



Shaping Pomegranates

Why shape pomegranate trees?

Selectively removing branches

1. develops a strong tree structure that can support heavy crops without breakage, and
2. brings a young tree into production at an early age.



What are the general objectives of pruning?

1. Eliminate or reduce those tree parts that bear poor quality fruit.
2. Maintain branch spacing to allow good penetration of light and spray materials.
3. Prune to maintain a tree height that makes management and harvesting easy and keeps tree productive (taller trees do not bear more fruit!).

What are the specific objectives of pruning?

1. Prune trees at planting time.
2. Prune young trees very lightly.
3. Prune mature trees more heavily, especially if they've shown little growth so that they are re-invigorated. Keep the tree canopy open to induce annual formation of fruit-bearing wood. The fruit will form mostly on the outer part of the canopy where light penetration is best.
4. Prune less heavily if there is a light or no crop at all.
5. Prune the tree tops more heavily than the lower parts as the top is where most vegetative growth occurs.
6. Thin more shoots toward the end of a well-pruned branch in a mature tree. This will increase fruit size and quality on the remaining shoots.

How does pruning vary with time?

Year 1: Cut trees back to 60-75 cm at planting and remove suckers in summer (i.e., shoots arising from the rootstock or low on the scion (trunk suckers or water sprouts) or from the ground (root suckers) once a year.

Year 2: Regular pruning and suckering begins in late dormancy of the second year with additional suckering in summer. Prune branches by 1/3 during the first winter after planting. Remove crossing branches and shoots, leaving 3-5 shoots/branch.

Year 3 and thereafter: Light annual pruning of established trees encourages fruit production; pomegranates tend not to require heavy pruning if maintained regularly. Remove dead and damaged wood during late winter and remove sprouts and suckers as they appear. Heavy pruning will reduce the crop.

When to prune: Prune mostly in the winter when danger from fall or early winter freeze has passed, but before full bloom in spring.. To keep the interior of the tree open during the growing season, prune in summer as needed.

Delaying pruning until after bloom may be advisable with pomegranates grown in an area that gets late frost frequently.

Prepared by Louise Ferguson, Kitren Glozer and Mark Bell June 14 2008

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