



# Planting a fruit tree in a pot

**Time needed for activity** 1 hour minimum

**Location** Outdoors

## Context

This activity plan highlights the importance of sustainably managing our natural resources, focusing on planting fruit trees in pots to support biodiversity.

Natural Resources Wales' purpose is to pursue sustainable management of natural resources in all of its work. This means looking after air, land, water, wildlife, plants and soil to improve Wales' well-being, and provide a better future for everyone.

## Curriculum for Wales

### Science and Technology

- **What matters** - The world around us is full of living things which depend on each other for survival.
- **What matters** - Being curious and searching for answers is essential to understanding and predicting phenomena.

### Mathematics and Numeracy

- **What matters** - Geometry focuses on relationships involving shape, space and position, and measurement focuses on quantifying phenomena in the physical world.

## Objectives

**By the end of this activity learners will be able to:**

- Explain why it is important to plant trees
- Plant trees in pots successfully
- Protect and maintain planted trees

## Equipment and resources

- A large bucket - ideally one per tree
- A bin bag per tree - optional if you do not have enough buckets
- Trowel per group
- Sealable plastic box
- A pot at least 60cm deep and 60cm diameter is recommended per tree
- Soil or peat free compost
- Watering can
- Mulch - optional



## Background information

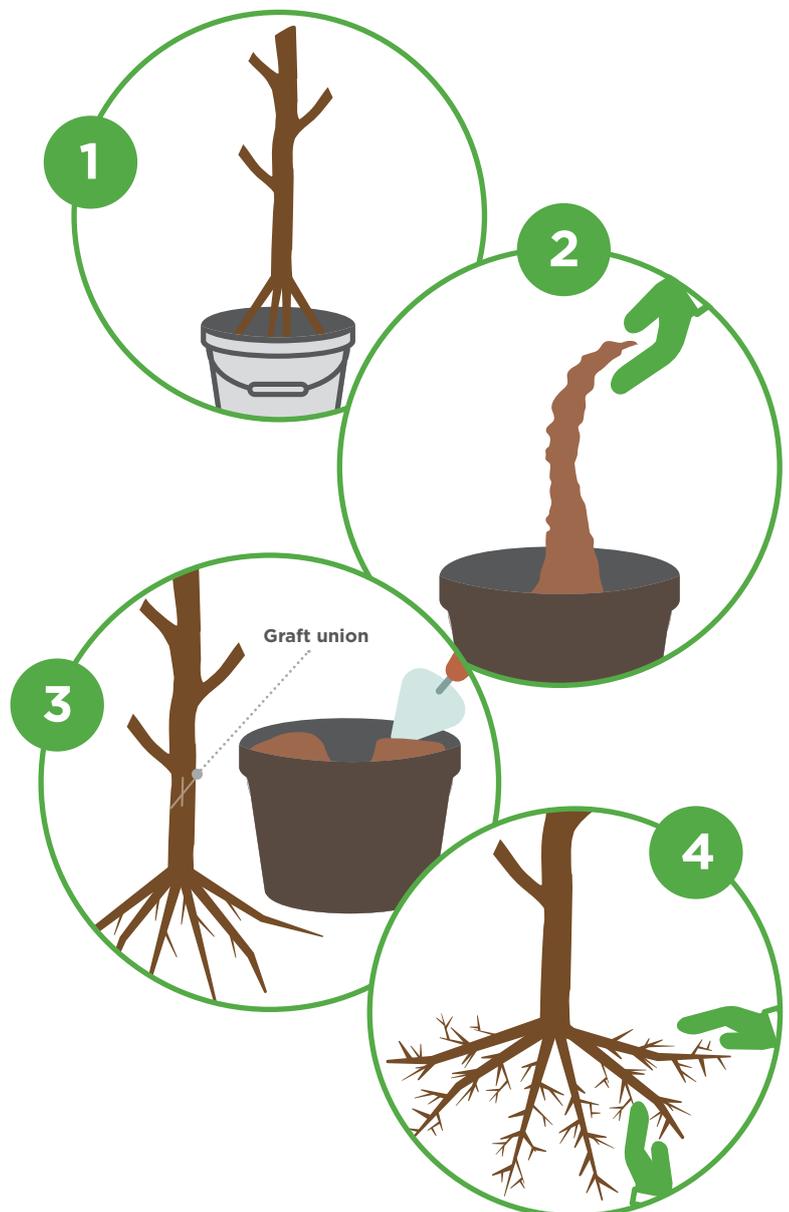
If you don't have enough suitable outdoor space to plant an orchard, fruit trees will happily grow in large pots. You will need to soak the roots of each tree for 30 minutes and then prepare the pot and plant the tree which will take at least an additional 30 minutes. It is advised to soak all the trees beforehand and plant all the trees at the same time, in groups, to maximise efficiency and ensure learners are engaged with the activity.

Depending on where you have sourced the fruit tree it may have been grafted. A grafted fruit tree is made up of two parts of different trees joined together to ensure the desired variety of fruit can be grown. Rootstocks make up the base of grafted trees, they provide the root portion, while a scion consists of the fruiting section of the tree. See our **Information note – Rootstock and grafting** for more information.

Before undertaking this activity, it is recommended you plan where your trees will be situated. See our **Information note – Designing an orchard**.

