

Collecting Apple Wood (scions) for Grafting & Budding

You are encouraged, but not required, to bring in your own apple wood as the source for buds and scions (pronounced *sigh-ons*) you intend to clone/ graft. Otherwise, we will have a variety of apple wood to choose from including crabapples and antique heritage strains.

1. Wait as late in the winter as possible to collect scionwood but before bud-break. Ideally, cutting of scion wood would be done when the temperatures have been above freezing for several days. Don't cut scions during bitter cold days.
2. Only fully dormant wood should be cut. If the buds are swelling, "breaking" open, or leafed out, don't bother.
3. Select clean, healthy, one-year old wood free of insect damage, winter damage, or disease. Good one-year old wood is often a deep burgundy-red color with buds spaced proportionately 1-4 inches apart on the scion. If the wood has fruiting spurs (spike or thorn-like), that is two year old wood and is generally not acceptable.
4. Water sprouts (vigorous shoots usually the result of pruning or branch damage) are a good source of scion wood. Make sure such sprouts are from the parent tree and not root sprouts. Sprouts from the roots are totally unacceptable as scionwood.

5. Using pruners disinfected with a mild bleach solution and rinsed thoroughly with water, scions may be cut into 6-12 inch lengths. You may seal cut ends with a quick dip in hot candle wax, but it is not necessary. Place scions in a closed but not completely air tight plastic bag with a slightly damp paper towel around the base of the cut ends. No need to do the same for the top of scions even if they have exposed cuts.
6. Enclose a variety label or identifying tag in each bag of scion wood, even if bringing only one bag. This will help reduce mix-ups of wood when working around others.
7. Store in a refrigerator making sure the wood DOES NOT freeze or dry out. Check weekly to make sure paper towel remains moist, keeping the scions hydrated but not saturated.
8. Avoid collecting wood from strains like Jonathon which are subject to fire blight, a serious apple tree disease. Trees dying from old age and NOT disease are OK. This is a great opportunity to preserve Great Gran Pa's favorite McIntosh tree on the back 40.
9. Please do not bring in any wood taken from trees known or suspected of having a disease. All wood will be inspected prior to grafting and may be "banned" from the workshop should it be found to harbor insects or diseases.