

WORKING THE LAND

(With this issue of ROOTDRINKER, we initiate a regular section of practical lore on agriculture, homesteading, and the natural world. Please write and share your own experiences. May we all become stewards of the earth.)

notes on grafting

[This information was collected by Doug Jones from diagrams of, and talks with, Fred Ashworth and two folks who have worked with him: his nurseryman, Bill MacKenty; and Jerry Moeller of Ft. Covington.]

Fred Ashworth is surely the most reliable source of wisdom on the growing of fruit trees in the North Country. Among horticulturalists, he is known for his five decades of work in the breeding and propagating of fruits, vegetables, and flowers. In standard books on apple and pear varieties, you will often find his name given as original propagator of this or that variety.



On Walnuts by GLEN NYSTRUP

If you place a walnut in the ground and want it to grow, there are a few things that will help it along.

To begin with, there is a choice of planting time. The seeds may be buried Fall or Spring. If you wish to plant in the Spring, store the nuts in a cool or cold but not freezing place, and be sure they have moisture--you may sprinkle them periodically.

The hull may be taken from the nut before planting, but the shell should not be broken.

Walnuts grow long tap roots, straight down. It will help to pierce the ground with a crowbar to about 18" and fill with topsoil. Walnuts grow well in a corner of a garden area, but plan to leave them for more than a year if you want to use those which pop up the second rather than the first year. (Most should sprout the first year.)

When the seeds are in the ground, see that they are not bothered by weeds or they will suffer. And lay a section of chicken wire over the bed to keep squirrels from gathering them up.

I placed leaves over the bed to keep down weeds. The sprouts had no trouble growing through this. Take off the wire before the seedlings are very tall.

So much for the seeds.

To transport seedlings: remember the long tap root, dig them carefully. Place them into holes which are dug deeper than the tap roots. Walnut seedlings like rich soil. A good hole filler might be rotted manure and topsoil. And black walnuts are used to soils which are a bit sour.

As for when to plant, a wise old friend advises me: "plant them before you begin the garden." But let them winter over once first.

Keep the manure low in the hole, unless you intend to mulch. Manure at the surface will encourage the growth of grass around the trunk, offering competition.

If you have a choice about the types of plants about the walnut trees, nitrogen-fixing legumes may be best (such as alfalfa or birdsfoot trefoil).

Take care that the seedlings are not girdled by critters in the winter and spring.

And a good way to learn more is to watch them grow.

Fred's greatest gift to us in the North (next to his peaceful, happy presence), is his dedicated work to locate and propagate trees which can tolerate our extreme winters and still bear loads of delicious fruit. So many distinct flavors you never knew existed - even banana - I kid you not! Walk through his home orchard in September and you will wonder why the North Country bothers to import any fruit at all.

Just as amazing as the flavors is the fact that he uses only manure for fertilizer and doesn't spray with toxic chemicals. Even worms respect him!

What do you graft on what?

APPLE SCION on APPLE STOCK < including crabapple

PEAR SCION on PEAR STOCK

PEAR SCION on HAWTHORN ("thornapple") STOCK,

but be sure to leave one branch of the hawthorn to grow (otherwise tree will reject pear graft). But trim off the rest of the hawthorn's buds and thorns, and those branches of the understock which will not be grafted. ("You want to leave the tree no doubt about what it's supposed to do.") Force the sap into the scion. Trim most growth from apple stock, too.

Basically, you can graft onto any volunteer apple, pear, or hawthorn trees you find on your land, best if they're quite young. For stock, Fred starts his own super-hardy variety of crabapple from seed. If you have a favorite variety of mature tree you want to propagate, take scions from the newest, sappest shoots - the waterspouts - but from a part of the tree which had the fruit you like. Scions should be a few inches long and anything up to 3/8" in diameter. They must be given a quick dip in melted paraffin or beeswax, as a protective coating. You can take scions in the fall after leaf-drop and refrigerate till spring, but best to cut them in spring before bud-break.

Protect young trees from rodents with a loose collar of wire screening 2' up the trunk, and a little into the soil.

"Stock-Saver" Splice Graft

(recommended for beginners - most commonly used graft) "Use this one before bud-break in April, and with any luck at all, you'll get better than 50% takes... Graft several on each tree... In top-working, graft only upright, growing limbs."

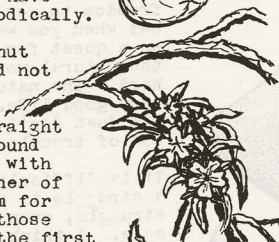
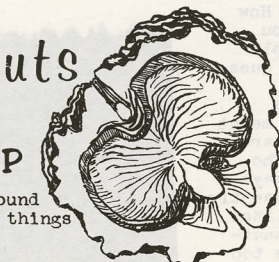
TOOLS: a sharp knife, some masking or freezer tape, and rubber bands (the tape and rubber band fall off by themselves when their job is done.)

← To root or main limb when topgrafting

STOCK
Cut on same angle
SCION
Scion waxed before grafting into scion

STOCK SCION
Stock and scion spliced (aligned) - Be sure one side of bark of stock and scion are even. Diameters should be similar.

STOCK SCION
Freezer or masking tape wound over splice to seal union.
Rubber band wound over tape to tighten union so graft will start sooner (generally about 3 weeks)
STOCK SCION
Leave this stock sprout on graft - KEEP THESE CUT OFF.
untill growth from scion is 4" long. Then cut off.





