

A New Grafting Tape[®]

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Over the years, we have used a great variety of products for tying up our chip and T-buds as well as for grafting. Since the late 1970s we have used primarily chip budding for ground budding as well as top working. For this technique we have used such products as:

- 1) Clear plastic strips in roll in various thickness.
- 2) Clear pre-cut plastic strips of various thickness and stretchability.
- 3) Conventional elastic strips.
- 4) Wide elastic strips primarily for ground budding.

All materials have advantages and disadvantages. One of the main disadvantages of all these products is that not one of them disintegrates completely after application. Each of them must be gone over again to remove all or some portion of the tie in order to allow the bud to grow out without inhibition.

A few years ago, we were introduced to a product called "Buddy-Tape". Buddy-Tape is a parafilm-like material, 2¼ cm wide and precut into 7-cm lengths (about 1 inch × 3 inch). The material is very stretchy and seals upon itself.

The material has several advantages over conventional tying materials.

- First, the tape is wide and requires fewer turns around the understock in order to cover the bud wound.
- Second, the tape is very stretchy and will take on the shape easily of any bud or wound under it.
- Third, the tape is self-sealing. When closing off the tape the tier simply doubles up on the last round and pulls the tape off sharply causing it to seal on itself.
- Fourth, the tape is very economical. One covering of the tape has sufficient strength to hold the bud or graft in place. The 7-cm precut pieces are more than long enough to cover most understock, even up to 1½ -inch caliper.
- Fifth, the tape is time efficient. Although it takes a little getting used to by novice tiers, once the tricks are known, the tape is faster than other conventional ties. When ground chip budding, a good budder who does 2500 buds per day can keep two tiers busy with plastic or elastic ties. When using Buddy Tape, one good tier can keep up to the budder.
- Finally, the biggest advantage of Buddy Tape by far is that it disintegrates after 6 to 8 weeks. This fact saves a labor intensive task of reworking the buds to remove the ties.

Last summer we tried Buddy-Tape on top budded standards such as *Prunus* and *Salix*. We experienced that the tape did not disintegrate. This was a surprise as it did disintegrate on the ground buds the same summer. To the credit of the distributor, a representative has visited our nursery on several occasions and together we are working out the problem with several trials, the results of which I hope to share with you at a future date. I do feel the product does merit trial on ground budding.