



## *Nursery Tree Quality*

It's a good question? and seems to be a part of any conversation when fruit growers get together. I suppose if we think about it, it's quite an individual thing as currently we don't have a standard nursery tree type in our industry, there are currently at least 5 different types of nursery trees that growers require nurseries to produce.

So with this in mind we could come to the conclusion that tree quality is having delivered to the orchard a product that suits the grower's situation and a product that he or she is quite happy to plant and establish.

Nursery tree quality in Australia has improved over the last 5 years with some nurseries producing very well feathered trees, improvements in delivery methods reducing transport damage. But if we were to have this type of tree as the standard across our industry we still have some way to go, growers must think about their own situation as this type of tree may not be for everyone, large feathered trees on dwarfing rootstocks need close attention and a good level of commitment in the first year as any stress related issues from lack of water, fertilizer weed control can be disastrous.

How do growers receive what they want, first of all know what suits your situation followed by very good planning and most of all communication with your nursery. Communication must be paramount; nurseries can't be criticized for failure to deliver if they don't know what your specification is.

APFIP developed a nursery tree specification some time ago; this specification covers 3 different types of nursery trees. 1 year old whips, 18 month old budded and 2 year old nursery trees, APFIP considers this spec quite achievable with good nursery practices. The specification is posted on the APFIP website and can be viewed at [www.apfip.com.au](http://www.apfip.com.au)

APFIP is currently considering introducing a nursery tree procurement service for growers; this would involve APFIP taking on a support role with growers to assist them in acquiring nursery trees to their specifications.

APFIP's aim is not to be a tree broker but to work with growers and nurseries and help bridge the communication gap. We anticipate that growers would contact APFIP with their nursery tree requirements including tree type and specification; we would then seek out a nursery that could complete the order. Once an order has been confirmed between the grower and the nominated nursery APFIP's role would be to supervise the growing of the nursery trees and keep the grower up to date on their progress, as well help develop the relationship between the two parties. Growers would need to be committed to planning, advanced ordering and to meeting the payment schedule required by the nursery, this could include deposits and progressive payment options. Nurseries would need to be committed to the production of trees to an agreed specification so as the anticipated outcome for each party is fulfilled.

Any questions or feedback on this proposed service would be welcomed.

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