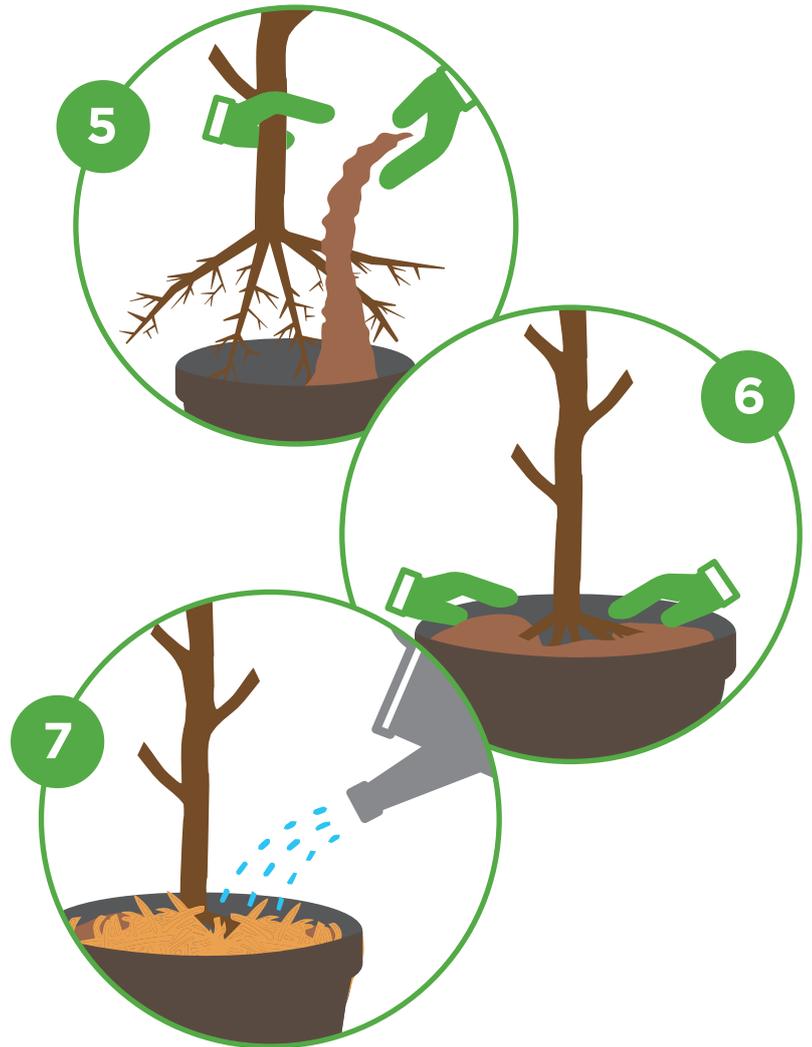
## What to do

1. Before planting the tree, soak the roots in a bucket of water for roughly 30 minutes. Ensure they are thoroughly wet and do not dry out while you prepare the hole. If you do not have enough buckets for one per tree, you can keep them damp by wrapping them in a bin bag while you prepare the area.
2. Fill your pot three quarters full with soil or peat free compost.
3. Make a hole in the soil of your pot, around the same size as the root ball. Making sure to break up the material at the bottom of the hole to help the roots penetrate the soil. The hole should be deep enough to cover the roots but it's important to make sure the graft union (if the tree is grafted) is above the soil. The graft union, also referred to as the graft collar, root collar or root bark collar, is where the scion and rootstock are joined.
4. Take your tree out of the bucket, or bin bag, and tease apart the roots, so that they can reach out in all directions.





5. Ask someone to hold the tree in the pot, making sure the roots are spread apart. You can now fill in the hole with soil, ask the person holding to move the tree up and down a few centimetres as you do this to ensure there are no air pockets around the roots. Roots can't grow through large pockets of air and air pockets also prevent water from travelling through the soil.
6. Using your hands, push the soil down around the roots. Avoid pressing too hard, you want the soil to be firm but not compacted.
7. Finally give your tree a good water, it is vital to regularly water your fruit tree to ensure the soil doesn't dry out. Adding a layer of mulch at this stage can assist in keeping the moisture within the soil, as well as providing nutrients and preventing weeds.



### Suggested key questions

- Why are fruit trees important?
- How can we protect the trees from pests, diseases and weather?
- What are the functions of different parts of the tree?

### Adapting for different needs/abilities

#### More support

- Provide more support to learners, especially when infilling soil around the roots.

#### Less support

- Ask learners to research how other types of fruit seeds are grown.
- Provide pH testing kits for learners to test the soil.



### Follow up activity/extension

- Visit a local orchard or public garden to explore other fruit trees and after care techniques.
- Incorporate an orchard management plan into your Eco-School Action plan, see our orchard management resources for more information.
- Design and produce signs to label your trees.
- Monitor and record precipitation (potentially with a digital weather station) to inform a watering schedule.

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### Other resources

Try our other tree, woodland and orchard resources:

- **Activity plan - How a tree works**
- **Activity plan - Why orchards are important**
- **Information note - Types of pruning**

### Looking for more learning resources, information and data?

Please contact: [education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk](mailto:education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk) or go to <https://naturalresources.wales/learning>

Alternative format; large print or another language, please contact:  
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