



## INFORMATION SHEET - CARE OF THE NEWLY GRAFTED TREE

### FIRST YEAR

When you get your newly grafted tree home put it in compost in a pot and keep it warm and damp. If you have not got a greenhouse, it can be kept indoors. It will not need light at first. In about three weeks time the buds will start to swell. This is a sign that the graft has taken. When this happens it will need to go into the light in a sheltered position. If any growth occurs on the rootstock, just nip it off.

The first task is for the tree to grow its trunk. One main bud is allowed to grow. Usually the top one has most vigour and those below can be removed although it is wise to cut at least one back but leave it as a short stub just in case the top bud is damaged and a replacement is needed.

When the growth of the top bud is 4 inches or slightly more, the plastic tie must be removed or it cuts into the graft and can damage or kill it by cutting off the sap.

As the shoot grows it will need a cane against it to keep it straight.

### SUBSEQUENT CARE

At the end of the first year one had to decide what form the tree will take, for instance cordon, espalier or bush.

The following instructions describe how to make a bush shaped tree.

At the end of the first year most trees will have made enough growth for the trunk. Those intended for a traditional orchard where sheep graze underneath may need to have a second year to reach the height required.

At this stage the tree may be just one straight stem or it may have little side branches called feathers (Diagrams 1a and 1b) These may be kept as permanent branches if they are well placed but may have to be cut off if they are too low or close together.

The next stage is to establish the trees first branches so as to make a framework.

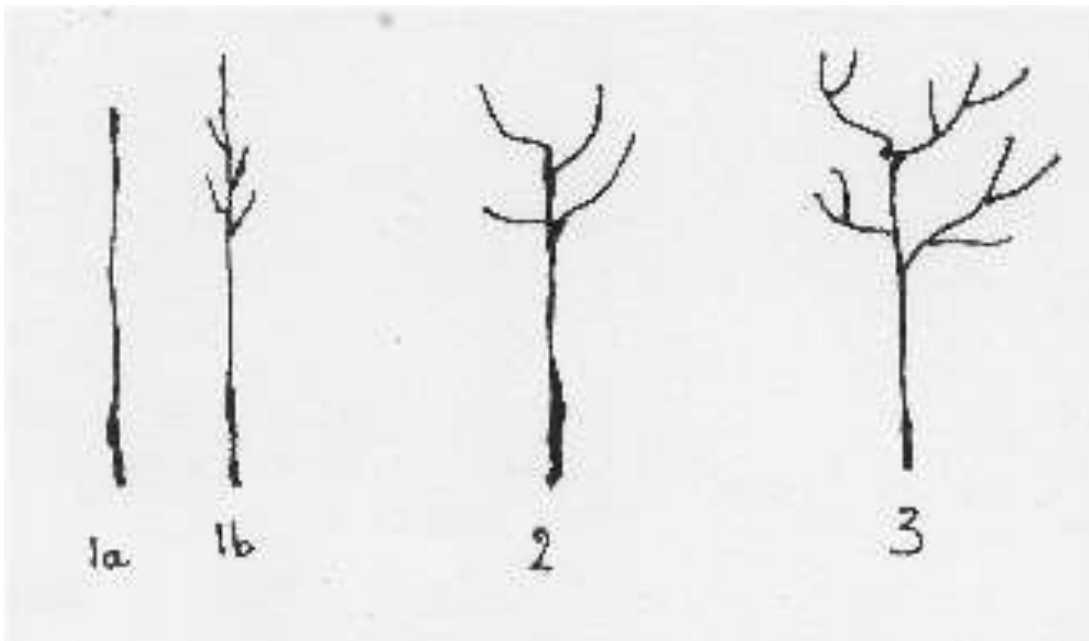


Decide how high you want the tree to be and cut off the extra growth. The top bud of any branch prevents lower buds developing so when it is removed these buds begin to grow and make the side shoots on the trunk, which will become the branches( Diagram 2).

At the end of this year select three to five nicely spaced branches radiating around the trunk. Remove the others. Try and make the tree 'goblet shaped', ( Diagram 3) i.e. open in the middle. This allows air and sunshine in which helps prevent disease and ripens the fruit.

Cut the main branches back by a third. This makes them grow more strongly and results in growth of side shoots on the branches. These will eventually carry the apples. When, doing this, cut back to a bud which will grow in the right direction. Usually this is an outward facing bud i.e. facing away from the trunk of the tree.

At this stage you will have achieved the basic shape of the tree.



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