



Two (or three or four) for the Price of One
By Annette Mickelson
UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

Would you like an orchard filled with all of your favorite kinds of fruit, but you just don't have the space? Grafting fruit trees is a great way to get multiple varieties of fruit in a small space. If you see fruit trees at the nursery that have multiple varieties on the same tree, you are looking at a tree with multiple grafts. In fact, pretty much all fruit trees are grafted onto what is referred to as "root stock." Because many fruit trees are susceptible to soil-borne diseases and insects, they are grafted onto the roots of a variety that is resistant to those pests.

Grafting is the insertion of a branch or bud from one plant into the stem or trunk of another. This can be done with a single bud or a larger piece of stem or branch. There are several methods that are used to graft. The method used is dependent on the type of tree and whether you are grafting onto a main branch, the trunk, or another branch. It depends also on the time of year, since some methods work better in the spring and some in the fall.

As mentioned above, you can graft smaller branches, called scions, onto an existing fruit tree. In this way you can add a variety of fruits to your tree and create what is sometimes called a "fruit salad" tree. The different varieties need to be compatible--that is, in the same family. You can't graft an orange scion onto an apple tree, but you can graft different varieties of apple on the same tree or different varieties of peaches or even nectarines and apricots onto a peach tree. You can also add a variety that will help with pollination, since many fruit trees require a different variety of tree for pollinating.

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Grafting is also done to control the height of the tree, since not everyone wants, or can fit, a huge apple tree in their backyard. This also makes harvesting the fruit easier. I know I'd rather not go up a ladder to pick fruit. To achieve a smaller tree, the desired variety can be grafted onto a dwarf or semi-dwarf root stock.

Grafting can also be used to save a damaged tree. If the top of a fruit tree becomes diseased and dies, but the root stock is healthy, the top can be removed and a new tree branch can be grafted onto the trunk. This will then grow into a new tree of the variety you grafted onto the root stock. This is especially beneficial if you have healthy well-established root stock and don't want to wait for another baby tree to get its roots established. That part is already in place. Score! Master Gardeners have successfully used this technique in the Orchard Garden at the Sherwood Demonstration Gardens. For instance, we have an Asian pear tree with three varieties grafted onto it.

If you want to learn more about grafting fruit trees, please join us on Feb 13 from 9:00-10:30 AM for an online class being offered by Master Gardeners of Amador County that will teach the science behind grafting and provide "how-to" instruction. You can register for this class here: <https://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=32826>

Due to the pandemic, Master Gardener events will for the foreseeable future continue to be limited. We realize our public classes are valued by county residents and we are doing our best to provide virtual learning opportunities. You can find our new online class schedule at: http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public_Education_Classes/?calendar=yes&g=56698, and recorded classes on many gardening topics here: [https://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/Public_Education_Classes/Handouts - Presentations/](https://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/Public_Education_Classes/Handouts_-_Presentations/).

The Sherwood Demonstration Garden is open on the first and second Saturdays of each month from 9 AM -12 noon. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the number of people allowed in the garden at one time is limited, and masks and distancing are required. Please check our website for more details https://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/Demonstration_Garden/

Have a gardening question? Master Gardeners are working hard remotely and can still answer your questions. Leave a message on our office telephone: 530-621-5512, or use the "Ask a Master Gardener" option on our website: mgeldorado.ucanr.edu. We'll get back to you! Master Gardeners are also on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest.

For more information on the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County, see our website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. To sign up for notices and newsletters, see http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news.