

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 attention, your tree should grow well.

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 hot, wet summers, the amount of rainfall is rarely enough to replenish soil moisture. The soil may be dry around the roots even when the surface appears moist. Dry, windy conditions are also likely to lead to water stress.

You can also over-water your trees especially if you have poorly drained soil. If you are unsure how moist your ground is, you can test it by digging down carefully using a trowel to the side of the 3ft square. The quantity of water required will vary with the soil type, but typically a two gallon watering can twice a week during dry weather in the growing season should be necessary. Always apply water at the base of the tree.

WEEDING AND MULCHING

Weeds, grass and vegetation intercept water before it reaches the roots of new planted trees. Keeping a plant-free/weed-free one metre square around the tree will help alleviate this problem. Bark or mulch will help prevent weed growth. The mulch needs to be around 5cm deep and applied in the 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 removed dead or diseased material.

FEEDING

Fertilisers do not need to be added at the time of planting. We recommend using the required amount of 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 your fruit tree will replace the natural food chain that is normally removed in most gardens. This should be carried out in late autumn. A balanced feed is best, simply because it provides the three main ingredients for food growth and the health of trees. It will also offset the effects of regular pruning.

ADJUSTING TREE TIES AND REMOVING STAKES

Inspect tree ties and 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 to 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.

M9 and **M27** need to be staked for life.