
Module I

Organizing the training

Preparing a training session

How you prepare for a training session will depend on the people you are training. In one scenario, farmer trainers train farmers, and in another, resource people such as NGO or extension staff train the farmer trainers.

Farmer trainers train other farmers

Farmer trainers usually hold this type of training session in an informal setting such as on their own farm or on the farm of the farmer who requests the training. Other farmers should be able to attend the training session, if this is agreed upon beforehand.

The farmer trainer should always make sure that all the necessary inputs like scions, rootstock and tools are available. The farmers who want the training could supply the rootstock.

Farmer trainer's training

Resource personnel such as NGO or extension staff plan and train the farmer trainers. Note that for the training to be most effective, you should have a maximum of 15 to 20 farmer trainees in any one session. Follow the steps below when you prepare:

- Begin your own planning a month before the training.
- Limit the number of participants to not more than 20 for intensive, practical training.
- Select participants by their interest, experience and need for training in fruit production or nursery management.
- You may mix participants with different skills and levels of knowledge.
- Prepare a tentative list of participants.
- Invite participants at least 2 weeks before the date of the training session.
- You may invite participants in writing by letter or memo or orally.
- In the invitation, make clear the place, time, duration and contents of the training.
- In the invitation, make clear the arrangements for food, transport, accommodation.
- In the invitation, make clear that farmers should bring their own tools such as knives and secateurs.
- Ask the farmer participants to confirm if they plan to attend the session. If some of those invited do not confirm, invite others and try to enlist a full number.

Selecting participants

When selecting participants, keep in mind that a farmer should

- be a practising farmer with tree crops on farm and interested in tree-crop production
- be one who interacts well with other farmers and who is accepted in the community
- live within walking distance from the training site, to avoid logistic problems
- have skills in organization and facilitation

Preparing for the workshop

Before starting the training or using the manual, you should

- discuss and determine the objectives and follow-up of the training
- analyse the target group of proposed participants to determine what the training content should be and how to structure it
- review the material provided in the manual and adapt and supplement it according to local conditions
- remember you will need to follow up with monitoring and evaluation and thus use appropriate forms to collect data from the farmers

Training contents

Select the relevant training modules, considering

- the main fruit trees in the area
- the farmers' interests and skills

Schedule the training sessions not to conflict with important seasonal production activities such as planting, pruning, orchard management and harvesting.

- Set a timetable for opening, teaching, discussion, practicals, break, closing.
- Be flexible and make changes in the schedule if necessary, but be reliable and punctual.
- Arrive at the training place in good time to make the necessary preparations.

Place, timing, inputs

If you conduct the training session in an unknown area or far from your place, you should come a day before the training to organize materials, site visits, nursery visits, accommodation of participants, and so on.

Indoor training—the theory

- Theory and classroom discussions should not be longer than 4 hours a day.
- Arrange to have a room for your teaching, such as a school classroom, a meeting room or assembly hall.
- Be sure it is equipped with chairs and tables, and a blackboard or flipchart with pad is desirable.
- Theory is more vivid if you include drawings and handouts.

Outdoor training—the practical work

- Fruit orchards or fruit tree nurseries will be of main interest.
- Involve the nursery owner or orchard owner or manager, who should be informed of your main activities and should be present during the training.
- Agree on when you will come and how long you expect to stay.

Planning the training sessions

- 1-day training, for in-village training with farmers from the area; sessions can be repeated 2 to 3 times a year.
- 2-day sessions serve as a compromise between content and participants' time constraints; follow on with another 2-day session in approximately 6 months.
- 3- to 5-day sessions are very intensive; you must balance carefully between theory and practical, as farmers are not used to staying in a classroom for a whole day.
- Plan each day separately to combine theory and practical.
- Get a second resource person to assist if possible.
- Consider the workload of the farmers.
- Consider seasonal events in farming, such as onset of rains, planting, weeding, harvesting, that may make farmers too busy to attend.
- Avoid public holidays, religious holidays, or any public event such as the opening of school or elections.
- Before the training date, arrange for food for lunch and breaks for all the farmer trainers.
- As you know the common fruits in the area, be prepared to discuss mainly these relevant fruits and the related activities in orchard or nursery.
- For beginning fruit growers, regard the training as creating their awareness of the potentials of fruit production.
- For advanced fruit growers or nursery owners, concentrate more on nursery activities or orchard management and specific topics.
- Enquire of the farmers on the first day of the training what they expect to learn, so you can effectively address their topics and questions.

