

How to Espalier Fruit Trees **(Es . pal . ya)**

DEFINITION: Tree/shrub branches trained to grow flat on a supported framework. Refers to both the support frame and pruning technique

LANDSCAPE/GARDEN USE:

- Small space . Conserve space . Camouflage structures
- Wind/Visual block . Living fence . Decorative accent
- Eliminates ladder . Reduces pruning difficulties

Note: Place in full sun to south/southeast location

ESPALIER PATTERN: Pattern will influence plant selection and required maintenance

- Design landscape area and sketch espalier before plant purchase
- Pattern:
 - Informal - limited only by imagination
 - Formal - Horizontal T, Single Cordon (vertical/oblique), Step-Over (fence), U-Shaped (single, double, triple), Candlestick, Belgian Fence, Fan

TREE SELECTION:

- Any flexible lateral branched, attractive flowers, fruit, foliage or attractive bark plant can be espaliered
- Branching as close to desired pattern
- 8 to 12 inch branch spacing
- Spur or Tip fruit bearing

Spur:

Red/Golden Delicious	Winesap
McIntosh	Fuji
Honeycrisp	Jonagold
Jonathan	

Tip:

Pink Lady	Granny Smith
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BUILDING ESPALIER (support):

- Select planting site
- Trellis - wood/wire/turn-buckles
- Direct wall anchoring - brick, concrete block, wood siding, etc.
- 6 inches to one foot away from background structure (air movement, pruning, tying, maintenance, create depth, back lighting, etc.)

PLANTING ESPALIER TREE:

- Plant slightly in front of support
- Soil amendment is often needed
- Use proper planting procedure
- Start with a young tree
- Mower/grasswhip determines height of first cordon

PRUNING/TIEING ESPALIER:

- Requires regular pruning
- Prune cordons to desired length - 10 feet
- Keep back-up leader
- Summer pruning - July/August
 - Sideshoots - when young bark starts to turn brown
 - Cut back to 2 or 3 buds, 3/8" and 45% to desired bud
 - Remove wall side growth
 - Trunk shoots and suckers
- Winter pruning (dormant)
 - Shorten long shoots - 2 or 3 buds
 - Spur pruning - weak/poor placement
- Tying
 - Guide new growth with flexible tape
 - Tie close to branch and cut tape tails
 - Remove tape as plant growth dictates



In our gardens, we have apple trees on either side of the pergola and a nectarine behind the compost bins.

Factsheet [Espalier – Wisconsin Horticulture](#)