

Collecting and Grafting Evergreen Scionwood in the San Francisco Bay Area

Collection of evergreen scions requires a sharper eye for detail than the straightforward collection of 1st-year wood for deciduous fruit tree scions. Evergreen tree buds should not be unfurling new leaves nor be swollen in preparation for a flush of new growth. Look for buds that are pointed and closed. If warm weather has forced the trees along (sometimes up to a month early), the center of the tree or lower branches may have a few branches with dormant buds for usable scions.

Rootstocks generally should be slightly ahead of the scion. Rootstock in containers can be taken into a greenhouse or warmer-than-usual location such as a protected sunny wall about two weeks before grafting. This causes a flush of growth and the tree will have increased levels of the generative auxins necessary for a quick callusing of the graft. If budding rather than grafting, citrus rootstocks especially need to be prepared with this flush of growth. In most cases, scions may be collected much ahead of use although some collectors say it is better to cut right before use. Trimming rather than pulling off leaves will minimize damage to the axillary buds. If scions are stored in a frost-free refrigerator rather than an old-fashion kind, add an outer bag over all the individually labeled and bagged scions and keep in a lower drawer to help preserve the wood. A few drops of water in the bags will help keep the scions moist longer.

The following table summarizes conditions for various evergreen fruit:

| Plant | Collecting Scions | Grafting |
|--|---|---|
| Loquat | Collect between flushes of growth, when firm, not in bloom; can use fuzzy growth buds plus those further down stem. | Graft during any season. |
| Carambola | Pick between flushes of growth, when firm, not in bloom. | |
| Passion fruit | | Needs substantial rootstock so these are usually propagated from cuttings instead. |
| Citrus | Collect anytime but trim off any brand new growth which will wilt. Look for fat buds on newer growth, not buds with tiny leaves. May have to search inside of tree to find good wood. | Graft when tree is actively growing and bark slipping, generally between March and September. |
| Carob | Collect between flushes of growth. | Graft in spring, just as rootstock buds break. |
| Capulins | When dormant, collect longest wood from last year's growth. Two-year old wood may be unusable as Capulins tend to shed buds. | Use when rootstock is swelling just before bud break |
| Mangos | Pick anytime between flushes of growth. | Anytime except during cold temperatures |
| Myrtaceous - | | Grafting is very difficult. Condition of rootstock is very important. |
| Myrtaceous-feijoas (Pineapple Guava), pitanga (Surinam Cherry) | Scions can be collected at any time but use those that are old enough to have developed a definitely russet bark. | Some feel that feijoas and pitangas should be completely dormant at the time of grafting. Others think that they should be in full flush of growth. |
| Avocado | Scions will store up to three weeks only. Choose wood on the lower half of last year's growth flush - the pointed axillary buds of the upper half produce only flowers. | |
| Sapote | Scions keep almost indefinitely. | |
| Cherimoya | Scions keep for a couple of months. Cherimoya should be collected during the deciduous phase and stored until the rootstock begins growth. Never graft cherimoya while the rootstock is dormant and deciduous - callusing does not occur. | |
| Macadamia | Wrap branch tightly with a wire several weeks before cutting to force scion to store food and stimulate development of latent buds. | |

This information on preparation of rootstock and specific kinds of scions came primarily from research by Idell and from experiences of C. T. Kennedy from Santa Clara CRFG and Tom Addison from the Golden Gate Chapter. If you have information to add please contact Idell Weydemeyer at 510-223-6291 or iwgarden@earthlink.net.