



## GRAFTING APPLES, WHY DO IT

Apples are grafted on to a rootstock so as to get the same variety of apple as the original tree. It is like cloning them. A tree grown from seed will have a different genetic pattern from the 'mother' tree, so the relationship is like mother to a child, and to get an exact copy, we take a piece of the original tree and put it on a new root. The two pieces grow together.

The rootstock is also a type of apple but it governs the eventual size of the tree. The smaller the root the sooner the tree finishes growing and can put its energy into fruit production. A small tree is more convenient for modern gardens but will not have the hold in the ground a big tree root does and so a stake will be needed for support.

Small trees allow for easier pruning so as to produce better fruit and lessen disease. Fruit is also easier to pick.

Rootstocks are commercially produced and are known by numbers, which do not seem to have a sensible sequence.

**M27 gives a tree of height 4-6ft      1.2m-1.8m**

**M9 gives a tree of height 8-10ft      2.4m- 3.0m**

**M26 gives a tree 10-12 feet      3.0m.- 3.6m**

**MM 106 gives a height of 12-15 ft      3.6m- 4.8m**

**MM111 gives a tree 15-20 feet      4.8m-6m**

**M25 gives a tree of 15-20 ft      4.8m-6m**

These are the approximate heights after 10 years as grown in the South of England. In our area the trees may not grow as tall. Some varieties of apple are stronger growers than others.



As explained, apple trees produce fruit when their roots are well established so M27, which has a small root will produce fruit earlier than M25.

M27 will need a stake to support it but M25 only needs one whilst it gets established.

MM106 is a versatile rootstock and can be used for a bush or half-standard (clear trunk of 1.2m) tree, or for a cordon (see below). In exposed situations and where soil is poor and/or damp, MM111 may be preferred to MM106 as it suffers less from wind rock.

Most apples are grown as bush trees but they can be trained into different shapes. Many people like cordons which are really just one stem. They permit a lot of varieties to be grown in a small space. Quite often the cordons are grown at an angle. This enables a longer stem to be accessible and it discourages the tree from putting all its energy into upright growth, so it produces fruit instead. Rootstock used for cordons are MM106 or M26.

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