



FRUIT TREES: CARE AND MAINTENANCE ~ WINTER PRUNING

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Getting Started

- Sunscreen
- Eye protection, long sleeves, hat, gloves
- Pruning shears, loppers, saw
- Sterile equipment



Tools of the Trade



Sharpening the Tools

- Ordinary bathroom cleaner
- Ordinary steel wool
- Flat screwdriver
- Carbide sharpening tool
- Double-sided sharpening stone
- Diamond sharpening tool
- Ordinary household oil



Winter and Summer Pruning

Winter—

- Maintain strong tree structure with well-placed scaffolding branches; remove dormant buds to invigorate the remaining buds
- Eliminate dead, broken, crossing, weak, or poorly spaced branches.
- Remove up to 50% of last year's growth on the fast-growing fruit trees (peach, nectarine)
- Remove up to 20 % of last year's growth from fig, apple, pear and plum.
- Prune during a 7-day rain free period





Summer—

- Maintain a manageable tree size
- Open up the canopy and interior to light and air circulation
- Remove vigorous upright shoots.
- Head cut and thin branches to control tree height.
- May remove up to 30% of the foliage from the tops and sides of the tree without disturbing next year's shoot growth, flowering or fruit production.

Preserve Fruiting Wood

Fruit Born On This Year's Growth:

- Citrus
- Figs (2nd crop in late summer/fall)
- Pomegranates
- Quince

Because these trees bare fruit on branches growing in spring, care should be taken with any spring pruning.

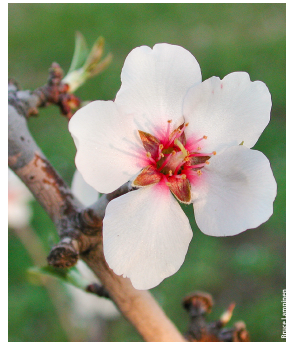


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Fruiting Wood Cont'd

On One Year Old Wood:

- Almonds
- Apricots
- Nectarines
- Olives
- Peaches
- Persimmons
- Figs (1st crop in early summer)



On Two Year Old Wood:

- Asian Pears (terminal spurs 6-8 yrs.)
- Apples & European Pears (terminal spurs, 8-10 yrs.)
- Cherries (lateral spurs 10-12 yrs.)
- Plums (lateral spurs 6-8 yrs.)

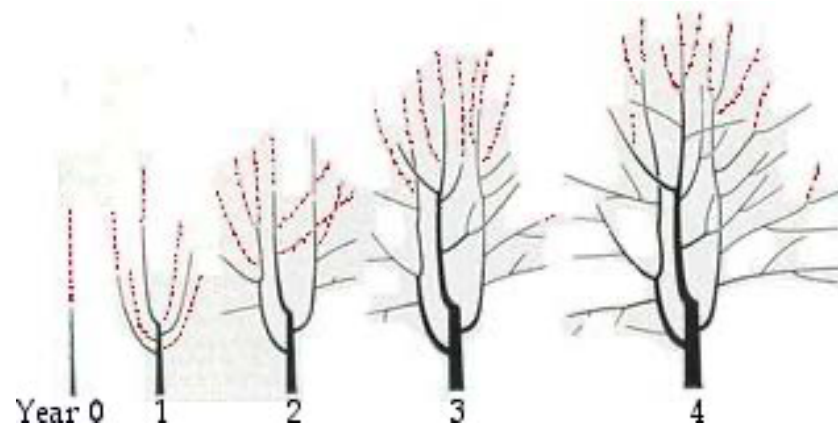


Types of Pruning

At planting, determine which you want to do. Training is done to create scaffold branches, angled 45-60 degrees from trunk (for strength), evenly spaced.

- Modified Central Leader
- Open Center
- Espalier
- Fruit Bush

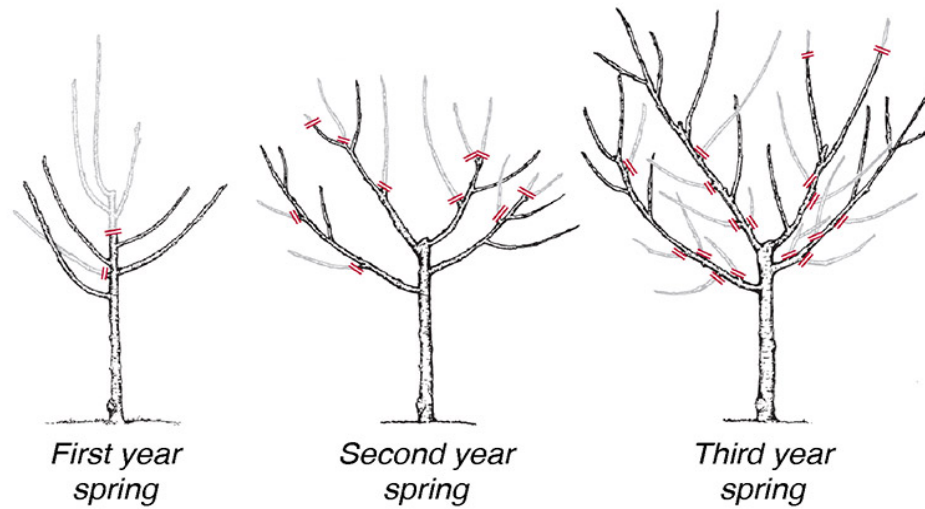
Types of Pruning - Modified Central Leader



