

FRUIT TREE PRUNING WITH ROB VELSEBOER



Before Pruning



After Pruning

WHY PRUNE?

We prune to prevent disease, damage and manage size.

ROBS FRUIT TREE TIPS:

- Buy Fruit Trees from a reputable source

Forgotten Fruits

forgottenfruits@gmail.com

Edible Gardens

www.ediblegarden.co.nz

Marawhenua Nurseries

tastytrees@gmail.com

- You want a 'pickable' height for your section. This may be dwarf root stock.
- Prune for mowing and for air movement in and around the tree.

GENERIC PRUNING TIPS:

- Always chop at an angle so the water runs off it.
- Vase shape recommended. Keep air movement in centre.
- Keep little branches if they have fruiting spurs, unless cicada damaged or rubbing.
- Prune trees ANNUALLY for the FIRST FIVE YEARS. After that every 2nd year, then every 3rd.
- Pruning's – Put through chipper/ compost or to the chickens – otherwise they can spread pests & disease.

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Contact

Dee Pignéguy

dee@feedmeright.co.nz

www.feedmeright.co.nz

+64 9 444 9342



Rob Pruning



After Pruning

- Commercial – More height, more tree. Home – Keep it low, keep it simple.
- Prune – Late Autumn. Plums – Jan/Feb (Mid/Dry Period)

DAMAGE & DISEASE:

Cicada / Canker (contagious)/ Woolly aphid (if not on Northern Spy Rootstock).

Spray with meths/use Neem granules over winter around cicada damage.

Lichen – Use Lime Sulphur – NEVER Copper! Kills all in soil!

BEWARE: SILVERLEAF!! (Winter Only) Pull out and BURN it! Highly contagious!

HEALTHY SOIL/SOIL IMPROVEMENT/HERBAL LEYS:

This is VERY important to stop codling moth, woolly aphid and to get 'balance'.

*It takes 5-10 years to gain balance on a property.

Plant a HERBAL LEY under trees...(as below)

Winter: Phacelia/Alyssum/Red Clover. Autumn is a good time to plant Phacelia. Alyssum ('Carpet of Snow') – nothing that has more pollen for insects!

Spring: Borage/Spring bulbs/Forget-me-nots/Comfrey (for potassium)

Dills/Fennels/ Parsnips (to flower) and Chamomile are also good for under trees.

- Plant Rosemary as a hedge and Lavendar, but not under trees... These are good for bees, but steal much required nutrition from the soil under trees.

- Don't companion plant in vege gardens – make insectory OR plant under fruit trees instead!

HYGIENE:

'Meths' pruning tools between trees to avoid spreading disease from tree to tree.



Clean tools in meths between pruning each tree

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PRUNING PASTE:

- Creates a barrier to stop fungus and repel insects.
- Earthwise (recommended) – Available from Naturally Organic.
- Also available from Rob / 'Organics' Seedlings (Hobsonville Markets/Sunday) made from Beeswax/ & Raw Linseed (and assorted essential oils) *DO NOT use on tamarillos / figs – they need to breathe as they are hollow stemmed and would rot and die-back.
- Pruning is a two-person job – one cuts / one waxes

PRUNING TOOLS:

SECATEURS: French brand 'Bacho' is recommended.

(Bypass or Anvil) – Buy bright colours (yellow or blue) so you don't lose them! Avoid green ones!

Invest in a secateurs sharpener, the triangular shaped ones are the best and last for years. Sharpen hourly, if pruning all day as it's very important they are sharp.

You can buy spare springs and blades for the right brand of secateurs. Try 'Fruit Fed' and 'Horticulture'.

LOPPERS: 'Fiskars' brand recommended / \$90 - \$120 – last a lifetime & you can replace blades. They have harder blades so don't require sharpening so often.

PRUNING SAWS: 'Silky Blade' – Made in Japan is recommended. Clean with toothbrush in between trees. Be careful as they are VERY SHARP! These cut on the pull action only.

HEALTH & SAFETY: Goggles and gloves would be recommended, but you need vision and dexterity – so Rob doesn't use either!

ROOTSTOCK:

Apples – Northern Spy is the BEST for Auckland's clay soils.

M26 – Tap rooted / good for ¼ acre.

