

Benefits of Buying Grafted Trees



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Buying
Grafted Trees

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What are Grafted Trees?

Grafted fruit trees are simply 2 trees fitted to grow as one.

The rootstock is the root of a tree that is cut to let a second tree be fitted into it so it can bind the inner tissues together, heal, and continue to grow.

The second tree, called the scion, is usually cut from a young growth on an established tree. This is the part that will produce fruit. And since it has been taken from a known tree, we can be sure the fruit will taste the same.

Benefits of Buying Grafted Fruit Trees

Taste

[Fruit trees are not true to seed.](#)

This means that if you grow an apple tree from seed, its fruit may not taste like the variety of apples you took the seed from. Simply put, there is no guarantee a Honeycrisp apple seed will grow into a tree that produces Honeycrisp apples.

Hardiness

Because you can mix and match the rootstock and the scion, you can get trees that are very well adapted to your exact conditions, giving them a chance to thrive without much help.

Resistance

Grafted fruit trees often have better resistance to disease and insect activity.

Can You Graft Trees Yourself?

Yes. Grafting trees is not difficult and requires a few supplies.

How to Graft

With just a little knowledge, you can graft trees by yourself and end up with a tree that produces multiple types of fruit, like the [Tree of 40 Fruits](#).

Pick the Right Trees

You have to start by picking compatible rootstock and scion. This means that they have to be closely related.

Gather Supplies

You will need a sanitized sharp knife, tape, and grafting wax.

Cut Your Trees

There are several methods for cutting, like [Bark Grafting](#) or [Whip and Tongue](#).

They all boil down to using a clean, sharp knife to expose a broad portion of the green tissues underneath the bark. Next, you need to make sure they fit tightly together.

And it is essential to be as precise as you can. Sharp cuts and a tight fit will help the tree heal quickly from this stressful event.

Bind and Seal Your Trees

Use the tape to bind the two pieces together and the wax to seal the wound to help keep out bacteria and fungi that will cause infections or worse.

When to Graft Fruit Trees?

The best time to graft fruit trees is during the late summer or early fall. This means the tree will have a short time to heal before going dormant for the winter.

Conclusion

Buying grafted fruit trees is the only way to be confident they will produce a specific fruit. So what trees do you want to plant?

Read More:

[Benefits of Buying Grafted Trees](#)

[10 Techniques To Increase Germination Rate of Seeds](#)

[5 Plants That Easily Grow in Water](#)

**Sutton Foster's Tomato
Growing Tips**



I just finished reading Sutton Foster's book, "[Hooked: How Crafting Saved My Life](#)." I got it because she's crocheting on the cover of the book and that's my go-to craft. It's also her go-to craft, however she enjoys many other crafts as well. She even mentions gardening in the book. Specifically, she talks about the memories of her dad growing tomato plants. Moreover, she provides his top ten tips for growing "the perfect sandwich-sized fruit."

Is Gardening a Craft? An Art? A Hobby?

I don't particularly delineate between these things, and I get the sense that Sutton Foster doesn't either. She definitely knows the difference between a hobby and a job. She's a television and Broadway actress as a profession. She uses crafting to calm, soothe, restore, heal her, something she's been doing since she was a kid. She mentions cross-stitch, knitting, collage, glass art, painting, drawing, baking, and gardening throughout her book. In terms of the roles they play

in her life, they seem relatively interchangeable. Gardening can be a craft, an art, a hobby. Of course, it can also be a job, and then it's a little bit different.

Tomato Garden Memories

Foster had a complex childhood, and her parents had a complicated, pained relationship. But she remembers gardening as one of the things that they all enjoyed together. Her dad was the one who loved to garden. He planted a variety of different things, and she planted with him. Her mother got involved a bit as well, collecting the seeds in the fall for replanting in the spring. And they all enjoyed the tomato sandwiches made from the tomatoes grown in their own garden.

10 Tomato Growing Tips

In brief, here are Sutton Foster's ten tomato-growing tips, which are actually her "Papa Bob's Tips."

1. It all starts with great soil.

This is true of most things that you plant in your garden, of course. Don't neglect this part of gardening; it's foundational.

2. Pick the right tomatoes.

She recommends beefsteak tomatoes. They're hearty and perfect for those sandwiches her family loved to eat.

