

How to prune apple tree

Pruning is the removal of unwanted branches from a tree. It is an important practice in the management of fruit trees.

Pruning allows you do multiple graftings on an apple tree. You can graft and have up to 5 varieties of apples on a single tree. To do this, encourage low growing branches and this is done by pruning it to about 15 inches off the ground. This encourages the plant to grow shoots which branches are then trained. Grafting multiple varieties on the same tree allows harvesting to be spread over a longer period of time.

Grafting tips

Train the branches into vase shape using sticks. The vase shape ensures that the tree capitalizes on the light ie it captures maximum light ensuring maximum yield. The vase shape also ensures air and sunlight penetration hence minimizing the incidence of disease.

Do the grafting and leave a period of between 3 to 6 weeks of contact between scion and stock to enable successful union. The grafting union can be tied using a nylon string.

After grafting, you have to prune the graft. After 6 to 8 weeks, prune the bottom of the stock and the top of the scion. In the first year, do not allow the scion to fruit as the added weight during fruiting can lead to breaking of the union.

Protect the graft union wound from rodents, pests and diseases. Also protect the tree trunk from pests and diseases.

Feed your plants with fertilizers that supply the plants with all the macro nutrients that plants need. The macro nutrients include nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium, magnesium, sulphur and calcium.