

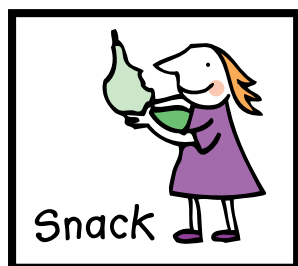
Dwarfing Pears and Pollination

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We grow pears in dwarfing forms for the same reasons we grow other types of dwarfed trees: small trees are much more precocious in starting to bear fruit in about their third year. This is very important as pears on normal pear stock live a very long time, grow into large trees and can take many years to come into fruit.

Dwarfed pear trees are easier to spray (cherry slug), to protect from birds, to prune and to harvest.

Pears, as apples, often have a biennial habit e.g. they tend to bear a large crop of fruit one year and have a rest the next. Varieties on dwarfing stocks are easier to thin in the "on" year thereby not stressing the tree too much and permitting it to bear more regularly.

Unfortunately in the case of pears we don't have many different rootstocks to choose from as is the case with apples. On the other hand the close relative of pear - the quince - has been found to provide a satisfactory dwarfing stock and indeed in many parts of Europe virtually all pears are grown on quince rootstocks. The "Anger" quince, known as quince A has been found to be the most satisfactory clone and has been widely used for both quince and pear trees and even medlars.

Some varieties of pears however don't grow happily on quince rootstocks and don't make a satisfactory graft union or make a weak and short lived tree. To overcome this problem the practice of double grafting is used: we graft a compatible variety onto the quince then a year later the desired pear variety is grafted on top of that. It's a complicated way to produce a fruit tree and takes a whole extra year, but is well worth the trouble.

Dwarfed pears are suitable as espaliers, pear arches and fan trees on walls. Pears on normal pear stocks are much too vigorous for this and constant hard pruning tends to make a tree produce ever more vegetative growth rather than flowers and fruit.

Pears definitely require cross pollination. Although I've heard it said that Williams is partly self fertile, my books say:

- Williams is compatible with Beurre Hardy, Conference, Packhams, Beurre Bosc and Comice
- Beurre Hardy is compatible with Conference, Beurre Bosc, Comice, Williams and Beurre d'Anjou
- Conference with Beurre Bosc, Comice, Beurre d'Anjou
- Beurre Bosc with Beurre hardy, Williams, Conference, Comice
- Comice with Williams, Beurre Hardy, Beurre Bosc, Conference and Beurre d'Anjou
- Beurre d'Anjou with Beurre Hardy, Conference, Williams and Comice

This would imply that any 3 of my pears would give satisfactory pollination.

Bob Magnus