3. Plant tomatoes in the sun.

Specifically, she recommends a spot that gets 4-6 hours of daily sunlight. Of course, this depends on the tomatoes that you choose to plant as well as environmental factors. But it's a good starting point.

4. Plant tomatoes to grow upwards.

You want to use a [DIY trellis](#), tomato cages, or other support to assist the vines of your tomato plants to grow vertically.

5. Focus on growing the main vines of the tomato plant.

Foster explains that tomato plants have lots of little extra growth shoots that try to grow off of the main vine. However, you should pull those off. This allows the plant to concentrate its energy on great growth along the main vine. I didn't actually know this tip myself.

6. Avoid overwatering your tomato plants.

This is one of the most common causes of tomatoes that [aren't growing properly](#).

7. Use fertilizer.

She recommends a name brand liquid fertilizer that you apply every two weeks. However, you can make a DIY fertilizer or choose your own favorite. Follow the instructions that are relevant to your specific tomatoes as well as to the fertilizer you're using.

8. Fight off bugs.

Bugs love tomato plants. They also often kill them. There are many methods of dealing with them, of course. Foster recommends planting marigolds near your tomato plants because they are a natural insect repellent. Furthermore, she points out that if you pop the head off of marigolds at the end of the season, the seeds are neatly stored right there for you to collect and replant in the spring.

9. Pick tomatoes when they are not quite ripe.

Why? Because the plant still has more opportunity to grow additional tomatoes on that vine. However, it needs the space and ability to do so.

10. Ripen tomatoes on the counter.

Place them in the sun. Let them fully ripen. Enjoy!

Read More:

- [Dealing With Tomato Blight](#)
- [Reasons Why Tomato Foliage Curl](#)
- [To Prune or Not to Prune: Keeping Tomatoes in Check](#)

To Prune or Not to Prune? Keeping Tomatoes in Check



TO PRUNE OR NOT TO PRUNE?

Keeping Tomatoes in Check

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To prune or not to prune, that is the question! [Tomatoes](#) are one of the most popular garden plants for a reason. They're fairly easy to grow, produce an impressive yield, and are

available in many interesting varieties. There are many schools of thought when it comes to tomato pruning. So what's the right way to do things? Should you let tomatoes grow wild? Or keep them neat and tidy?

Tomato pruning

I believe that you should do what works for you. Whether you decide to prune heavily or not, you'll probably end up with at least some tomatoes if all other conditions are met. [Pruning](#) heavily results in a neat and tidy look. It ensures that most of the plant's energy goes into creating fruit.

But pruning aggressively can also be a lot of work. It requires paying close attention to your plants. I used to prune heavily, but now I'm a lot more laid back with it. Picking the suckers off is pretty easy to do, especially if you check on your plants regularly.

If even that sounds like a lot of work, choose tomato varieties that require no pruning, like compact and dwarf determinate varieties.

The dos and don'ts of pruning tomatoes

Here are things you should and shouldn't do when pruning tomatoes:

- **Do give tomatoes enough room to breathe.** Crowding plants reduces airflow and invites pests and disease. Pruning can help improve airflow and allow you to plant tomatoes closer to one another without suffocating plants.
- **Do keep enough foliage to protect the plant and fruits from sun damage.** Removing too much of a plant leaves it vulnerable to weather and sunburn. Instead, keep some leaves around for protection.
- **Do remove foliage that's touching the ground.** Soil keeps plants alive, but it's also a potential breeding ground

for all sorts of nefarious fungi and bacteria. So even if you're a lazy gardener, make sure to prune the lower leaves of a tomato plant to avoid potential contamination.

- **Do use cuttings to propagate new tomato plants.** Just because you've snipped off a branch doesn't mean you need to toss it into the compost. Instead, you can propagate a whole new tomato plant by placing the cutting in a cup of water. Within a week or so, you'll notice roots start to appear, and soon after, you can plant the cutting and enjoy a whole new tomato plant.
- **Don't prune determinate tomatoes.** Some pruning at the base of the plant may be required, but you should prune determinate tomatoes minimally. By removing stems and offshoots, you risk limiting your harvest.
- **Don't prune after rainfall when plants are still wet.** This is a good way to spread and introduce disease. Instead, wait till the plant is dry before pruning.
- **Do make sure to give support to tomato plants.** Whether you use bamboo poles or [cages](#), tomatoes need support structures to stay upright. Plants that sprawl on the ground are more likely to pick up diseases.
- **Don't use inflexible ties.** You'll need ties to fix tomato plants to support to keep them from bending or toppling over. Use flexible ties to do the job to prevent damage to the stem as the plant grows.