University of Minnesota Extension: *Stone fruits for Minnesota gardens*

2-3 tiers of branches, separated by 18-24" of trunk height.

Types of Pruning - Open Center



Open center pruning

University of Minnesota Extension: *Stone fruits for Minnesota gardens*

3-4 scaffold branches re-branch and grow upward in a vase shape.

Types of Pruning - Fruit Bush



Multiple trees planted in the same hole, each pruned to a single canopy.

Types of Pruning - Espalier



Small number of branches spaced in ornamental configuration against a flat surface.

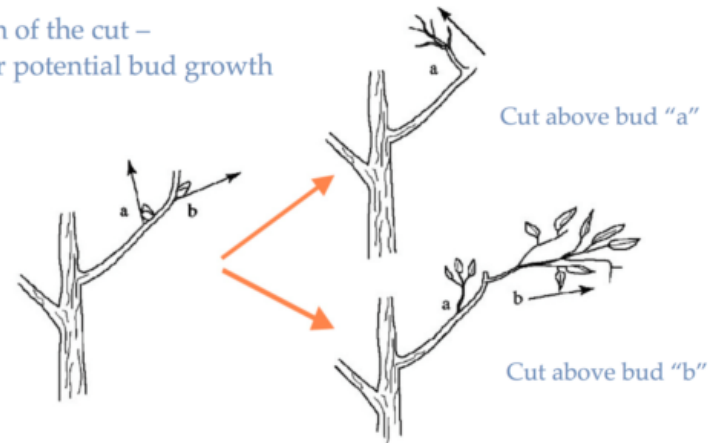
Pruning Technique



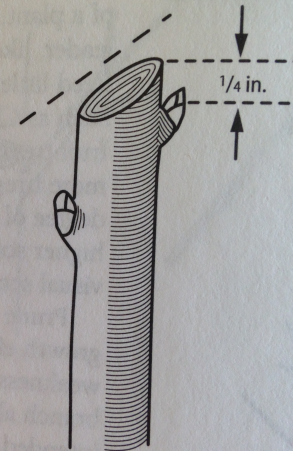
Heading Cuts

- Used to promote lateral growth below the cut
- Prune to an outside bud
- Cut at a 45 degree angle

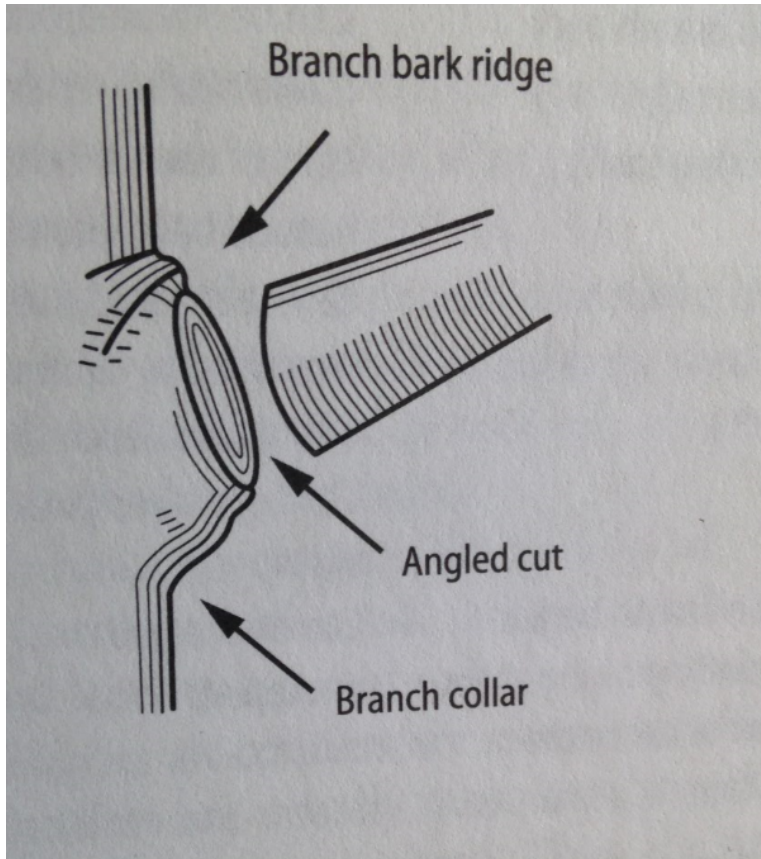
Location of the cut – consider potential bud growth



Make pruning cuts about 1/4 inch (6 mm) above a bud and slightly angled away.
Source: After Caldwell et al. 1972, p.10.



