



Above is California orchardist Herbert Clarence White's diagram for planting a tree.

White Planting Method

When organic expert Herbert Clarence White of Paradise, California plants a tree, he doesn't even glance at the little instruction sheet that the nursery sent with the stock. He proceeds to plant the tree using an unusual method handed down to him by his grandmother years ago. Grandma White's method has worked so well for Herbert over the years that he has used it to plant hundreds-possibly even thousands-of trees. He has seen fruit trees planted by Grandma White's method show 3 or 4 feet of new growth in a year, and start bearing crops in only a couple of seasons. His method requires a lot of work and a lot of raw material in the form of compost, peat and topsoil, but he claims (and others have observed) that the results amply justify the investment in time and material. You start out by digging a hole 3 feet wide and 3 feet deep in which to plant your young fruit tree. Separate the topsoil from the subsoil that is dug from the planting hole. In the bottom of the hole place a couple pieces of 4-inch drain tile and plug up the ends with stones. Fill up the bottom foot of the hole with a mixture of equal parts of topsoil, peat moss and finished compost, plus about 5 pounds of phosphate rock or colloidal phosphate.

On top of that mixture place a layer of small rocks. The next one-foot layer consists of pure topsoil. Now put into the hole a large stone. Spread the roots of the tree over that stone, then fill the rest of the hole with the compost-topsoil-peat-phosphate-rock mixture. As mulch over the planting, place one inch of compost, 3 inches of leaves, plus a layer of stones if desired. White also advises putting 250 to 500 earthworms in the top compost layer, and adds this postscript to the description of his method:

"Does all this sound too weird and grotesque? Too utterly fantastic? If so, far be it from me to try and convince you. But if you are just a wee bit interested in watching a miracle, just try it out on one little tree-following the planting plan as indicated in the diagram carefully-and it will be hard for you to believe your own eyes when that baby tree starts growing."

The planting board is of value to set the trees in line after the field has been staked out. This board is 3 to 4 feet long with a notch at each end and another at one edge in the exact center. Before digging the hole for the tree the board is so placed that the stake, showing where the tree will be, fills in the center notch. A stake is then placed at each end of the board after which the center stake and the board can be removed. After the hole is dug, the planting board is placed over the two remaining stakes in the original position. With the tree trunk in the center notch, the alignment of the original staking will be retained. The tips of the notches in the board should be in line with each other and the board must be used in one position only. How to Grow Vegetables and Fruits by the Organic Method, J. I. Rodale p574-75.

Ellen G. White Instructed in Planting Fruit Trees

While we were in Australia, we adopted the . . . plan . . . of digging deep trenches and filling them in with dressing that would create good soil. This we did in the cultivation of tomatoes, oranges, lemons, peaches, and grapes. {3SM 328.1}

The man of whom we purchased our peach trees told me that he would be pleased to have me observe the way they were planted. I then asked him to let me show him how it had been represented in the night season that they should be planted. I ordered my hired man to dig a deep cavity in the ground, then put in rich dirt, then stones, then rich dirt. After this he put in layers of earth and dressing until the hole was filled. I told the nurseryman that I had planted in this way in the rocky soil in America. I invited him to visit me when these fruits should be ripe. He said to me, "You need no lesson from me to teach you how to plant the trees." {3SM 328.2}

Our crops were very successful. The peaches were the most beautiful in coloring, and the most delicious in flavor of any that I had tasted. We grew the large yellow Crawford and other varieties, grapes, apricots, nectarines, and plums.--Letter 350, 1907.

329 {3SM 328.3}