



FRUIT TREES: CARE AND MAINTENANCE ~ WINTER AND SUMMER PRUNING

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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

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



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.



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: 2-3 tiers of branches, separated by 18-24" of trunk height.
- Open Center: 3-4 scaffold branches re-branch and grow upward in a vase shape.
- Espalier: fairly small number of branches spaced in ornamental configuration against a flat surface—fan shaped, U-shaped, in straight cordons, etc.
- Fruit Bush: Multiple trees planted in the same hole, each pruned to a single canopy.

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.



Fruiting Wood Cont'd

On One Year Old Wood:

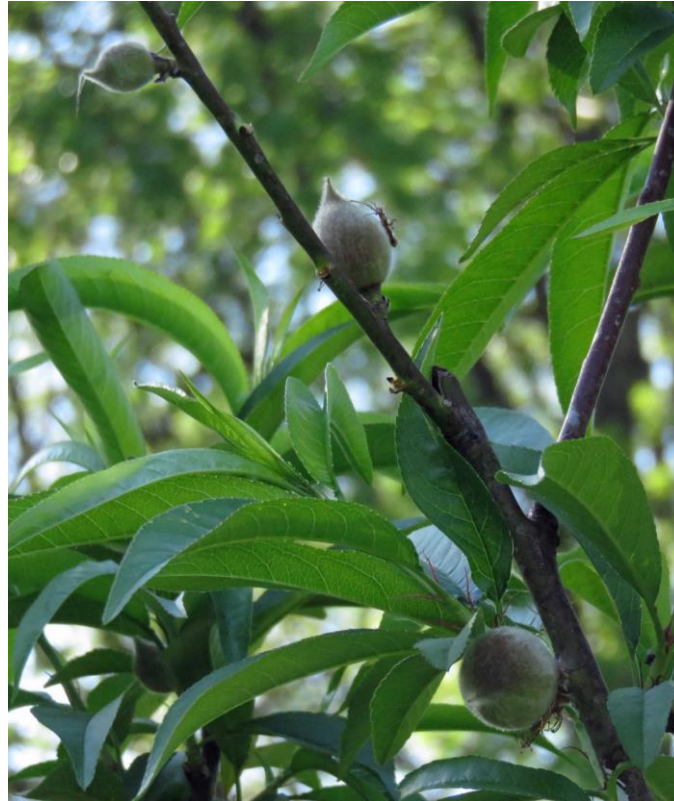
- Almonds
- Apricots
- Nectarines
- Olives
- Peaches
- Persimmons
- Figs (1st crop in early summer)



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.)

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



Pruning Technique



Getting Started

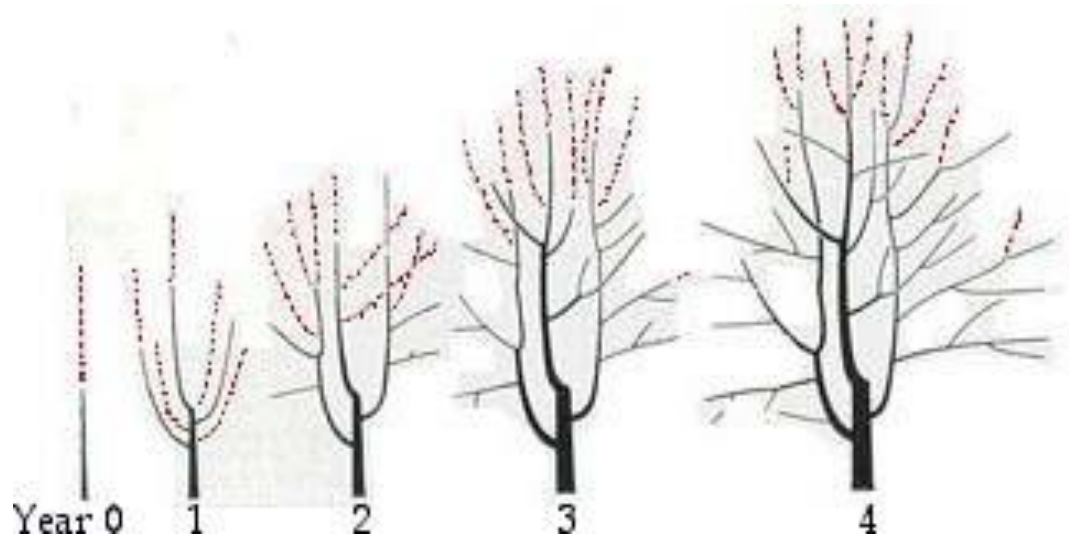
- Sunscreen
- Eye protection, long sleeves, hat, gloves
- Pruning shears, loppers, saw
- Sterile equipment



