

PRUNING FRUIT TREES, SHRUBS, AND VINES

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Come visit my garden at www.leereich.com/blog

Why prune? Plant health, size control, strength, beauty, quality, and because it's fun!

Plant responses to pruning

- Heading vs. thinning cuts
- Degree of heading
- Effect of branch orientation and location within tree

Training fruit plants

- Bushes: No training needed because no permanent framework; renewal pruned
- Vines: Single or double trunk with or without cordons
- Trees: minimize pruning and use mostly thinning cuts, wide spacing of scaffold limbs, wide scaffold branch angles, tree forms
 1. Central-Leader: apple, apricot, sweet cherry, pear
 2. Modified C-L: apricot, swt cherry, persimmon, Eur. plum, Amer. plum hyb
 3. Open-Center: tart cherry, swt cherry, peach, persimmon, Japanese plum

Fruit thinning

- Effects: larger and tastier fruits, better crop next year also, less limb breakage, less pests
- How: branch pruning; thinning individual fruits (for apples, pears, and other large fruits)

Pruning mature fruit plants

- Goals: light and air, control size, return bloom, promote new growth
- Amount and where to prune depends on bearing habit of plant
- Renewal method: either at ground level (shrubs) or up in branches (trees, vines)

How much and what to prune

- Plants that bear on new shoots: everbearing raspberries & blackberries, figs
- Plants that bear on 1-year-old stems growing from ground level: blackcurrant, blackberry, black raspberry, lowbush blueberry, & raspberry
- Plants that bear on 1-year-old stems growing up in the plant: grape, kiwifruit, peach
- Plants that bear on 2- and 3-year old stems: gooseberries, red currants
- Plants that bear on stems up to 6-years-old: highbush blueberry
- Plants that bear best on older stems: apple, pear

Plants that require little or no pruning: persimmon, medlar, pawpaw, juneberry tree, Nanking cherry

Plants that require more pruning: espalier (best is Asian pear and red currant)

For more information:

THE PRUNING BOOK, by Lee Reich (Taunton Press, 2010)

GROW FRUIT NATURALLY, by Lee Reich (Taunton Press, 2012)