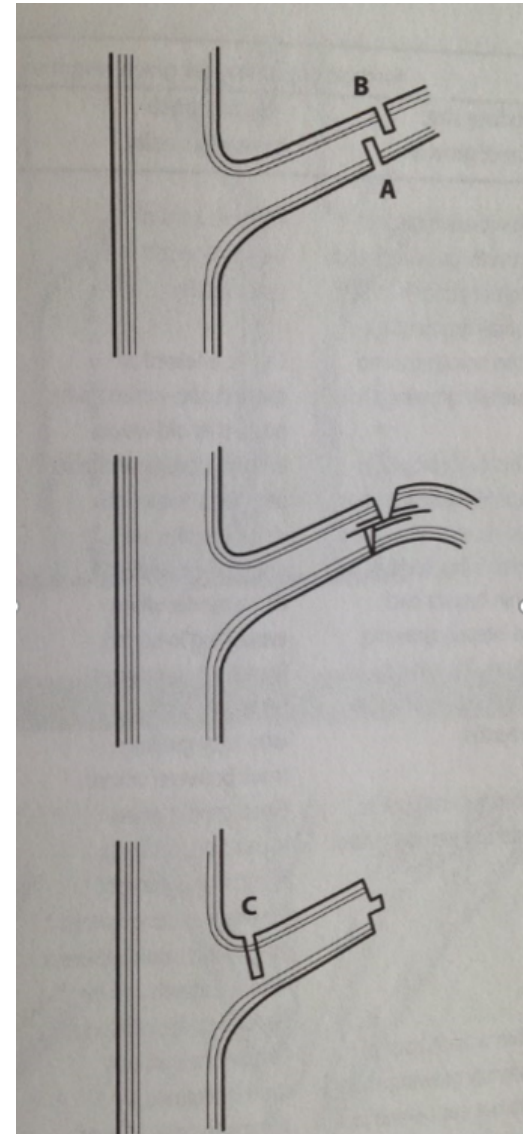
Thinning Cuts



- Used to remove branches or cut to a larger one
- Allows tree to maintain its natural growth habit

Large Cuts

- Use Pruning Saw
- Make Three Cuts
- Do not Seal the Wound



Success With Deciduous Fruit Trees



- Select Varieties suited to your environment
- Exposure to correct sun and watering
- Provide pollinizers where needed
- Protect against pests
- Proper Pruning
- Disease Protection

Selection of Trees for Planting



The number of micro-climates in SLO County make tree selection complicate.

Winter Chill Hours

- Accumulated chill hours trigger break in dormancy
- Cumulative Chill hours: hours between 32-45 degrees F from Nov. 1-Feb. 28
- CIMIS Stations: Atascadero – 1204; Nipomo – 428; SLO-390; SLO West – 621
- Effect of too few or too many chill hours



Environment – Things to Consider

- Sunlight Requirements
- Right size tree for your space
- Self-fruitful; self-sterile; partially self-fruitful
- Proximity to water/drip irrigation



Environment

- Pest management
- Use of soil amendments and mulch
- Slope soil away from trunk; whitewash young trees
- Spacing between trees
- Multiple plantings in same hole



Bare Root Planting Techniques and Requirements

- Advantages of using bareroot trees
- Hole size and depth
- Orientation of bud union
- Basin and mulch
- Slope the soil away from the trunk
- Irrigation
- Water to settle soil around roots.
- Head back the trunk of your new tree to knee height (18-24" from the ground).
- Whitewash





Prune or cut back the new tree



Questions?



Please tell us how you liked today's
program on pruning
Using this web link to an evaluation

<http://ucanr.edu/fruittrees2021>





Back-up slides

Winter Pruning - video



FRUIT THINNING



How to properly thin fruit:

1. Citrus, cherries, olives, quince, figs, almonds, pomegranates--- none needed.
2. Apricots---3-4" apart.
3. Plums---4-6" apart.
4. Peaches and Nectarines---5-7" apart.
5. Apples---leave 1-2 per spur.
6. Pears---leave 1-2 per spur.

Fruits 2-4 can be hand thinned.

Fruits 5-6, having thicker stems, should be thinned with clippers.

DISEASE PROTECTION

- Peach Leaf Curl (*Taphrina deformans*)
- Apricot Dieback (*Eutypa lata*):
- Do not prune persimmons or figs in summer, only in winter.
- Sanitize pruning tools

