

# Pruning Fruit Trees: Clip with Confidence!

## REASONS TO PRUNE

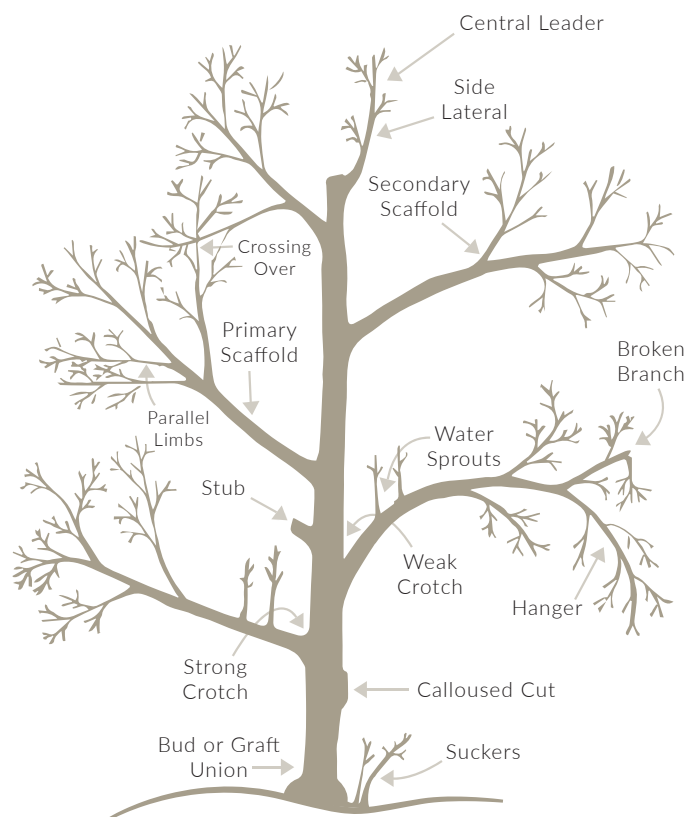
- Maximize sun and air exposure to fruiting wood
- Improve fruit size and quality of fruit
- Maintain vigorous, healthy trees
- Manage tree size and shape for ease of harvesting and spraying
- Maintain fruiting spurs or grow new wood for next year's fruit

## WHEN AND HOW TO PRUNE

- New trees—the day they are planted
- Established trees—every year while the tree is dormant (late winter/early spring)
- Remove branches that are dead, diseased, damaged, hanging, rubbing; water sprouts, and suckers—as soon as noticed at any time of year
- Remember pruning stimulates a tree to break dormancy and start growing in the spring

## HOW TO PRUNE AND WHERE TO CUT

- Cuts are made outside of the branch collar (swollen area where limb meets the tree)
- Heading cuts—shortening a branch/shoot to encourage lateral growth
- Thinning cuts—removing entire branch/shoot back to a lateral branch to control direction of growth



Cut too high  
from bud



Cut at  
wrong angle



Cut too  
close to bud



Angle too  
steep



Rough  
cut



Correct  
cut

# PEACH, NECTARINE, APRICOT, JAPANESE PLUM, SOUR CHERRY

## 1 Open Vase

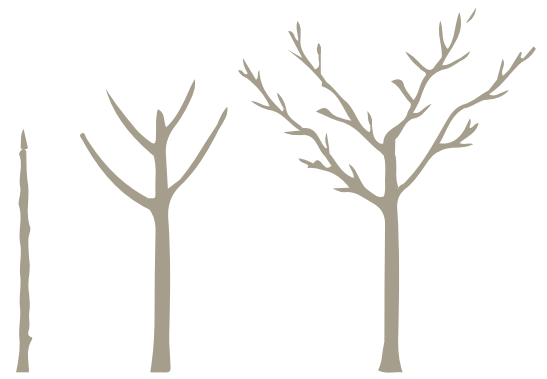
- Remove central leader
- Select three to four primary scaffold branches to leave for growth
- Branches should start about 18-24" up from the ground
- All scaffold branch angles should be angled 45-60 degrees from trunk

## 2 Know Where the Fruit is Found:

- Buds form on 1-year-old wood (branches produced the previous year)
- Peaches and nectarines usually have a triple bud arrangement of two fruiting buds on the outside and one leaf bud in the center

## 3 Prune off about 60 to 80 % of last year's growth

- This will stimulate new growth for next year's fruit production
- Let the light and air in to improve fruit color and provide good air circulation around fruit
- Choose pencil sized diameter 1-year-old wood to leave on the tree for fruit production and shorten these to 6-8" long.



# APPLE, PEARS

## 1 Central Leader/Modified Central Leader:

- Select three to four lower primary scaffold branches about 20-30" up from the ground
- Select three to four upper secondary scaffold branches that are 18-20" above the first set of scaffolds
- Try to place the secondary scaffold branches at right angles to the primary scaffolds
- All scaffold branch angles should be angled 45-60 degrees from trunk

## 2 Know Where the Fruit is Found:

- On spurs that are 2 years and older—do not prune off fruiting spurs

## 3 Prune to let the light and air in to improve fruit color and provide good air circulation around fruit



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Pruning the Orchard: [tinyurl.com/pruningtools](https://tinyurl.com/pruningtools)
- How to Prune Apple Trees: [tinyurl.com/peachtreepruning](https://tinyurl.com/peachtreepruning)
- How to Prune Peach Trees: [tinyurl.com/pruningappletrees](https://tinyurl.com/pruningappletrees)
- How to Select Pruning Tools: [tinyurl.com/pruningtheorchard](https://tinyurl.com/pruningtheorchard)