

How to Collect and Save Scion or Bud Wood

Scion wood can be collected immediately prior to being used for grafting or budding or it can be stored for a few days, weeks or months prior to being used for grafting or budding. It is CRITICAL that all scions (cuttings) are completely dormant when they are collected and stored. In this context, dormancy means that the buds which will break open to produce new growth (flowers, leaves, and stems) are not growing and are completely encased in bud scales. If these buds have broken open and new growth is occurring, the scion cannot be used or saved! Where some buds are open, yet others are still dormant, the portion of the branch or scion with open buds can be cut off and the remaining dormant scion can still be used or stored. If leaves are present, these leaves can simply be stripped away prior to storing the collected scion. It is not the presence of leaves that determine if the scion is dormant, but rather if the buds have broken dormancy and have begun growing.

Scions of deciduous fruit can be collected during the winter and stored until early spring to be used for grafting or budding. Grafting or budding should be done when the rootstock or understock is actively growing or will soon be actively growing. If the grafting or budding is done too early in the winter or spring on deciduous fruit, the scion may break dormancy and begin growing before the graft union forms. If this occurs, the scion will use up the stored "food" in the scion and will die. The longer the bud or scion remains on the rootstock before the graft union form, the more vulnerable it is to being knocked off or injured by weather or animals. Some very low chill deciduous fruit varieties begin growing very early in January in areas with mild winters. If you are collecting winter scion wood of deciduous fruit in a very low chill warm winter area, you may want to collect and store scions of deciduous fruit trees collected in the winter before the first couple of weeks in January.

Scions of deciduous fruit can also be collected during the early to mid summer and be used immediately or stored. This scion wood is collected from the current season's growth and must be mature, in the semi-hardwood or hardwood condition. Soft wood is not mature and is not usable. It is CRITICAL that the buds are fully dormant. Again, in this context, dormancy means that the buds which will break open to produce new growth (flowers, leaves, and stems) are not growing and are completely encased in bud scales. If these buds have broken open and new growth is occurring, the scion cannot be used or saved. If leaves are present, simply strip away the leaves prior to using or storing the collected scion.

Scions of evergreen fruit (citrus, avocado, mango, sapote and other subtropical fruit) must also be dormant. Once again, it is critical that the scions are fully dormant. As mentioned before, dormancy in this context means that the buds which will break open to produce new growth (flowers, leaves, and stems) are not growing and are completely encased in bud scales. The dormant buds should be plump and fully formed but not growing. If these buds have broken open and new growth is occurring, the scion cannot be used or saved. Where there is a branch that has some dormant buds and some buds which have broken dormancy and have begun growing, the portion of the branch that has growing buds can be cut off and the portion of the branch with dormant buds can be used or saved. The scion wood must be mature, in the semi-hardwood or hardwood condition. Soft wood is not mature and is not usable. In some types of

fruit (citrus or tropical guava for example) immature wood is very angular or square in cross section and is not usable as scion wood. As the wood matures, the wood becomes round or oval in cross section.

1. Cuttings should be taken from wood that is no older than 1-2 years old. Current season semi hardwood or hardwood cuttings can also be used. The cuttings should be about the size of a pencil (6"-8" long and 1/8" to 3/4" in diameter).
2. Make a slanted cut at the top of your scions; this will point "up" in the growth direction. Make a straight cut at the bottom of your scions.
3. Properly label each of your bundled cuttings.
4. Do not allow your cuttings to dry out, store them in damp paper towels (or damp newspaper) in plastic bags in the refrigerator. Do not store cuttings in the freezer.
5. Using an organic or synthetic fungicide (powder or liquid) when storing scions will help to prevent fungus from developing on the scions while they are being stored.
6. Check your scions every week or two. Remove and throw away any scions or cuttings that have begun to sprout as these will produce ethylene gas and will cause any still dormant scions to grow. Also remove and discard any scions that show signs of developing fungus.

Scions of subtropical fruit or of deciduous fruit that is collected during the late spring or summer should be used as soon as possible as these do not normally store for as long as scion wood that is collected from deciduous fruit during the winter.



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