

The development of young trees

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Fruit tree pruning is the cutting and removing of selected parts of a fruit tree. It spans a number of horticultural techniques. Pruning often means cutting branches back, sometimes removing smaller limbs entirely. It may also mean removal of young shoots, buds, and leaves.

Established orchard practice of both organic and nonorganic types typically includes pruning. Pruning can control growth, remove dead or diseased wood, and stimulate the formation of flowers and fruit buds. It is widely stated that careful attention to pruning and training young trees improves their later productivity and longevity, and that good pruning and training can also prevent later injury from weak crotches or forks that break from the weight of fruit, snow, or ice on the branches.

Plants form new tissue in an area called the meristem, located near the tips of roots and shoots, where active cell division takes place. Meristem growth is aimed at ensuring that leaves are quickly elevated into sunlight, and that roots are able to penetrate deeply into the soil. Once adequate height and length is achieved by the stems and roots, they begin to thicken to support the plant. On the shoots, these growing tips of the plant are called apical buds. Which not only promotes cell division, but also diffuses downwards and inhibits the development of lateral bud growth that otherwise competes with the apical tip for light and nutrients. As well as coppicing and pollarding allows the arborist to determine the shape, size, and productivity of many fruiting trees and bushes. The main aim when pruning fruit trees is usually to maximize fruit yield. Branches can become broken by the weight of the crop, and the cropping may become biennial (that is, bearing fruit only every other year). Flavourless fruit that does not store well. Careful pruning balances shoot growth and fruit production.

MAIDEN TREE

A maiden whip (a one-year-old tree with no side shoots) should be pruned to a bud with two buds below it at about 80 cm from the ground immediately after planting to produce primary branches during the first growing season. A feathered maiden (that is, a one-year-old tree with several side branches) should have its main stem pruned back to three or four strong shoots at 80 cm from the ground. Side shoots should be shortened by two thirds of their length to an upward or outward facing bud. Lower shoots should be removed flush with the stem.

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