



OPGA Educational Publication

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NAPGA web site: NAPGA.com

OPGA discussion group:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Ohiopawpaw/>

NAPGA Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/NorthAmericanPawpawGrowers>

Collecting & Storing

North American Pawpaw
Scion Wood

I have been advised and followed the traditional advice of collecting scion wood when the temperature has been above freezing for 24 to 48 hours in late winter or early spring (January to March). Be sure that the vegetative buds are healthy and plump and containing as few flower buds as possible since the flower buds must be removed at grafting time. Do not remove the flower buds until ready to graft. Removing the flower buds prior to storage creates open wounds that will allow the scion wood to desiccate and possibly allow fungi or bacteria to enter the wound. You must do advance planning and preparation for successful propagation. Remember that scion wood must be collected and properly stored for later use.

Select straight, smooth, scion wood from 1-year-old wood $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch diameter or larger depending on the type of graft that will be used. Each piece of scion wood (graft stick) should contain at least three buds. Last year's terminal buds are ideal for pawpaws. The terminal buds of some nut trees may not be mature. Mature wood with mature vegetative buds is necessary for budding and grafting.

The scion wood cut 10 to 12 inches long is best. This length fits best in 1 gallon freezer bags. Cutting scion wood into shorter lengths may allow the scion wood to dry out quicker. The cut ends of the scion can be sealed with grafting wax or bees wax.

After sealing the cut ends with grafting wax, bees wax, or paraffin, place in 1 gallon freezer bags. The scion wood may be wrapped with a moist paper towel, sphagnum moss, or wood shavings. This will prevent the scion wood from losing moisture and drying out. Make sure that all excess water has been squeezed out before wrapping the bundle of scion wood. Too much moisture may encourage mold growth. Once cut, the scion wood must be kept cool and moist. Be sure to remove as much of the air from the freezer bags as possible.

The scion wood can be kept throughout the grafting season if cared for properly. The optimum temperatures for the scion wood is between 32^o and 36^o F. Store the scion wood in bundles of no more than six and label each bundle with variety name or other identification, using permanent ink, in a refrigerator. A "dedicated" refrigerator is best for scion wood to prevent problems with ethylene gas.

After the scion wood has been grafted onto the root stock, be sure to remove any buds that break below the new graft. Any bud(s) that break below the new graft will compete with the new graft for nutrients.

Characteristics of good graft sticks:

1. Straight and smooth
2. Healthy and plumb vegetative buds
3. Diameter of scion wood between $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch or larger
4. Insect and disease free
5. At least 10 to 12 inches in length

Remember: Do not allow the scion wood to dry out. Scion wood should not be exposed to the environment, especially dry conditions and/or heat and then placed back in the refrigerator during the grafting season. Remove from the refrigerator the number of graft sticks that will be used only during a grafting session.