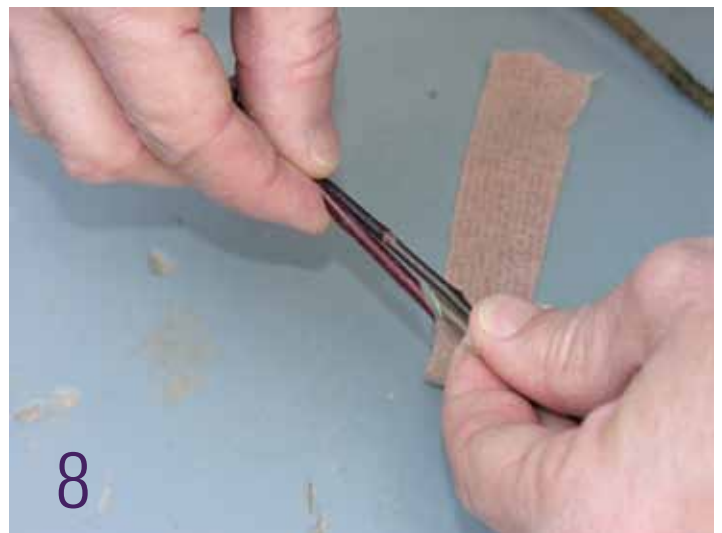
This is the root system of a typical rooting stock material.



Some of the tools needed are a set of sharp hand pruners, a sharp pocketknife or pruning knife, grafting tape or, in this case, stretch wrap and grafting wax is being used. Check with local nurseries or catalogs for these materials.



When working with small grafting material, using another small branch as a splint is helpful to help hold the graft to the rooting stock.



Making sure the two pieces match up properly is a key to having the cambium material – the area under the bark that is green and carries water and nutrients up and down the tree – match up with both pieces.



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The two pieces taped together



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Make sure plenty of grafting wax is used to cover this union to seal out air and to hold in moisture, thus allowing the union to grow together.



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The next step is to plant the rooting stock in a pot. Results may take two to four weeks to show. Keep this union in a cool, shady area so the graft does not dry out.



There are many other methods of grafting fruit trees, and there are some good resources available. They include *The American Horticultural Society Plant Propagation: The Fully Illustrated Plant-by-Plant Manual of Practical Techniques*, edited by Alan Toogood, and *Backyard Fruits and Berries* by Diane E. Bilderback and Dorothy Hinshaw Patent.

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