

Early training

Training trees on wires

Choose the shape that suits both the type of tree and your section. For all of them:

- Choose trees grown on dwarf rootstock where possible.
- Set up galvanised wires against a fence, wall, or between strong posts, with the bottom wire about 60cm from the ground.
- Use eyebolts to fix the wires onto walls or fences, to allow air circulation behind the plant.
- Insert pieces of cane between the branches and the wires, so that rubbing doesn't damage the bark.
- Set the plant in the ground about 30cm out from the wires.

Espalier

Training

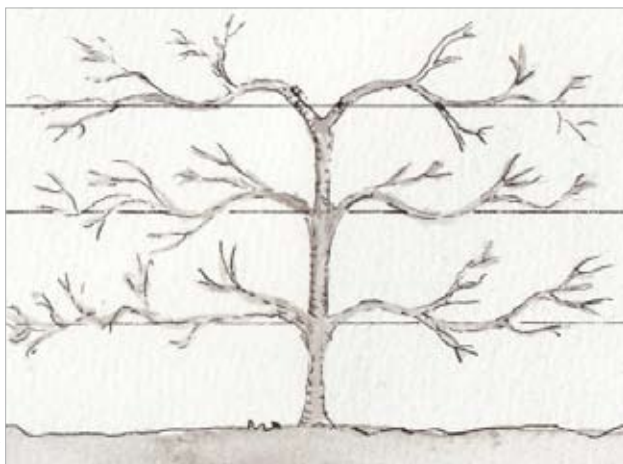
1. At planting, head back the leader to about 5cm above the level of the first wire – make sure there are at least three good buds below this cut.
2. The tree will grow new shoots below the cut. Choose the best three and pinch off the rest.
3. Select one shoot to continue as the centre stem, and two to gently tie down along the bottom wire as the horizontal arms. Let the tips of the arms point upwards.
4. When the centre stem has passed the next wire, cut it off just above the wire.
5. Repeat these steps until the tree is the height you want – up to six wires high, depending on the tree's rootstock. As they grow, keep tying down the fruiting arms until they've filled the wires.

Why train dwarf fruit trees on wires

- You can fit vigorous trees into a small or medium-sized garden.
- The trees don't cast so much shade.
- They make great dividers within the property.
- You can grow tender trees, which wouldn't normally survive in your area, against a wall that radiates extra heat.
- Pruning, picking, netting against birds, and spotting pests and diseases are all much easier.
- Branches that have been damaged (e.g. by cicadas) or are heavy with fruit are supported and less likely to break.

Maintain the shape

- Rub off any vertical shoots that sprout from the top of the central leader.
- Each winter, head back new growth on the 'arms' by one third to a downward-facing bud. Prune the laterals back to 7cm. Pinch off any unwanted shoots.
- In summer, shorten the branch tips to the start of the new growth and remove a quarter of the old spurs.



Adapted from *How to Make a Forest Garden*

Espalier

Suits apple, pear, nashi, persimmon, grapes.

Dimensions of structure: up to 2.5m x 4.5m, with wires 30–60cm apart.

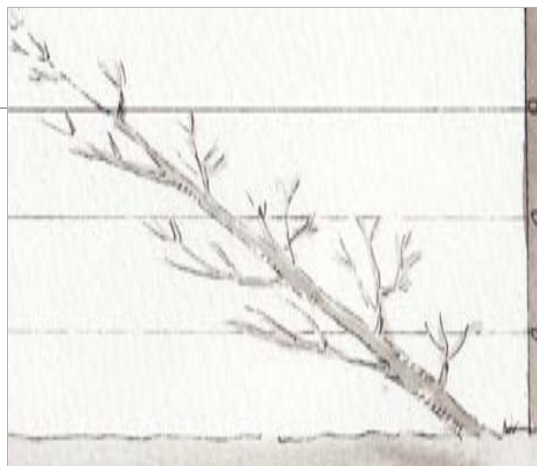
Early training

Cordon

Suits apple, pear, nashi, quince, gooseberries, red/whitecurrants.

Dimensions of structure: up to 1.8m x 75cm, with wires 60cm apart.

Fasten a piece of cane to the wires at a 45-degree angle.



Adapted from How to Make a Forest Garden

Cordon

Training

1. At planting, head back the main stem by a third and fasten it to a piece of cane that you've placed at a 45-degree angle. Shorten side shoots to 7cm, to a downward-facing bud.
2. Remove all flowers during the first spring.
3. In summer, shorten all the side shoots coming from the main stem to 7cm. Shorten secondary shoots to 3 leaves.

4. Next winter, head back the new growth on the main leader by a third.
5. Repeat these steps until the tree reaches the required height.

Maintain the shape

- Shorten the new growth on the main shoots to 7cm, and on the secondary shoots to 3 leaves.

Fan

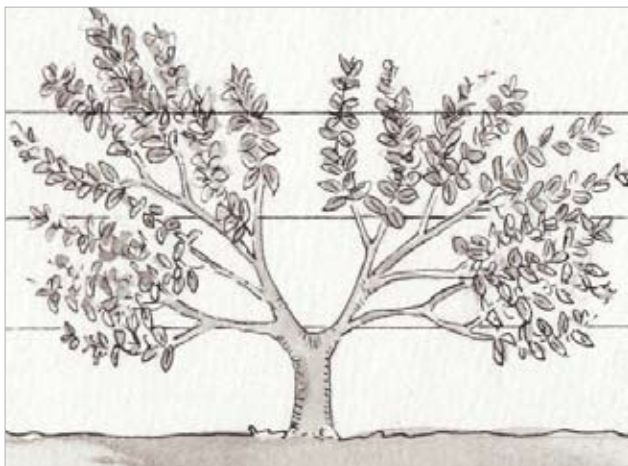
Training

1. In spring, head back the central leader to the level of the first wire. New shoots will grow from below that cut.
2. Select the best shoots for the fan 'ribs' – either radiating from one low central point, or from two evenly spaced laterals trained in each direction. Tie them loosely to pieces of cane that are tied between the wires.

3. The next season, shorten all the leaders to about 45cm of new growth, to force new shoots to sprout below that point.

Maintain the shape

- Each season, cut out any laterals that are growing in the wrong direction, and in midsummer, shorten to six leaves any shoots that are not part of the 'ribs'.
- Stonefruit, figs, persimmons and berries fruit on 1- or 2-year-old wood. Remove these shoots after they've fruited, to encourage the growth of new fruiting wood.



Adapted from How to Make a Forest Garden

Fan

Suits almond, cherry, apricot, nectarine, peach, fig, quince, persimmon, berries, redcurrants, whitecurrants.

Dimensions of structure: up to 2.5m x 3.5m, with wires 15cm apart.