7 Plants You Can Direct Seed



7 PLANTS YOU CAN
Direct Seed

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Recently, I've mentioned that this year I just don't have the bandwidth to garden like I usually do. But that doesn't mean I'm completely abandoning my favorite hobby. Although I didn't

start seedlings indoors, I still have a vast collection of seeds at my disposal, and I've already started sketching a plan for what I want to plant. There are plenty of things I can direct seed and grow without much intervention. A bit of thinning here and there is all that's required.

Some plants are great for direct seeding because they grow quickly. Others do best direct-seeded because they don't transplant well. When I started gardening, I direct seeded *everything*. I didn't have the space to commit to starting seeds indoors, and I didn't really understand that some plants needed long growing seasons to reach maturity. Through the years, though, I've learned about the best plants to direct seed—with a lot of trial and error.

I've even had success direct seeding some dwarf tomato varieties! With gardening, the sky's the limit. But to get you started off on the right foot this year, here are 10 plants you can direct seed just before or after your last frost date.

Plants You Can Direct Seed

Here are some of the easiest plants to direct seed in the garden.

- **Radishes.** These pungent, crispy root vegetables are one of the quickest growing edibles in the garden. Like most root veggies, they don't transplant well. If you're going the [square foot garden](#) route, plant 16 or 9 per square.
- **Carrots.** I just sowed my carrot seeds in the garden. I normally plant 16 per square, but this year I decided to broadcast sow the seeds because I'm planting so many, and I didn't feel like carefully pinching seeds into hundreds of holes. Carrots grow slowly, but they're really easy to grow given the right soil conditions. Once they sprout, all you need to do is thin out the seedlings. After that, regular watering is really all

that's required.

- **Kale.** Another slow-growing one. BUT [kale](#) does exceptionally well when direct-seeded. You can sow kale in the spring before your last frost date. I like the interplant kale with herbs and flowers to entice pollinators and beneficial bugs to settle in. Most years, cabbage loopers decimate my kale crops not under protection. But last year, I had a lot of success pairing my brassicas with flowers and flowering herbs.
- **Spinach.** This crop is another easy one to grow. You'll have the best results sowing early in the spring as soon as the soil is workable. Spinach bolts when the weather gets warm, so early plantings can mitigate premature bolting. Grow spinach in partial shade. The hot afternoon sun, even on a cool day, can trigger bolting.
- **Asian greens.** There are many delicious Asian greens out there, but some of my favorites include bok choy, Chinese broccoli, and frilly mustards. Most of these grow well from seed. You can also harvest them early as baby greens.
- **Summer squash.** I'm not planting squash this year because I have a squash bug problem. But if you're lucky enough not to have to deal with these irritating insects, summer squash is an excellent plant to grow from seed. It grows exceptionally fast, and once it starts to produce, you'll have plenty of food to eat. My favorite variety is [patty pan](#). Sow summer squash right after the last frost date.
- **Beans.** Beans grow so quickly I never bother starting them from seed. They also don't love to be moved around. I prefer bush varieties because they don't require supports, but if you space them too closely, you can end up with a tangled mess. Sow bean seeds right after the last frost date.

Read More

[Yes, you can garden for free](#)

[Ten ways to get free plants for your garden](#)

[How to get free plants](#)

4 Advantages of Pruning Plant Roots



4 ADVANTAGES OF
*Pruning Plant
Roots*

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You've heard of pruning branches, but what about pruning plant roots? [Roots](#) aren't something we think about very often. Mainly because they're buried under the earth. Out of sight.

Out of mind. However, paying attention to your plant's roots can be an essential part of raising healthy houseplants.

Here's why you might consider pruning plant roots. Below, you'll also find a helpful video for guidance on how to prune plant roots.

Improve root growth

Young plants can sometimes fail to produce healthy, abundant root systems. When this happens, pruning the roots before transplanting may help encourage more vigorous growth.

