



7 Tips for Fruit Trees in Small Spaces

To many people an orchard is a field with big fruit trees and perhaps animals grazing beneath when actually it is possible to have an orchard almost anywhere: it is just a case of the right tree for the right situation. Young fruit trees are highly flexible and adaptable and can be bent, trained and tied into all manner of shapes which will then set and the new shoots will grow to that form.

This means that we can grow fruit on a wide range of tree forms.

Here we look at few of the commonest ones

Dwarfing trees

As discussed in the Planning & Planting Sheet, fruit trees come on different rootstocks which determine their size. For smaller spaces, be sure to get a dwarfing or semi-dwarfing stock, selection of the right tree for the right space being key to good planting.

Cordons

A form of fruit tree planted at an angle – usually secured to wires or a fence – which is then pruned to a series of stubby branches upon which the fruit is borne. The angle supposedly reduces the vigour.



Espaliers

The classic walled garden trained fruit tree where the main trunk has layers or arms of branches that go left and right, often grown against walls or fences. These trees can be hard to train and take many years to develop into a good shape. Probably not one for beginners.

Step-overs

Originally a Victorian creation of a short tree with just two branches, one going left and the other right, often used as edging around borders and vegetable beds. Can be immensely productive for such small trees.



Apples over an arch

An easy way to create a division between two areas or over a path. A simple arch be it wood or metal with a tree planted either side, tying in the branches required and clipping out those not required.

After a number of years the arch frame can be removed leaving an entirely living fruit arch.



Tree in a pot

On a small rootstock it is possible to grow a fruit tree in a large container. It will require regular feeding and watering but can be productive for many years and enables fruit to be grown by those who have no open ground.

