

The Backyard Orchard: Top 10



Kevin Marini, UCCE Placer and Nevada Counties

10. Be a “Master Fruit Tree Steward”



- Buy locally grown fruit trees
- Remove ailing trees and non-producers
- Learn about the PESTS you may encounter!
- TAKE CARE OF THE TREES



9. Select the Right Tree for the Right Place

- Plant what you'll eat but experiment with varieties, harvest times
- Sun exposure, Chill hours, microclimates!
- Trees in containers
- From seed?



Selecting a Variety - Considerations

- What do you like to eat?
- How much space do you have?
- How much work are you willing to put in?
- Pollination – Self-fruitful or need a pollinizer
- Growth habit of fruit tree
- Climate (hardiness, chill hours...)
- Pests in the area

8. ALWAYS Plant Bare root Fruit Trees



The Container Fruit Tree



A slow tortuous death...

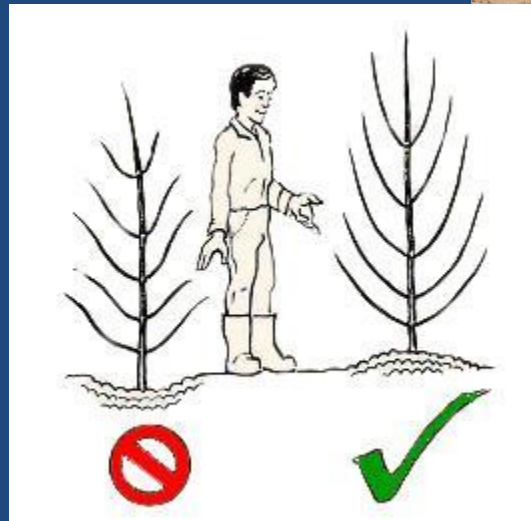
7. Explore and Prepare the Soil

- Soil Analysis
- “Soil Texture by Feel” test
- Drainage test
- Remove existing plants, especially perennial weeds!
- Soil “history”



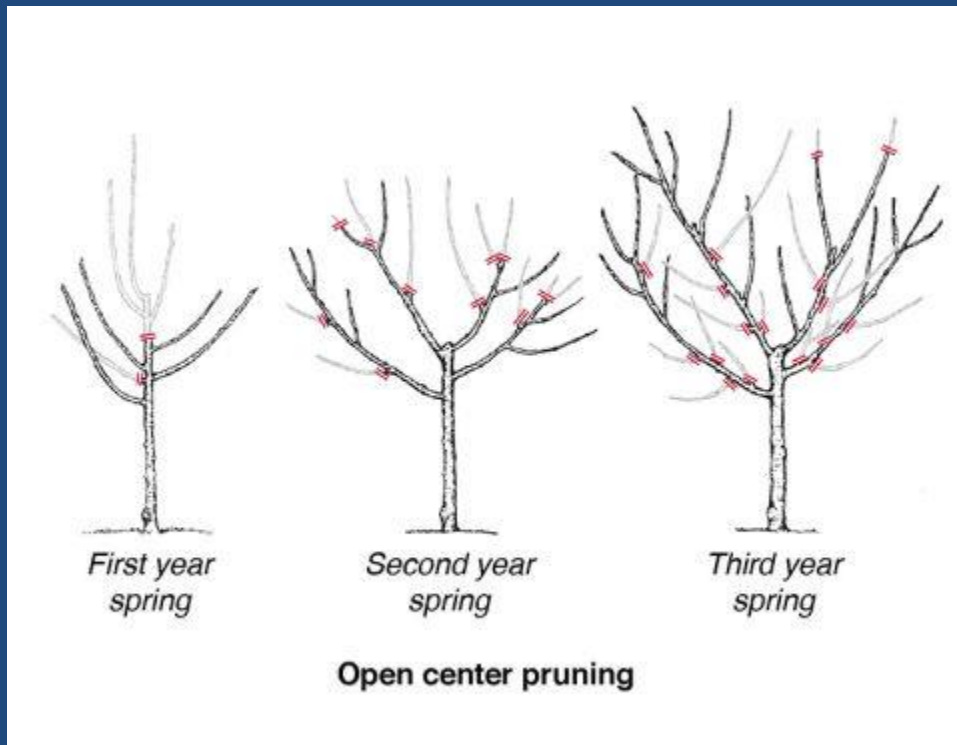
6. Plant the fruit tree with care

- Dig wide but not deep hole
- Spread out roots over firm soil
- Graft union 3-4" above surface
- Refill with native soil, no fertilizers
- Mulch on top and water in well
- Whitewash 50/50 interior latex/water



What is the "wobble test"?