Tools of the Trade

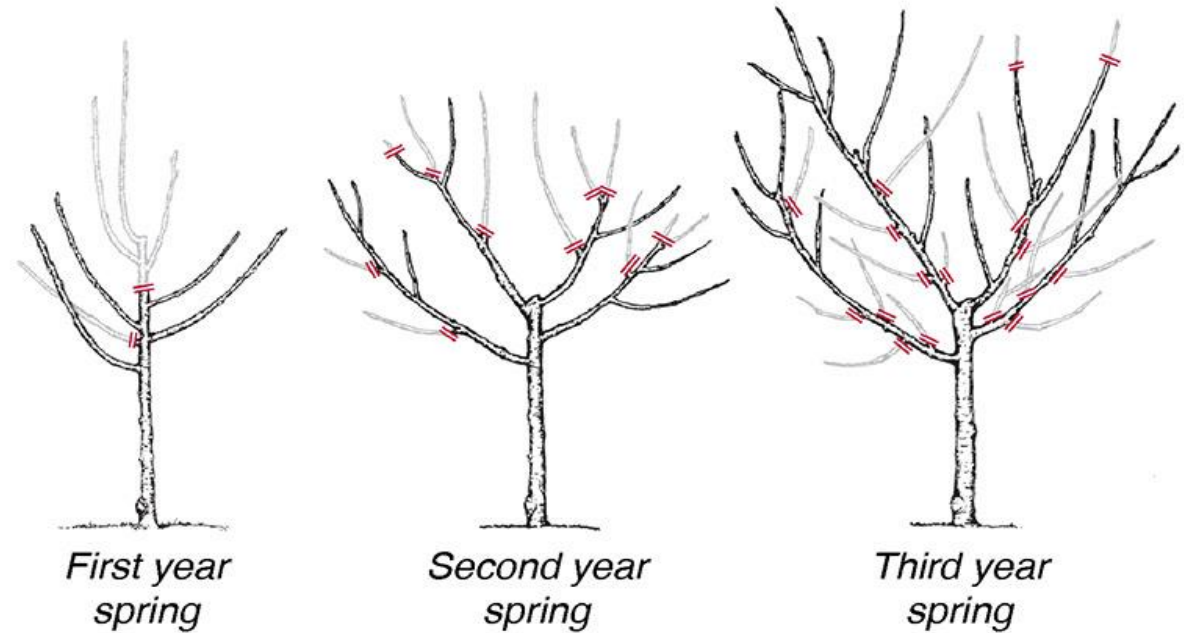


Modified Central Leader



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

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.

