

Approach graft

The reasons for trying this out are varied but generally it will be used to put a branch or bud where one does not already exist or to replace one which has perished.

Approach grafting is relatively simple, but to start off you will need some of the tools listed below

A tree that needs the graft and a donor if it's coming from another of the same species

A sharp knife preferably sterilised (hot flame will do)

A hammer and tiny nails or bits of 1-2mm wire

A Dremmel or drill with a 1mm bit

Cut paste

Something to wrap around the join i.e. raffia

Some wire.

First things first establish where the graft is going and where it's coming from

If a donor tree then it should be of the same species.

If from the tree you are working on then identify the branch you are going to use, figure out if it's going to reach without breaking and if not allow the appropriate amount of time to encourage its growth.

Once you have the branch give both the donor and the recipient a wee clean around the area you are going to use (this will get rid of any moss etc.)

Place the branch where you want it to go, this will enable you to see how deep and wide a hole you need to cut into the area. At this time you have to determine whether this branch is going to face up or down. Although in years to come it's going to be wired it will have a weakness at the joint for a

few years to come depending on the speed of bark growth around it, so it's better to face the right direction now.

Cut a channel in the recipient tree very slightly narrower than the branch you are working from if it's a bigger branch if smaller whip make is a snug fit, make sure its deep enough to take the depth of the branch used.

Remove the very outer part of the bark from the 2 sides and the inner part of the donor branch, if it's of reasonable size, if it's just a tiny shoot you are using you are likely to cut right through it if tried so best to leave it alone.

Place the new branch in place.

Secure in place by either hammering a nail through the middle if it's large enough or drill 2 holes on the tree at the bottom or top of your cut (depends on orientation of donor branch) and press a bit of U shaped wire into the holes with the branch in-between.

Secure smaller whips once in the groove by driving a wee nail of wire into the side wall of the groove and bending it over the whip.

Seal with cut paste and cover with raffia optional.