Forgotten Fruits / Edible Gardens / Marawhenua Nurseries all good reputable stockists / grown on good root stock. Do specify what your conditions are when ordering. They are very helpful, so have a chat with them!

NOTES ON SPECIFIC TREES

APPLES: Recommended: Telstar (small & sweet) & Captain Kidd.

*Turn/twist apples whilst picking to avoid damage to fruiting spur.

Where you chop it off becomes a fruiting spur.

Coddling Moth – Use pheromone trap in Sept/Oct/Nov/Dec. Buy 'fridge-fresh' only (Stockists: Fruit Fed / Wrightsons/RD1 Albany) Lasts 4-6 weeks.

BALLERINA APPLE – Don't prune. Maypole.

MAYFLOWER APPLE – Great cooker. Strudel. Crunchy!

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CITRUS: Use Pruning Paste on citrus too! For Citrus Leaf Mold – Neem Spray on hard from underneath. Do NOT prune in Oct / Nov / Dec. Because of: Citrus/Lemon Borer (native to NZ). One branch will die,. Cut back till you find it and kill it!

ESPALIER: You can espalier Apples/Pears/Figs & Grapes only.

FEIJOAS: Feijoas have surface roots and are gross feeders. They require a lot of air in the middle.

Prune out centre. Encourage blackbirds, thrushes and waxeyes.

FIG: Fruit on new growth only. Cut back hard! At least ½.

GRAPE & KIWIFRUIT: Prune when lost ALL leaves – can bleed to death otherwise!

Grapes – Prune all the way along. Chop on 3rd node out. Although, with heavy grapes (such as Albany Surprise) chop to 2nd node.



Rob pruning a grape

GUAVAS: Chop the centre out and up to 2m.

PEACHES: For Auckland? Only buy O’Ryan/Blackboy/Golden Queen/Paragon. Blackboy and Paragon highly recommended.

Better from stone, otherwise fights with graft. If you know of someone relatively local with a healthy peach, procure a stone. It does fight a bit with the graft otherwise. Black Boy, grown from stone, will fruit in 2 years! O-Ryan not that tasty, but it’s the earliest spring blossom and only fruit around at that time of year (December)

Pruning: Keep branches at same height as the springtime sap rises. This keeps branches energy at the same height, so the sap is in the same place. Pink: This seasons growth. Peaches fruit on new growth only. Brown: Old / Will never fruit again. As much green growth as possible! Chop out cicada damage as it weakens branch and won’t cope with weight of fruit. Chop back 1/3rd every year. If you prune too much you will get less fruit so make it gradual.

Get rid of old fruit as this causes problems. Prune branches out and not up. You want as much air movement as possible. Prune out all of the dead branches – Use pruning paste!!

Pruning paste is not required on dead or little cuts – just on fresh open wounds.

They need to have AIR! Otherwise the fruit will develop brown rot / become inedible.

Rubbing causes disease – chop off on an outward node.

Peach trees are very forgiving and come back with a vengeance after a couple of years.

*Think about the next two years of growth. Get rid of dead/brown – Keep as much green growth as possible.

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PEARS: Only purchase pears on QUINCE root stock (otherwise they get massive!)

Pears fruit 50-60 years on the same spurs! They are ugly!

Where you chop it off becomes a fruiting spur.

MULTIPLE GRAFTS – Be careful to keep multiple grafts pruned the same amount or one will take over.

NASHI – Has shiny bigger leaf than pears.

All energy goes to 'tall & high'. Wood is alot harder for pears & nashis.

PERSIMMONS: In autumn this is a stunning plant!

Brutal prune required. Chop back hard! Take centre out & cicada damage

PLUMS: Plumquot (Plum/Apricot) naturally cross (same family)

Plums have crown shaped fruiting spurs. Fruits for 100+ years on that crown! So crowns don't get pruned!

Watershoots grow into the tree. They grow strong and bigger than any other branch. They don't fruit, so need to be pruned.

QUINCE - CHINESE QUINCE & ENGLISH QUINCE - Recommended: Taihape Quince (available at Edible Gardens)

Quinces LOVE the cold!

Prune out rubbing branches but no pruning generally required with Quince.

Can be made into a hedgerow. Quinces don't like humidity.

This workshop was held at Dee's Place

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