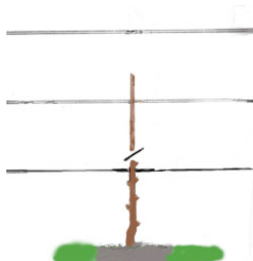


Training an Apple or Pear espalier from a maiden

To “espalier” a tree is to the art of training it to grow against a wall or other upright support, making it a perfect choice for a confined space. Traditionally in many vegetable and fruit gardens the espalier was used as a means of edging the plot and borders. Only apple and pears can be trained as espaliers, as cherry and plums will break when you bend them horizontally. Cherries and plums can be grown as fans.

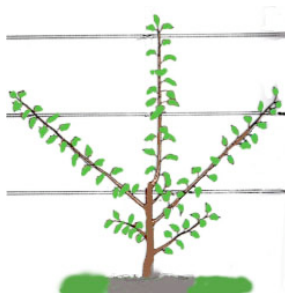
The first task is to erect a training system for the tree against a wall, fence or on the edge of a border, wherever the chosen spot may be. This involves erecting horizontal wires between two posts and deciding how many tiers you would like on the espaliers.

The rootstock used for espaliers is MM106 for apples and QA for pears . The wires are supported by tensioners and eyelets. The distance of height between the horizontals can be between 8 inch and 24 inches depending on your selection and the height of any wall /fence



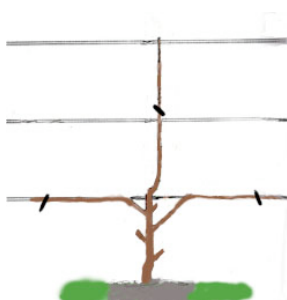
Step 1

Having planted the tree ,cut back the main stem to about 18 inches (45cm) from the ground. Allow the top buds to grow up in spring.



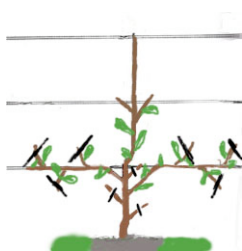
Step 2

In spring the new leader will continue to grow vertically which can then be used to start the second tier. Tie the lower buds onto the wires carefully at 90 degrees to the main leader. This should be done in summer/autumn when the branches are woody. If tied too early the when the growth is soft you run the risk of braking the new growth and losing a tier



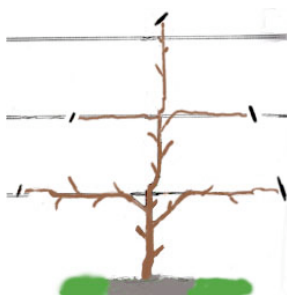
Step 3

In the winter of the second year when the tree is dormant, the vertical stem should then be cut back to two buds above the second wire and the two new side shoots will then form the next horizontal layer with the top bud forming the new leader.



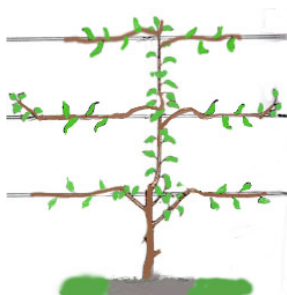
Step 4

In late summer cut back side shoots growing from horizontal arms back to 3" to 4" (7 to 10 cm). Cut back any shoots from the main vertical stem. The fruit will form on these short stumpy spurs.



Step 5

In the winter of the third year cut back the central leader arm again as in step 3. Train the second tier branches and tie to the wire as shown.



Final form of a 3-tier espalier

After 3 years of training your espalier should have a form similar to the one shown. You can carry on producing new tiers until the tree gets to the top of the fence/wall. When it has reached the desired height take out the central leader.