

Tips for Pruning Fruit Trees

Below is “cheat sheet” to remember proper pruning techniques, appropriate tools and safety equipment, and further resources and opportunities to expand your knowledge and skills.

Why do we prune?

Increased production—maximize production and rejuvenate growth of fruits with regular pruning, plants that are open are able to ripen properly

Reduce pests and diseases—proper air circulation and light penetration are key to maintaining plant health

Improve shape— well-managed plants and properly pruned trees create an attractive, pleasant aesthetic in any farm or garden

Gain control—Pruning trees helps to control overcrowding and shading of other plants

Pruning Tools and Safety Equipment:

1. Hand pruners
2. Pruning saw (curved, straight, and curved with hook)
3. Long-handled pruners
4. Goggles or protective eyewear
5. Helmet
6. Safety gloves

Keys to Success:

Start with suckers/water sprouts, downward facing branches, broken branches, crossing branches, and double leaders

Train early when trees are in formative stage, as you move from full mature to veteran stage reduce the amount of heavy pruning as it becomes harder for the tree to bounce back the older it is

Remember use the “right tool for the right job” –avoid using wood saws for pruning and ensure proper care and maintenance of tools by keeping them indoors in a dry, safe place

Avoid heavy pruning in the summer, the proper time to prune is in the dormant season (late winter/early spring)

Sanitize tools and equipment to avoid spreading diseases from tree to tree

Resources:

Cornell Fruit Resources: Tree Fruit blog <https://blogs.cornell.edu/treefruit/>

Cornell Guide to Growing Fruit at Home:

https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/67/Cornell_Guide_to_Growing_Fruit.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

The Pruning Book (2nd edition), by Lee Reich, Taunton Press, 2010

Landscaping with Fruit: Strawberry Ground Covers, Blueberry Hedges, Grape Arbors, and 39 Other Luscious Fruits to Make Your Yard an Edible Paradise (A Homeowner's Guide), by Lee Reich, Storey Publishing, 2009

The Holistic Orchard: Tree Fruits and Berries the Biological Way. Chelsea Green Publishing, White Rive Junction, VT

The Backyard Orchardist: A Complete Guide to Growing Fruit Trees in the Home Garden, by Stella Otto, Chelsea Green Publishing, 1993

The Organic Gardener's Handbook of Natural Pest and Disease Control: A Complete Guide to Maintaining a Healthy Garden and Yard the Earth-Friendly Way, edited by Barbara Ellis and Fern Marshall Bradley, Rodale Press, 2010

iTree—a set of free online tools to quantify the benefits and values of trees around the world, aid in tree and forest management and advocacy, and show potential risks to tree and forest health

Upcoming Events and Continuing Professional Development:

Citizen Pruner course offered by Trees New York (around \$100)

NYBG Bronx Green-Up offers a **free** Pruning Certificate Series every year and includes 4 classes and 3 workdays, Bronx residents and community gardeners are highly encouraged to apply

Green Thumb has ongoing **free** pruning workshops throughout the year, check their website for upcoming opportunities

*Opportunity just outside of the city- Lee Reich, PhD, farmdener and writer hosts pruning worksho. Location: Lee's garden at 387 Springtown Rd., New Paltz, NY 12561 <http://www.leereich.com/>

Contact Information:

If you have questions about pruning, that is what we are here for! Always feel free to ask me questions:

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