



## Preparing and planting your orchard

### Summary:

One Planet Matters will provide you with native broadleaf fruit trees to create your orchard. We just ask that you prepare the soil for your trees before we arrive with them. Here is a simple guide explaining what to do. Please complete steps 1 & 2 before we arrive, and the rest we will go through with you!

### What you will need: ☐

- Spade
- Garden Fork Compost (if you have poor quality or clay soil)
- Mulch

### What we will provide:

- Trees Ties
- Tree Guards
- Mallet / club
- hammer

### Key Stage / Age group: All

### Time needed:

**Location:** Outside, in a spacious and prepped area

### Curriculum links:

#### Science: Living Things and Their Habitats (Key Stage 1 and 2):

- Recognising and describing the basic needs of plants for survival.
- Identifying and naming common plants in the local environment.
- Observing and describing how seeds and bulbs grow into mature plants.

#### Geography: Place Knowledge (Key Stage 1)

- Exploring the importance of sustainable land use and the impact of human activities on the environment.

### Activity links:

This activity works well with lots of other activities, such as science investigations, IT presentations and any other growing-related activities.

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## 1 - Decide how you want to position your trees

Traditionally, orchards are planted with the trees in rows, however you may decide to plant your trees in curves, or even in a cluster.



### Just make sure that you:

- Dig holes for your trees where they will get sufficient sunlight and soil depth, and where they aren't too close to other trees or large shrubs.
- Space your trees far enough apart so that they do not compete with each other for root or canopy growth. A good guide is to leave 10-12ft between trees.

## 2- Dig a hole which is just a bit bigger than the root system

We recommend digging square holes, as this encourages root growth. Begin by taking just the top layer of grass off, leaving as much soil in the ground as possible - this will mean there is more soil to cover the roots back up with. Break up the soil with a fork and use the spade to place the soil next to the hole.

Some trees come with compact rootstock and others have roots which protrude more, so we say to dig each hole about 35cm wide, and then we can make some holes wider on the day if needed.

In terms of depth, about the length of a shovel's head (about 35cm) should be perfect. You will see a notch just above the roots on the trunk of the tree - this is where the fruit tree has been grafted. We want to make sure that this notch sits just above the soil once the tree has been planted. Have a look at our video resources page where our tree expert Rob explains this in more detail.



### 3 - Plant the tree & add the stake

Place the tree in the hole, adjusting the size to fit the rootstock. Place the stake next to the tree and hammer it in so it stays upright - make sure you don't damage the rootstock while doing this. Then tie the tree to the stake, ensuring the tree is straight upright.



### 4 - Fill in the hole and firm down the soil

Using the soil that you dug out, fill the hole back up to cover the root system. If you have clay or poor quality soil, mix some compost into the soil. Press in the soil around the tree and stake with your hands. Don't stamp on it as this will compact the soil too much - gently pressing the soil down is perfect. This is a good time to add a tree guard if you have rabbits or deer who live nearby.

### 5 - Mulch around the tree

Using a good compost or manure, mulch around the tree. You could use many things, including compost, leafmould, woodchip, well-rotted manure, or straw.

#### **Mulch is important for young trees for a few reasons:**

- Keeps moisture in the soil.
- Feeds the tree with nutrients.
- Keeps weeds down, which reduces competition while the tree is young.