Inputs for classroom teaching

You will need

- for writing: paper, pens, marker pens, blackboard
- training aids: handouts, illustrations, pictures, your own drawings. sketch or draft on paper beforehand any picture or diagram you may want to present on the blackboard
- fruit tree samples: rootstock, scions, grafted or budded trees that have taken
- tools: sharpening stone, a grafting knife or other sharp knife, pruning secateur, containers of different sizes, grafting tape

You can demonstrate practical activities in the classroom. Demonstrations will attract and interest the farmers and help you avoid 'lecturing'.

Trainers

To be most effective, a team of farmer trainers should conduct the training if the course is to take a long time. A farmer trainer can invite an extension officer to provide backstopping. However, the manual is designed in such a way that an individual farmer can easily follow the steps.

Guidelines for practical training

- Farmers should get the chance to practise as much as possible. If all cannot perform a practical activity, select one or two farmers to carry it out in front of the others, so all can learn from the experience.
- Let farmers discuss and reproduce in a nursery or an orchard the theoretical topics that you have already presented.
- Ask participants questions and discuss the answers. Repeat theory only if the group is not able to cover the topic.
- Demonstrate and explain the practical activities, and then have the farmers do the activities themselves under your supervision and advice.
- Do not criticize a participant for making a mistake; explain the correct way again.
- Keep on hand some first aid material including plasters for cuts in case of any injuries.

See the Trainer's Toolkit in the appendix for more details.

Field work and practical exercises

The main aim of developing the manual in the existing format is to give the participants a practical feel of the content through hands-on training. To use the manual and train effectively, the training should be conducted at a site where the participants have access to either a nursery or an orchard and classroom work is limited.

Field activities should be organized well in advance. Before the training, the trainer should assess the site and decide which topics to emphasize, according to local farmer requirements. The most important point the trainer should consider is **to centre the training on problem solving**.

- Make sure that enough of the required tools are available that farmers can practise themselves.
- For grafting, cuttings or any other practical exercise, make sure you have scion material.
- Before using scions of improved cultivars, farmers can use any local material to practise making the cuts.
- For a major practical exercise, prepare a list of tools and inputs required and confirm whether everything is available. Such tools as a hoe, a bucket and soil for soil mixtures should always be available.

Input requirements for grafting training

In a group of 20 participants, form 5 groups of 4 participants. Each farmer can prepare three graftings. You need approximately

- 10 grafting knives (2 for each group)
- 5 pruning secateurs (1 for each group)
- 2 sharpening stones (to be shared by all)
- 80 scions of improved cultivars (4 for each participant)
- 60 rootstock pieces (3 for each participant)
- 100 strips of grafting tape (5 for each participant)
- 60 caps to cover the grafting union (3 for each participant)
- 60 labels (3 for each participant)
- 5 pens or pencils (1 for each group)

Form for preparing practical exercises

In addition to the common tools and inputs, fill in the ones you need for your specific training exercise.

| Tool or input | Required number | Available |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Hoe | 1 | 1 |
| Shovel | 1 | 1 |
| Rake | | |
| Bucket | | |
| | | |
| | | |
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| Fruit production training—Evaluation | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| Place | Trainer's name | Date |
| Name of participant | From village or hamlet | Remarks |
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Further forms for practical exercises

| Soil preparation exercise |
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| Topsoil (2 debes) |
| Farmyard manure (1 debe) |
| Sand (1 debe) |
| Water (1 debe) |
| Jembe |
| Cheppe |
| Rack |
| Bucket |
| Polytube containers (10–20) |
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| Pruning exercise |
| Pruning secateur |
| Pruning saw |
| Knife |
| Wax or oilpaint |
| Brush |
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