Prevent or reverse root binding

If you've ever repotted a plant or left a seedling too long in its pot, you may have noticed that its root system begins to circle the bottom of the container. If this happens, it means the plant has become root-bound. Without anywhere else to expand, the roots become a ragged, dense mess. [Trimming](#) the roots can help encourage new root growth and improve the overall health of your plant.

An alternative to trimming is to use breathable [fabric pots](#). Obviously, this isn't a great option for indoor plants. For outdoor plants, though, fabric pots allow for air pruning. Because the fabric is breathable, it will enable the roots to breathe, preventing plants from becoming root-bound altogether.

Increases nutrient absorption

By pruning plant roots, you encourage nutrient absorption. The new root fibers help increase a plant's nutrient uptake from the soil. If you have a root-bound plant, it can't take up nutrients efficiently because it's incapable of growing a lot of new, healthy roots.

Slows down growth

Abundant growth is great, but a plant that grows too rapidly will quickly need to be repotted again and again. By pruning roots, you slow down overall growth keeping the plant the right size for its current pot for a little while longer.

Get more plants

You'll also need to prune roots if you want to [divide](#) plants. To divide plants, you'll need to separate the roots, clip them, and trim them to encourage new growth.

How to prune

The ideal way to prune a plant is to lightly trim part of its root system. Taking off too much can have the opposite effect and potentially damage the plant.

5 Factors That Affect Plant Growth



Many factors affect plant growth. Plants have a few basic needs. Having these needs unmet will cause them to perish. There are also factors outside of a gardener's control that

can impact how well a plant grows. While some variables are out of your control, there are things that you *can* influence.

What affects plant growth?

Plants need several things to stay happy. If you have the ability to control these variables, doing so can help your plants thrive.

Sunlight

Sunlight is the lifeblood of a plant. Without it, plants die. Sunlight enables photosynthesis, which is the process that allows plants to process nutrients. Without sunlight, they can't properly take up nutrients. Some plants need more sunlight than others and providing your plants with the right amount of sunlight is key. Giving plants like lettuce too much sun can cause them to wilt, bolt prematurely, and wither. Not giving enough sun to plants, like eggplant, can stunt their growth and diminish overall yields.

Water

Honestly, this is probably the most confusing task for gardeners to get right. Even the most experienced gardeners sometimes over or under water their plants. It's one of the important factors that affect plant growth. When you're gardening outside, Mother Nature does some of the work for you. Indoors, it's all you, baby. Either way, watering is a bit of an art. Without water, plants will eventually die—even the most drought tolerant. Outside, mulch is a helpful way to retain moisture. Irrigation systems can also help you water deeply and consistently—and waste less. Inside, I highly recommend getting an app that reminds you to water on a schedule or creating a makeshift calendar of your own. Watering plants that have different moisture needs on the same schedule is a recipe for disaster.

Air

Plants are a lot like people. They don't like being squeezed together like sardines. Pack them too close, and you can encounter problems like stunted growth, pests, and disease. Space plants accordingly to prevent overcrowding. Keeping them spaced apart helps improve air circulation, which will reduce instances of disease. It'll also give your plants plenty of room to grow. If you're a patient person, you can try an experiment. Plant squash close together instead of following seed packet spacing guidelines and plant them in another area where they have plenty of room to breathe. You'll see a noticeable difference in how they grow.

Temperature

Out of all the factors that affect plant growth, this one can be tricky to control—especially outdoors. The weather can be unpredictable. Sometimes, even the most diligent gardeners end up with dead or sickly plants on their hands because an unexpected frost occurs. You can use crop protection and other tricks to play around with [temperature](#), but when it gets really cold, there's nothing you can do to stop the freeze. When [starting seeds](#), getting the temperature right is key. Tomato and pepper seeds, for instance, won't even germinate if the soil is too cold.

Nutrients

Plants need food to survive. Often, good quality soil that's amended yearly contains plenty of [nutrients](#) to get you through a vegetable gardening season. However, that's not always the case. Poor nutrient uptake can happen for several reasons, including inadequate pH and environmental conditions. Without the right nutrients, plants can become diseased and stunted and provide a diminished or non-existent yield.