

# ESPALIER

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What is espalier? Training a plant to an orderly, usually geometric and usually two dimensional form

Why espalier?

- High quality fruit
- Very ornamental
- It's fun!

Plant responses to pruning

- Heading vs. thinning cuts
- Degree of heading
- Effect of location within tree
- Effect of branch orientation

Parts of an espalier

- Leaders: main stems (one or more)
- Arms (or ribs): permanent stems off leaders
- Branches: temporary stems

The goals in espalier

- Maintain tracery of leaders and arms
- Clothe branches or arms thoroughly in flowers and then fruits

Espaliers that work best in this part of the world:

1. Columnar apples or, at least, European pears or spur type apples on dwarfing, precocious rootstocks.
2. Asian pears on semi-dwarfing or dwarfing rootstocks
3. Figs (in minimally heated greenhouse)
4. Red (white, or pink) currants, and gooseberries
  - Train leaders and arms
  - In early summer, cut side branches back to 5"
  - During dormant season, shorten these same branches to 1"

For more information:

***The Pruning Book***, by Lee Reich (Taunton Press, 2010)

***The Ever Curious Gardener: Using a Little Natural Science for a Much Better Garden***, by Lee Reich (New Society Publishers, 2018)