



How to

GROW PIP & STONE FRUIT TREES

Fruit trees are easier to grow than most people think. Here's a guide to help you get the best from your trees.

The home orchard is an important part of New Zealand's gardening history, and although the modern home garden is small, the trend for growing your own fruit is still strong. Fruit trees not only produce a rewarding crop each year, but are also great as a decorative garden feature, providing spring flowers, fragrance and summer shade.

How to plant

To give your fruit trees the best start, plant them in winter, while dormant. Dig a hole that is slightly deeper than the root depth and which allows for 20cm clearance around the roots. Mix in some good quality compost with the soil and place some of this mixture in the bottom of the hole, also mix in some slow release fertiliser (**Tui NovaTec Premium**) then place the tree in the hole so that the soil level is the same as it was in the bag. Before filling the hole, firmly position tree stakes (3 stakes in a windy spot, 1 is sufficient in a sheltered spot), partly fill the hole and firmly compact. Continue filling and compact once or twice more. Water well and tie your tree to the stake with soft tree ties.



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Common fruit tree shapes

ESPALIER - A style of fruit tree training that can be particularly decorative. Less common but gaining popularity, especially for smaller gardens. The tree is trained horizontally (apples and pears) or in a fan shape (stone fruit) on wires or fences.

CENTRAL LEADER - A modern shape that is popular because it requires minimal pruning (usually only after the fourth year) and because it is easy to train. A pyramid shape with one central leader and tiers of fruiting branches. Fruit produced early in the tree's life.

VASE - A traditional system which has four to five leaders growing to form an open centre, which is good for ripening fruit and harvesting.

Where to plant

Choose an open, sunny position, sheltered from strong winds. Fruit trees will grow in a wide range of soil types as long as there is good drainage. Plums and pears stock tolerate heavier soils than most other fruit trees. Using good quality compost will improve water retention in lighter soils and improve drainage in heavier soils. It will also improve soil fertility.

Caring for your fruit trees



We recommend **Tui Enrich Fruit, Citrus and Shrub Controlled Release Fertiliser** or a well-balanced general slow release fertiliser in early spring and in autumn, sprinkle below the tree's branches. Watering is very important when establishing new trees, as is regular watering in dry periods over spring and summer. In the first 3 years give occasional deep soakings. Applying **Saturaid** also helps to direct water down to the root zone.

Use **Compost** or **Bark** as mulch. It will conserve moisture, protect roots, add nutrients and prevent the growth of weeds and grass (which compete with trees for soil nutrients).

Pruning

The aim of pruning is to encourage renewal of fruiting wood for regular crops of quality fruit, to let light into the tree, to remove diseased parts and to control a tree's height. Pruning is done in winter when trees are dormant. Make sure your secateurs are sharp and cut just above each growth bud. When removing dead or diseased wood, always cut through the healthy tissue below the diseased section. Paint large cuts with a sealing compound to protect your tree against disease.

During early stages of tree development, the main goal is to develop the shape and framework which will support the heavy crops of fruit. When you espalier a fruit tree sometimes you need to bend branches into a position where they are going to be most useful, this often involves tying flexible twigs to a support structure.

APPLE TREES - After initial shaping of apple trees, the only pruning necessary is the removal of excess twiggy growth. Apple trees usually produce fruit on spurs, short stubby growths attached to main branches. They continue producing on the same spurs for a number of years. Pears and cherry fruit also grow on spurs and require similar treatment.

PLUM TREES - Plum trees produce fruit on the same spurs for several years. Once shape has been established, they require little pruning. Excessive pruning can over stimulate tree growth at the expense of fruit. Remove vertical branching and water shoots' regularly.

PEACH & NECTARINE TREES - These trees flower on new wood made the previous summer, so prune hard to encourage new growth. Otherwise, fruit will be produced further and further out on the branches each year. Don't remove too many flower buds or the current season's crop will suffer. Flower buds are plump while growth buds are flatter.



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Smaller fruit trees

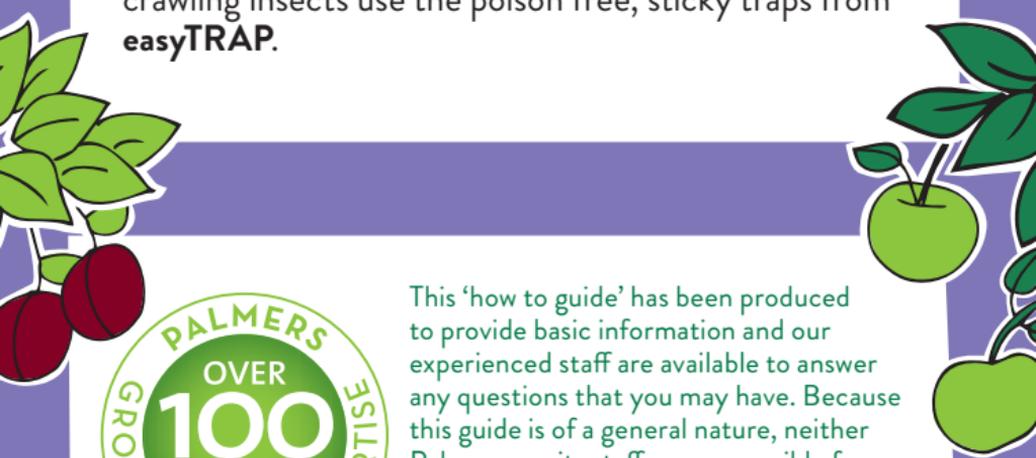
There are many new varieties of fruit trees that are smaller growing or naturally dwarf in habit, which makes them ideal for container growing. These trees will still need a suitable pot and regular care for best results. If you require a tree for smaller gardens, there are some choices of smaller slower growing rootstocks available in some favourite varieties, such as apple, peach, nectarines and more.

Diseases

Diseases are spread by wind or moisture and thrive in humid weather. Burn or dispose of any fallen infected leaves or mummified fruit. Keep your fruit trees in a well-ventilated position and prune to increase air movement.

A couple of preventative sprays of **Kiwicare Organic Super Spraying Oil** and **Grosafe Free Flo Cpper** during winter will help prevent disease invading leaves, stems and fruit and kill overwintering insects.

For codling moth (on apples) you can use the codling moth pheromone trap, for other flying and crawling insects use the poison free, sticky traps from **easyTRAP**.



This 'how to guide' has been produced to provide basic information and our experienced staff are available to answer any questions that you may have. Because this guide is of a general nature, neither Palmers nor its staff are responsible for the application of the information, as the contents may need to be modified for individual projects and site applications.

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