RAISED BED MAGIC

(or how we grow 100 lbs of carrots in a 30-foot row)

Over the years I've been experimenting with the technique of growing certain vegetables in raised beds, or long mounds 10"-20" wide and 4"-8" in height. Besides a tremendous yield increase per square foot of garden space, there are certain other advantages:

1 Increasing depth of topsoil in root region of plants - better nutrients supply; more

depth for growing long, straight roots of carrots, parsnips.

2 Acceleration of soil-warming in spring - we started our

first spinach, lettuce, and peas the last week of March, and they're doing well.

3 Improved drainage - a great boon for heavy soils or rainy spells - keeps seeds high above standing water for better germination.

4 Easy to mulch.

5 No stakes to mark rows.

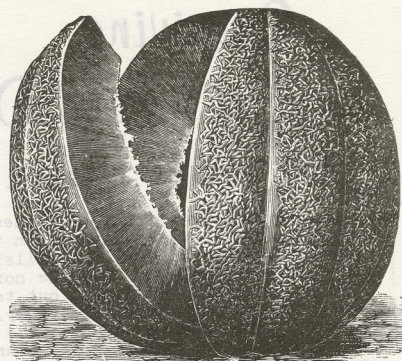
6 Stops runoff on slopes.

Contact me for specific spacing and variety recommendations

Kiln Yard

The kiln squats like a sullen god among chipped brick, shattered pots three empty jugs of Tokay
The easing drain of piss like a dark corner - vapor rising through first light with the fresh smolder of new pots, strewn like oblate babies on the blackened hay.

Allen Hoey



VIRTUALLY UNPUBLISHED BUT EXPERIENCED POET WILL WORK ON COMMISSION.

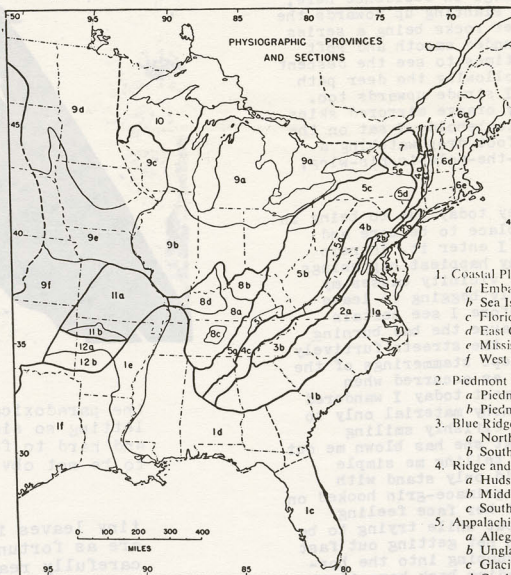
6-12 LINE NATURE LYRIC \$15.
SONNET (ON GENERAL TOPIC OF YOUR CHOICE): 50.
HAIKU (ON CURRENT SEASON) 5.
POT LUCK 10.

WILL CONFER ON COMMEMORATIVE, CONGRATULATORY, LAUDATORY AND OTHER SPECIAL-PURPOSE VERSE.

YOU GET ALL DRAFTS AND TWO TYPED COPIES.

RON NEWSOME BIRDSFOOT FARM CANTON, N.Y.

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCES OF EASTERN NORTH AMERICA



1. Coastal Plain
 - a Embayed section
 - b Sea Island section
 - c Floridian section
 - d East Gulf Coastal Plain
 - e Mississippi Alluvial Plain
 - f West Gulf Coastal Plain
2. Piedmont Province
 - a Piedmont Upland
 - b Piedmont Lowland
3. Blue Ridge Province
 - a Northern section
 - b Southern section
4. Ridge and Valley Province
 - a Hudson-Champlain section
 - b Middle section
 - c Southern section
5. Appalachian Plateaus Province
 - a Allegheny Mountain section
 - b Unglaciated Allegheny Plateau
 - c Glaciated Allegheny Plateau
 - d Catskill Mountains
 - e Mohawk section
 - f Cumberland Mountains
 - g Cumberland Plateau
6. New England Province
 - a White Mountain section
 - b Green Mountain section
 - c Taconic section
 - d New England Upland (including Reading Prong)
 - e Seaboard Lowland
7. Adirondack Province
8. Interior Low Plateaus Province
 - a Highland Rim section
 - b Bluegrass section
 - c Nashville Basin
 - d Shawnee section
9. Central Lowland
 - a Great Lake section
 - b Till Plains section
 - c Driftless section
 - d Western Young Drift section
 - e Dissected Till Plains
 - f Osage section
10. Superior Upland - a part of the Laurentian Upland
11. Ozark Plateaus Province
 - a Ozark Plateau (including Salem and Springfield Plateaus)
 - b Boston Mountains
12. Ouachita Province
 - a Arkansas Valley
 - b Ouachita Mountains

our technological and political systems fail to recognize natural divisions - We need to gather knowledge of these natural systems so that local culture will diversify and adapt to local ecology.

Appalachian Highlands

From: *Deciduous Forests of Eastern North America*, b, E. Lucy Braun

Hafner Press 1950

Interior Highlands



CAMPING SPECIALTIES
15 E. MAIN ST.
CANTON N.Y. 13617
386-8360

SIERRA DESIGNS
KELTY NORTH FACE
QUALITY BACKPACKING