Fruit Bush



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

Espalier

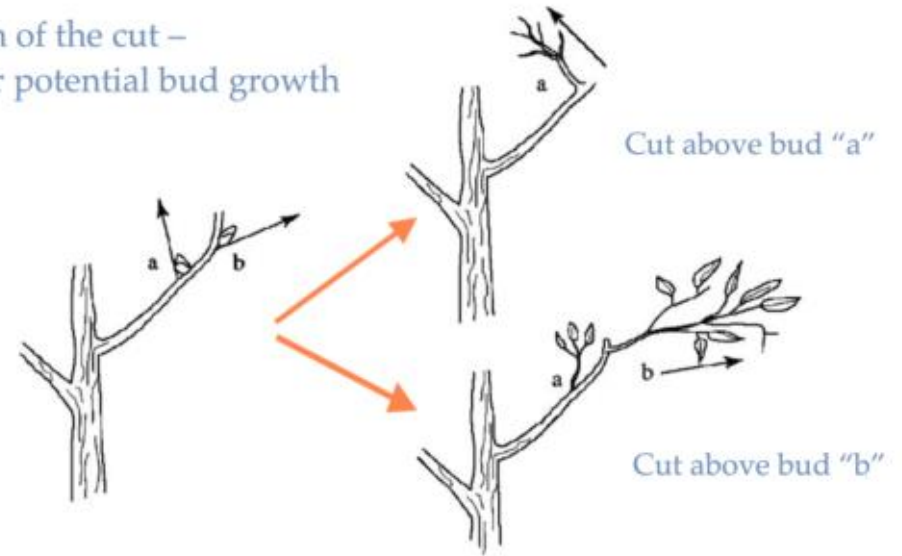


Small number of branches spaced in ornamental configuration against a flat surface.

Heading Cuts

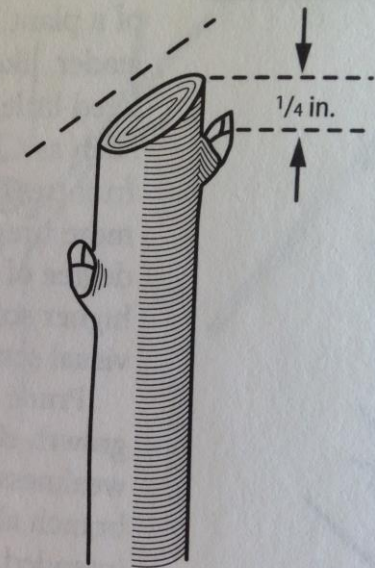
- Used to promote lateral growth below the cut
- Prune to an outside bud
- Cut at a 45 degree angle

