

FRUIT TREE PRUNING WORKSHOP

WHY PRUNE

Health of the Tree

To Control Size

To Get the Right Amount of Fruit

WHEN TO PRUNE

Winter

Dormant Pruning is about shaping a tree. Later in winter is better for many plants; fungi and bacteria which may be all-too-present in early winter are rarer now.

Prune to correct shape and/or to create vigorous growth. Save upright branches for summer pruning, but do remove watersprouts (in fact, that's a good first step in a winter pruning).

Prune to remove the "3 D's" – the dead, the diseased, the disoriented.

Summer

Summer Pruning is about controlling the size of a tree to whatever size is manageable for you, while also maintaining the structure, reestablishing the fruiting wood, or simply getting a wayward tree back in balance.

The Summer Solstice in late June marks the midpoint in the annual growth cycle. By this time a tree's resources have migrated from the roots to the foliage. Pruning now will remove some of these resources and slow the tree down; however, it's still early enough in the summer that a tree has plenty of vigor to recover; growth will be at a more moderate pace. Before you prune, appraise the tree and note what looks wrong—too tall, too crowded—or both? Picture the height of the tree you have in mind and prune accordingly. If the tree is a mature tree that has not been pruned on a regular basis and/or is quite overgrown, plan on pruning it back over a three-year period.

TOOLS

Bypass Pruners, Loppers (long-handled pruners), **Pole Pruner, Pruning Saw.**

For cleaning blades: **Rubbing Alcohol** (in a spray bottle is best).

For lubricating: **non-petroleum lubricant** such as Camellia Oil or Felco Lubricant Spray, or food-grade silicone spray can be used on tools with moving parts. Keeping a few clean rags in separate ziplock bags for alcohol or lubricant use makes the job much easier.

TREE STRUCTURE

Central Leader
Open Center
Fan
Espalier

TYPES OF CUTS & CONCEPTS

Identifying nodes and internodes
Heading Cut
Thinning Cut
Apical Dominance
Branch Collar
Height of limbs from ground does not increase
Preventing Tear out
Strong Attachment vs Weak Attachment

HOW MUCH TO PRUNE & WHERE

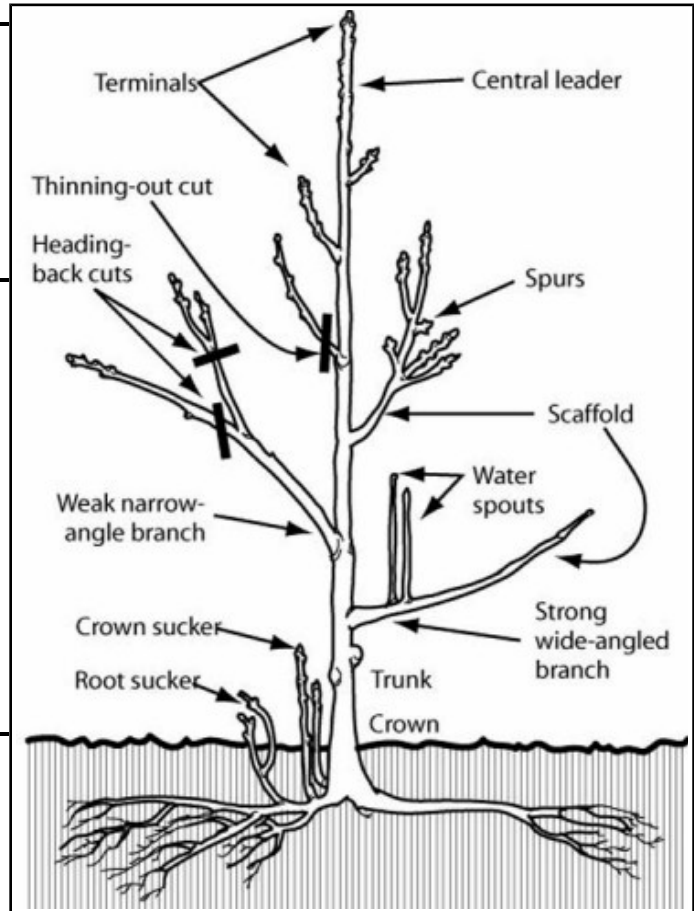
Envision the tree 2 - 3 years out and where you want growth
Know Your Tree:

Rootstock

Where is the graft?

Where does it fruit? Spurs?

Last Year's Wood? New Wood? How much fruit do you want? Initially, less is better.



Prune carefully: New Shoots forced on older limbs are weakly attached and split out easily, so be sure to make your cut high enough to protect the new lateral that will grow below that cut.

(Source: After Harris et al. 1981, p.4)

