PRUNING FRUIT TREES AND SHRUBS

What to prune - DO NOT REMOVE MORE THAN 30% EACH YEAR; STOP WHEN 30% IS CUT
• Start by removing damaged and diseased branches
• Remove branches that are growing toward the center of the tree
• Remove dangerous or nuisance branches
• Remove older stems
• To improve appearance – to alter form and density

When to prune
Fruiting trees, shrubs, vines and brambles:
➤ Late winter, before the sap begins to flow
➤ Can prune in fall but late winter is best

The right tools
• Hand shears – by-pass preferred, anvil type suitable – for branches up to ¾-inch diameter
• Lopping shears – for branches ¾ to 1 ½ inches in diameter
• Pruning saw – for branches over 1 ½ inches diameter

How to prune
Removing damaged and obstructing tree and shrub branches:
• Cut back to a main stem, trunk or strong outward-growing branch
  ➤ Cut flush to the “branch collar” without damaging it
  (On larger branches, use the “three-cut” method to avoid stripping the bark.)
  ➤ Make a clean cut
  ➤ Do NOT leave a stub
  ➤ Do not use a wound dressing
  ➤ Leave branches with a wide angle to the trunk

Pruning fruit trees:
• Train all fruit trees when young to develop the recommended shape for the kind of tree.
  ♦ Apples should be trained to a “central leader” form
  ♦ Pears should be trained to a “modified central leader” form
  ♦ Peaches should be trained to an “open center form”
  ♦ Plums and cherries should be pruned sparingly to a “modified central leader” form
• Prune fruit trees yearly to maintain their recommended shape. Yearly pruning also serves to
  maintain tree vigor and to balance tree growth with fruit production.
  ➤ Thinning the fruit soon after fruit set improves fruit size and quality.

Renovation of a many-stemmed shrub:
• Cut older stems back to ground level
  ➤ Do not leave a stub; Cut cleanly
• Remove ¼ to 1/3 of the oldest stems each year

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Three Cut Method

Dead Branch  Branch Bark Ridge  Living Branch

Second Cut  Second Cut  First Cut  First Cut  Third Cut
Cut First
Branch Collar
Branch Collar

Open Center Concept: Peach and Nectarine

Cut central leader to 28” height to promote lateral branching.

Central Leader Concept: Apples and Pears

Years 1, 2, and 3 for pruning and training apples and pears.