To Prune or Not to Prune at Planting



5. Water wisely and “fruitfully”



The UC
Davis
“TRIC”

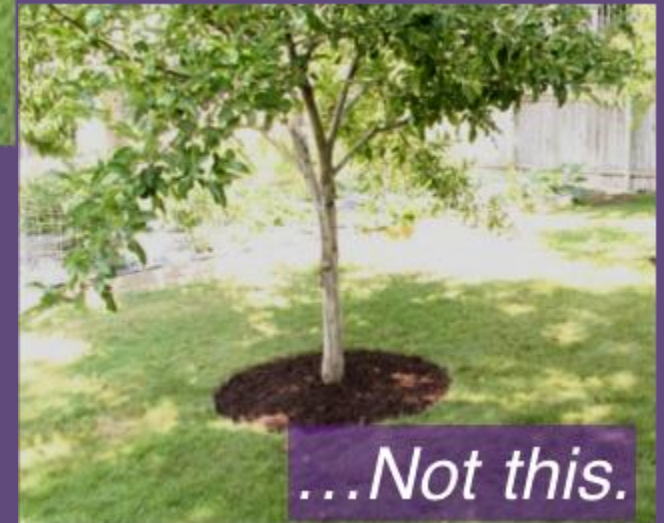
Mulch for Fruit Trees

Arborist wood chips!!!!



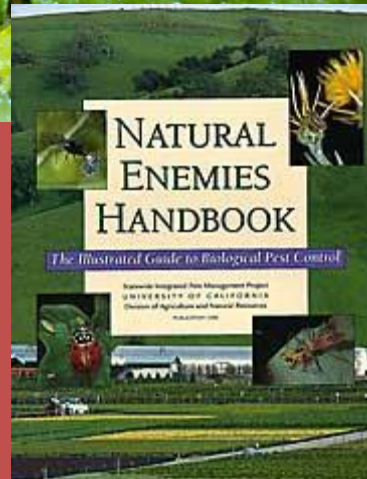
This...

Remember – *Mulch is NOT compost and compost is NOT mulch.*



...Not this.

4. Be patient with Insect Pests



UC IPM:
ipm.ucdavis.edu

But...prevention is crucial



UC IPM: ipm.ucdavis.edu

3. Have the courage to thin your fruit!



Thinning fruit applies to most fruit trees to save branches from breaking, improve fruit quality and size, and even out biennial bearing



Rule of thumb (and pinky)

