



Thompson & Morgan

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Ref:

Planting your tree

- Try and plant as soon as possible
- An apple tree likes sun and needs good drainage for proper growth and production so choose a sunny and sheltered position for your tree, and make sure the site has good quality and well-drained soil. Make sure you allow enough room for your tree to grow. Apple tree roots are very shallow and non-invasive to buildings or walls.
- Dig a hole a third wider than the roots and to the same depth as the tree's roots, firming the bottom of the hole into a slight mound. Insert a stake and the tree. Use a stake approximately one and a half inches square and secure the tree to it with a proper tree tie. Make sure that the tree does not rub on the stake. Remove the stake at the end of the second year at the latest. Fill in with soil and mound towards the base of the tree.
- Water your tree thoroughly after planting and ensure that the surrounding soil is well fed through the growing season. A nutrient supplement or balanced fertilizer can be added for the first years to help maintain the healthy growth of the tree.
- If the tree is to grow in a container, half fill a large container or pot with soil-based potting compost and place your tree on top. Fill with more soil to the base of the tree, water well and feed regularly.

Planting Tips

- To ensure effective watering, insert a piece of plastic pipe with holes drilled in the sides, reaching from the base of the roots to just above the soil level. This channels with water to where it is needed and minimises the problem of surface rooting.
- Once the tree is planted, remove the central stem by cutting it out just above the highest side branch – this will allow an open, centered, bush-shaped tree to grow.
- Keep one square metre of soil around the trunk totally free from grass and weeds. This solves many fruit growing problems.

Aftercare

- Mulching is the act of covering the area of soil that contains the roots with either an organic or inorganic covering to retain soil moisture, especially during the summer months. Mulch can be straw or rotted manure, or even a piece of old carpet or black plastic. Prior to mulching, moisten the soil first if it is dry. Keep the mulch away from the tree stem to avoid diseases.

Aftercare Tips

- Once the fruit sets or starts to develop (usually around mid June), thin out the fruit that is on each branch. This allows the fruit to mature quicker and healthier. Typically, thin the fruit so the tree contains only about 5 apples in the first year. 15 in the second and 70 in the third. From then on, fruit thinning is only required if the tree sets more than 150 fruits.
- Water your tree at weekly intervals during the growing season, This will ensure a good fruit size and strong flower buds. The volume of water should be about 10-15 litres per week.
- During the growing season, take note of the leaves. If they are deep green, the tree is happy. If they are a different colour, the tree is telling you something and needs your help.

Pruning

- The aim of pruning is to create a well formed tree, with well spaced branches which are not overcrowded. This allows plenty of light to enter to ripen the fruit and also encourages good air circulation which reduces the spread of disease. It is important to get this right from the beginning, as it is very difficult to put mistakes right later on.
- All pruning should be carried out in the winter months, ie between November and February, when the tree is dormant and it is easier to see the shape of the tree then. This also gives less shock to the tree's system.
- Cut the side branches back by a half to two thirds. Cut back to an outward facing bud, to encourage growth away from the centre of the tree. Remove any damaged or broken branches, as well as any low down on the trunk.
- From the fourth year, when pruning out sub-branches, always cut the branch right back to allow the growth of new branches. Best quality fruit form on the sub-branches. The picking season begins late September.

Pollination

- Self-fertile trees will produce fruit without the need for another tree to pollinate it. However, most apple trees are self-sterile and require the pollen from other apple trees in order to produce fruit.
- To ensure good pollination and therefore a good crop, it is essential to grow two or more different cultivars from the same Flowering Group or adjacent Flowering Groups. Some cultivars are triploid – they have sterile pollen and need two other cultivars for good pollination; therefore, always grow at least two other non triploid cultivars with each one.

Some flowering groups:

Cultivar	Fertility	Flowering Group
Cox's Orange Pippin	Self sterile	Group 3
Discovery	Self sterile	Group 3
Braeburn	Self Fertile	Group 5
Jonagold	Self-sterile Triploid	Group 5
Golden Delicious	Partially Self sterile	Group 4
Tydemans Late Orange	Self sterile	Group 4
Tydemans Early Worcester	Partially Self sterile	Group 3
Saturn	Self sterile	Group 3
Meridian	Self sterile	Group 3
Michelmas Red	Self sterile	Group 4
Park Farm Pippin	Self sterile	Group 4