

Macdonalds Nursery

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FRUIT TREE PRUNING

Pruning is done for several reasons:

- To manage the size and shape of the plant
- To remove any dead or diseased wood
- To promote new growth
- To regulate the amount of fruit on the plant

With these reasons in mind pruning can be done in several simple steps.

Firstly go over the tree to remove any dead or diseased branches.

Then remove any growth that is crowding the centre of the tree or any branches that are rubbing on one another. This is done to allow lots of light and air into the centre of the tree to help prevent the build up of disease, and the extra light helps to ripen fruit evenly on all sides.

Now reduce the height to the size you require. By containing the trees height it is easier for you to pick the fruit, spray and prune the tree. And the last step is to thin out the fruit buds or spurs if required. This means less fruit on the tree but it will be of a larger size and better quality.

You will find it easier to prune your trees if you apply these steps to one branch at a time.

Pick the new leader at the height you require. This is a new growth heading in the direction you want this particular branch to grow. Now remove any new growths that are about the same height as it. This helps ensure the strong new growth is in the direction required. Working down the branch, remove any dead or broken branches. For peaches and nectarines remove about 50% of this season's growth and leave the others uncut.

Apples and pears will have little knobly growths along the main branch - these are fruiting spurs. Just shorten these back if needed, to keep the fruit close to the main branch. If the tree had lots of little sized fruit last season, remove some of these spurs to reduce the number of fruit on the tree but give the remaining fruit a chance to develop into a good size.

Apricots and Plums use a combination of both these, so shorten back the longer laterals and thin out the fruiting spurs if needed. As we go down the branch remove any growths that are crossing the middle of the tree to keep the centre of the tree open.

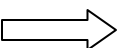
Remove any branches that may rub on another branch, remember their position may alter as the fruit grows, particularly as it approaches maturity.

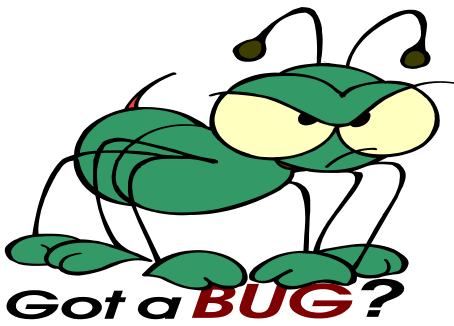
Cherries require only limited pruning to manage their shape and size as they can be prone to die back.

When pruning remember that the harder we prune the stronger the new growth but the less fruit the tree will produce. In the first few years, prune harder to produce a stronger tree with good framework. This will enable the tree to carry good crops for many years to come.

For older trees prune to get a good balance between fruit and new growth, so if you are unsure prune on the light side to increase the chance of a good crop of fruit. Fruit can be thinned at a later date if need be.

After pruning it is a good idea to give all your trees a thorough spraying with Kocide as this will cover all the cut surfaces with fungicide to help protect the tree this spray is especially important for Cherries and Apricots.





FRUIT TREE CARE - SPRAYING

Fruit Trees need a bit of individual spraying for their particular pests. Start by giving all your trees a thorough spray with **Kocide**, after pruning. This will help clean up a lot of fungal diseases making control during the summer much easier.

If you had infestations of aphids on new growth in early summer a spray with **Lime Sulphur** would be a better alternative to Kocide at this time.

Also a very good cover spray of **Pest Oil** during winter will control a lot of insect larvae and eggs, such as codling moth, oriental fruit moth, aphids, scale, woolly aphids and others. This is important for apples and pears.

Codling Moth is the biggest problem for apples and pears.

These are best controlled by applying your first spray of **Success Ultra** when the last few flowers are left on the tree.

This is repeated each fortnight.

Peaches and Nectarines

The main problem is curly leaf a fungal disease controlled using **Kocide or Liquid Copper**.

Give the trees a good spray to ensure complete coverage top to bottom. Apply the first spray as the buds become furry in the spring. Then follow this with another spray as the first flowers begin to show some colour.

The final spray is applied when the last 10% of blossom is left on the tree.

Plums and cherries can be attacked by pear and cherry slug this can be controlled using **Maverick or Success Ultra** as they appear.

Apricots suffer from the fungal diseases freckle and shot hole; these are also controlled with **Kocide or Liquid Copper**. Apply the first spray as the first flowers begin to open and the second when the last few flowers are left on the tree. This will normally coincide with your spraying for curly leaf. Once the Fruit has formed, spray with **Mancozeb** if required.



ADDITIONAL / ALTERNATIVE CARE

For those who prefer not to spray the following may be helpful to control some of the common pests.

Plant nasturtiums or marigolds under the trees to attract aphids. Dill, nasturtiums and parsnips that are left to flower will attract predatory wasps to help control codling moth.

Another way to catch codling moth and caterpillars is to place bands of cardboard, newspaper or 'Tree Guard' gel around the trunks of trees. Check these weekly as the bugs will be trapped in these.

Pear and cherry slug may be controlled by dusting them with talcum powder or wood ash, which will stick to their slimy skin.

If you have an orchard, then a few chooks scratching amongst the trees will eliminate a lot of insect pests.

Regardless of how you intend to control these pests and diseases, ensure you pick any old fruit up off the ground or that is left on the tree unharvested, as these are the greatest source of re-infection in the following season.

*For more information, visit us in store at **88 Retreat Road, Bendigo, Victoria, Australia, 3550***