Location of the cut –
consider potential bud growth

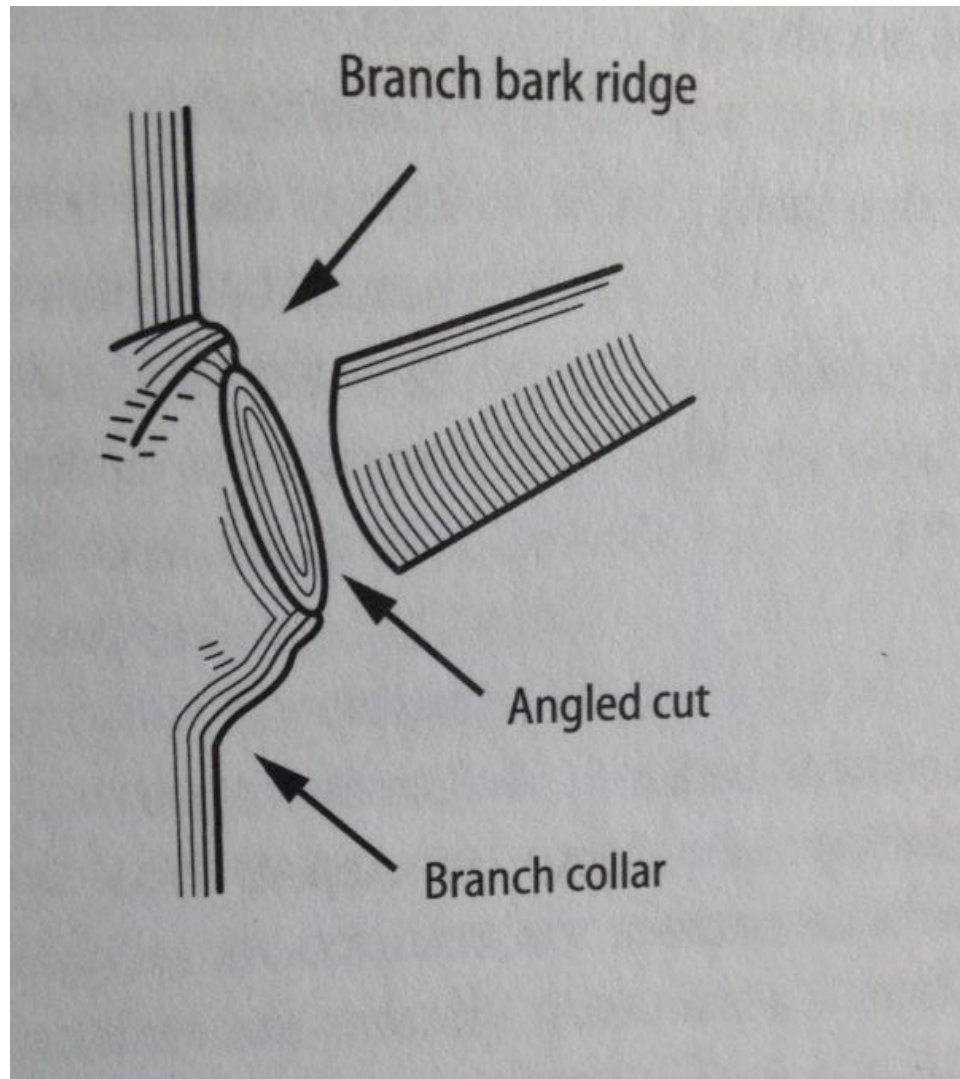


Make pruning cuts about
 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) above a bud
and slightly angled away.

Source: After Caldwell et al.
1972, p.10.



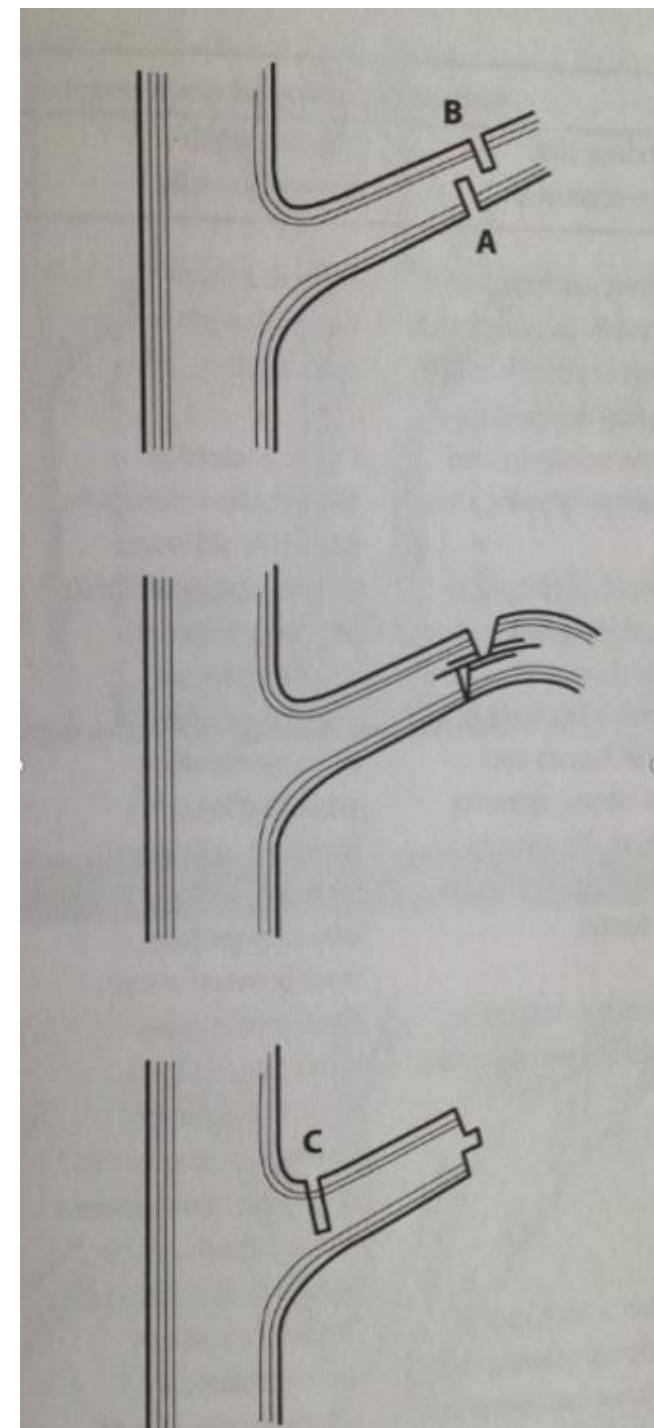
Thinning Cuts



- 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





Questions?