

Grafting Basics

Join two plants for hardier roots and reliable fruit

DIFFICULTY Moderate–hard
TYPE One-off technique per graft
TIME 10–20 min per graft



DIFFICULTY
Moderate–hard



TIME
10–20 min



COST
Low–moderate



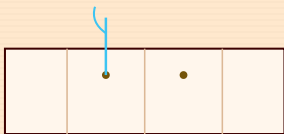
BEST SEASON
Late winter–early
spring (dormant
season)



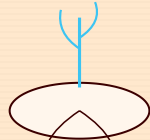
FREQUENCY
As needed

01 Rootstock meets scion

Grafting joins a chosen variety (the scion, for its fruit) onto a separate root system (the rootstock, chosen for vigour, size control, or disease resistance) — this is how most fruit trees are actually produced.



seed tray, correct depth



growing on, or a rooted cutting

02 What you'll need

- A sharp, clean grafting knife
- Compatible rootstock and scion wood
- Grafting tape or rubber strips
- Grafting wax or sealant (optional but helpful)

03 Method

1. Select dormant, healthy scion wood and matching rootstock of a similar diameter.
2. Make clean, matching diagonal cuts on both scion and rootstock.
3. Join the two, aligning the cambium layer (the thin green layer just under the bark) as closely as possible on at least one side.
4. Bind firmly with grafting tape to hold the join under pressure.
5. Seal any exposed cut surfaces with grafting wax to prevent drying out.

04 Troubleshooting

- **Graft fails to take** — cambium layers weren't aligned; re-graft with more careful cuts.
- **Scion dries out** — insufficient sealing; wax all exposed cuts thoroughly.
- **Rootstock suckers outcompete the graft** — remove any growth from below the graft union promptly.
- **Incompatible species** — grafting generally only works within the same or closely related species; check compatibility before starting.

05 Timing & maintenance

BEST TIME	Late winter to early spring, while both rootstock and scion wood are dormant.
DURATION	Success is visible within a few weeks as buds begin to swell and grow.
MAINTENANCE	Remove rootstock suckers regularly; check tape isn't cutting into growing wood as it thickens.
SIGNS OF SUCCESS	New growth emerging from the scion, and the union callousing over cleanly.

06 Tips & variations

PAIRS WELL WITH

Taking Cuttings

COMMON MISTAKES

Misaligning the cambium layers

Leaving grafting tape on too long, girdling the growing union

PRO TIP

Practise the cuts on spare wood before attempting a graft on wood you actually want to keep — the technique takes a few tries to get clean.