

## **Aftercare of your fruit trees**

Here at Grow we recommend that you look after your fruit trees, in order for them to thrive. Fruit trees need hands on care. With proper care and nurturing, your fruit tree should grow well and feed you for a long time. This advice sheet has been prepared to assist you with aftercare of your trees.

### **Irrigation**

It is important to ensure your trees are watered especially in warm weather. Trees can suffer from drought stress which is common with newly planted trees. Even with our cool, wet summers, the amount of rainfall is rarely enough to replenish the soil moisture. The soil may be dry around the roots even when the surface appears moist. Also dry, windy conditions are also likely to lead to water stress.

You can also overwater your trees especially if you have poor drained soil. If you are unsure how moist your ground is you can by using a trowel, dig down carefully to the side of the 3ft square to see how moist the soil is. The quantity of water required will vary with the soil type but typically a 2 gallon watering can twice a week during dry weather in the growing season will be necessary. Always water at the base of the trees.

### **Weeding and mulching**

Weeds, grass and vegetation intercept water before it reaches the roots of newly planted trees. By keeping a 3ft square around the tree this will help avoid this problem. The area should be kept weed free, and by using bark or mulch will help prevent weed growth. The mulch should be 2” to 3” deep and applied in autumn. Do not stack the bark or mulch against the tree trunk.

### **Pruning**

Fruit trees need to be pruned every year to improve fruit quality. It improves sunlight penetration and increased air movement through the tree. Pruning also develops the structure of the tree so that it can support the fruit, and is an opportunity to remove dead or diseased material.



## **Feeding**

Fertilisers do not need to be added at planting. When planting the trees and using Rootgrow you do not need to apply a fertiliser at all, as phosphorus (found in general fertilisers and superphosphate) can suppress the mycorrhizal fungi in the rootgrow.. Regular feeding is important for the production of good crops, and it will go a long way to prevent, or reduce the annual fruit drop that tends to start in June. Feeding the trees will replace the natural food chain that is normally removed in most gardens. This should be carried out in late autumn when it is a good time for using organic feeds. A balanced feed is best, simply because it provides the three main ingredients for good growth and health of the tree. It will also provide nutrients for growth, fruit and flowers, and general health of the tree. It will also offset the effects of regular pruning

## **Adjusting ties and removing stakes**

Inspect tree ties in spring and autumn and adjust ties to prevent constriction of the stem. We advise that trees on the following rootstock should be staked and tied as follows:

MM106      3 - 4 years

M26          5 years

After this time the tree should make sufficient root growth to anchor the tree and the stake and tie can be removed.

However M9 and M27 staked for life