

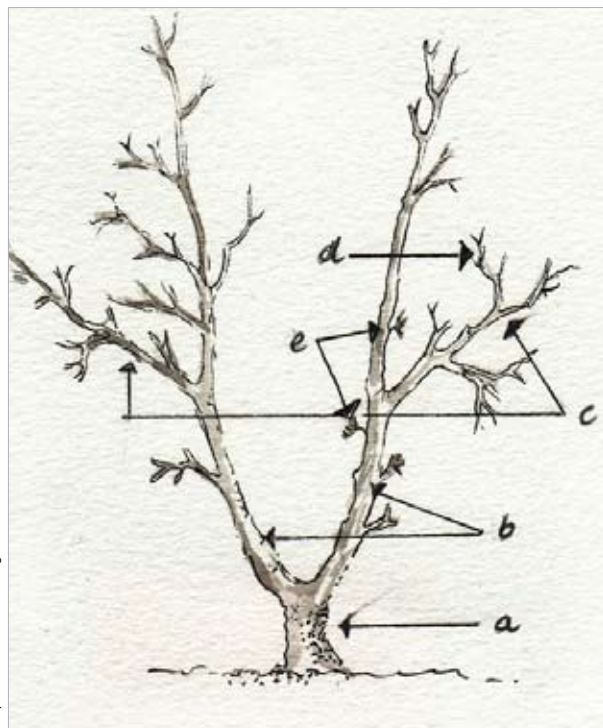
Training & pruning

Why train & prune fruit trees?

- You'll get more good-sized fruit.
- The tree is less likely to get diseases and broken branches.
- It will be easier to pick the fruit.
- You can train the tree to the size and shape that suits your property, and still get plenty of fruit.

Terms for parts of a tree (see diagram)

- Trunk (central leader):** The new plant's central stem becomes the tree's trunk.
- Leaders:** Strong upright shoots that sprout from the central stem and are trained as the 'framework' of the tree.
- Fruiting arms:** Main branches that grow sideways from the leaders.
- Laterals (or 'shoots'):** Thinner, fruit-producing side shoots that grow from the fruiting arms or leaders.



When to prune

- **Winter pruning** is best for shaping a young tree or reshaping an older tree. It encourages the growth of vigorous new leafy wood.

Do this before the sap begins to rise in spring.

- **Summer pruning** encourages the growth of less-vigorous fruiting wood, so it is the best time for trimming branches and renewing fruiting wood.

Do this when the new growth is several centimetres long, and again after the fruit is harvested.

- **Stonefruit trees should ONLY be pruned in summer, to reduce the risk of diseases.**

- Spurs:** Stubby clusters of fruit buds that develop on leaders and fruiting arms.



Fruiting spur

Adapted from Fruit Gardening in NZ

- **Buds:** The little lumps on a shoot are either leaf buds or fruiting buds (see below). It's easier to tell which is which in spring.



Leaf buds (pointed)
Fruit buds (rounded)

Adapted from Fruit Gardening in NZ

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How & where to cut

The most important thing to know is what kind of wood each type of tree carries its fruit on, so you don't accidentally cut it off. This information is included in the section 'Part 3 – Essential Plant Info'.

Trees that bear fruit on an earlier seasons' wood

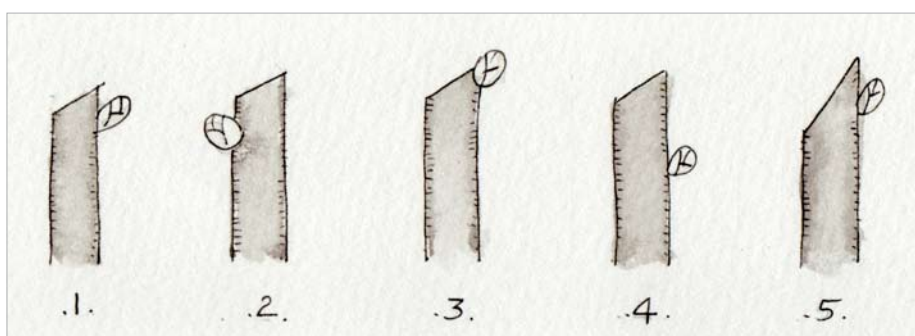
- You'll need to shorten some of the laterals (called *heading back*) to encourage the development of fruit buds.
- Make this kind of cut a little above a bud, sloping away from it at about 45 degrees (see below) so that rainwater runs down the other side instead of collecting on the bud.
- If you leave a longer stub, it can die back; if you cut too close to the bud, the wound might not heal (see below). Both of these can be an entry point for diseases.

Trees that bear fruit on the new season's wood

- Shortening the laterals would cut off the future fruit. Instead, you'll *thin out* some of them by cutting them right back to where they sprout from the branch or trunk.
- Cut exactly beside (but not into) the 'collar' – the rings where the shoot joins to the bigger branch. The bark grows fast in this area and will quickly heal over the cut.

Orchard hygiene

- Make sure your secateurs and loppers are sharp, so you don't make jagged cuts or tears.
- Between trees, wipe the blades with methylated spirits or bleach (e.g. Janola wipes) to avoid carrying diseases between trees.
- Use a pruning saw for thicker branches. Start by 'undercutting' the underside of the branch, then cut through the rest from the top. This stops the bark tearing away as the branch falls, leaving a wound that diseases can get into. If the branch is heavy, cut it in several sections to ease some of the weight.
- For apples and stonefruit, seal the cuts with pruning paint so diseases can't enter the tree there. Some advisors believe it's better to let the tree heal itself – but growers in this region say the risk of disease is too high in the climatic conditions here.
- Remove all the prunings from your property, especially dead or diseased branches and 'mummified' (brown and shrivelled) fruit.



Pruning cuts:

1. Correct
2. Cut in the wrong direction (sloping down towards the bud)
3. Cut too close to the bud
4. Cut too far away from the bud
5. Cut too slanted