

CROSCOMBE COMMUNITY ORCHARD MAINTENANCE PLAN

This plan has been created to ensure the health, productivity and longevity of the trees at Croscombe's Community Orchard.

Soil Testing: Test soil pH and nutrient levels annually. Amend soil with compost or fertilizers as needed. 

Mulching: Annually apply mulch around trees to retain moisture, suppress weeds, and regulate soil temperature.

Irrigation: Ensure trees receive adequate water, especially during dry spells.

Pruning and Training - Winter Pruning: Prune deciduous trees during dormancy to remove dead or diseased wood and shape the canopy. - Summer Pruning: Light pruning in summer to manage growth and improve air circulation. Engage the Croscombe community by organising events to learn and educate about pruning trees.

Training Young Trees: Use stakes or ties to guide young trees into a strong structure.

Pest and Disease Management - Monitoring: Regularly inspect trees for signs of pests or diseases. - Organic Solutions: Use organic methods like neem oil, insecticidal soap, or beneficial insects to manage pests. Prevention: Apply dormant sprays in winter to prevent fungal diseases and overwintering pests.

Fertilization - Timing: Fertilize in early spring and late fall to support growth and fruit production. - Method: Use organic fertilizers like compost, manure, or balanced granular fertilizers. - Avoid Over-Fertilization: Excessive fertilizer can harm trees and the environment.

Weed Control - Manual Removal and grass cutting: Regularly remove weeds by hand or with tools to reduce competition for nutrients. Regular grass cutting around the trees (already in place), and strimming if and where necessary of the surrounding areas mindful of possible disturbance to natural wildlife.

Harvesting - Timing: Harvest fruit when ripe to prevent overloading branches and attracting pests. Organize harvest events to engage the Croscombe community and share the produce.

CPC OWG: Create a schedule for regular maintenance tasks and assign roles.

Maintenance Logs: Document all activities, including pruning, fertilization, pest control, and harvests. - Tree Health Records: Track the health and growth of each tree over time. - Feedback: Collect input from OWG and community members to improve the plan.

Long-Term Planning - Tree Replacement: Plan for replacing old or diseased trees to maintain orchard productivity.

Diversity: Ideally introduce new fruit varieties to diversify the orchard and reduce disease risks.

Fixtures: regular checks and upkeep of orchard gate, seating and any signage installed.

By following this plan, the community orchard can thrive, providing a well maintained and beautiful space for the benefit of the whole Croscombe community, and a sense of shared purpose for years to come.

February 2025