

## Fruit Tree Pruning

Fruit trees provide us with a bounty of fresh food and need only a little care. Four things are needed to keep your fruit trees healthy and productive: proper irrigation, fertilization, pest control and pruning.

Fruit tree pruning has two seasons: winter (dormant season) and summer. Dormant-season pruning guides young trees into the desired shape and invigorates trees. Summer pruning controls growth.

We recommend keeping your fruit trees to a height that you can easily manage without a ladder. Keeping trees short makes them easier to care for and, of course, easier to harvest. Smaller trees also need less water, and you can fit more of them into the available space.

Pruning is a scary concept for many gardeners, but it's actually pretty hard to kill a fruit tree through pruning. It is important to prune at the right time, however. Check our website for details!

Start by taking a good look at your tree from all sides. Are there any obviously unbalanced or overcrowded areas? That's where you'll want to focus. But first cut out any dead, diseased or crossing branches. Cut them all the way back to the next major branch or well below any signs of disease.

Next, remove any watersprouts, the vigorous, upright branches with few buds. Watersprouts will hardly ever yield fruit and should be cut back to the branch they grew from.

While there are many things to think about when pruning, the main thing is just to start. Pruning is something you learn by doing, and trees are forgiving. The Master Gardeners are cheering you on.

For more information, go to; [cecolusa.ucanr.edu](http://cecolusa.ucanr.edu)