Figure 16.41

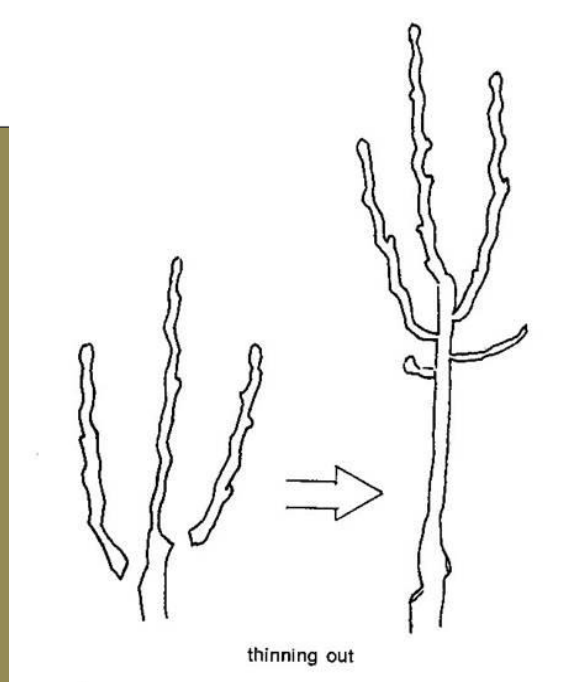
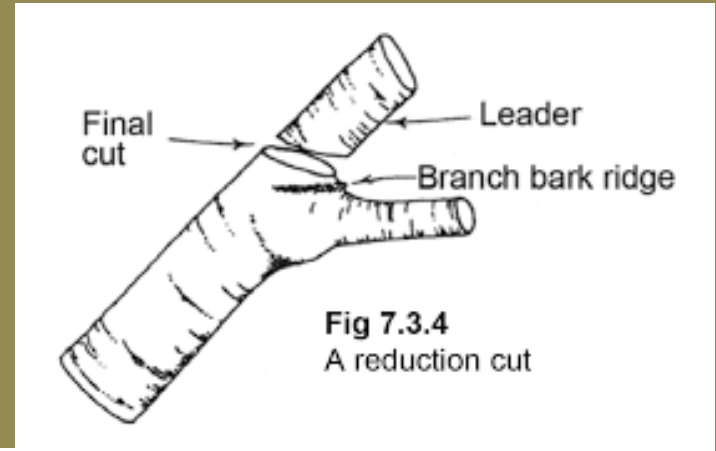
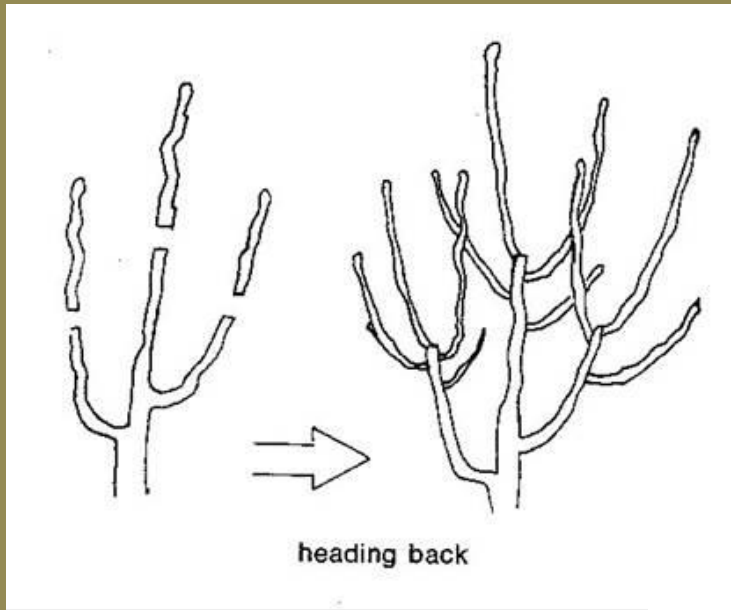
Fruit thinning in peach. Same branch before (left) and after (right) thinning. *Source:* After LaRue and Johnson 1989, pp. 58, 59.



2. Use the right tools for the job



1. Prune with a purpose!



- Heading cut
- Thinning cut
- Reduction cut

Prune fruit trees for overall structure in the winter and for size control in the summer

**Avoid pruning
CHERRIES AND
APRICOTS during
rainy season (winter)**

Dormant vs Summer Pruning



Pruning for structure

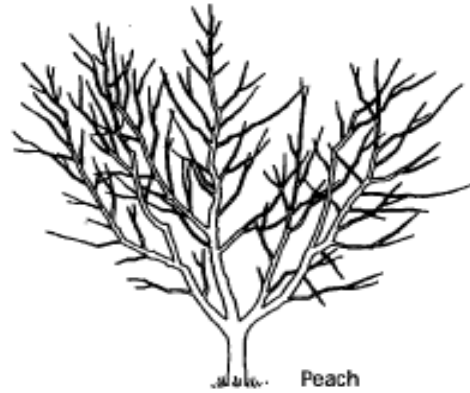


Figure 3. When pruning and training a young tree, it's important to keep in mind the form of the mature tree. Note the central leader and conical shape of the apple and pear trees and the more vase-like shape of the peach and cherry trees.



Citrus “Skirt Pruning”

Year round Pruning



Dead wood
Remove all dead and diseased branches.



Interior Branches
Take out branches that grow inward, toward the center of the tree.



Rubbing Branches
Remove branches that cross or rub against other branches.



Suckers
Remove some, but not all, of the suckers (branches that grow vertically, often in a clump.) If you remove them all, they will come back.

Different fruiting types



Little to no
major pruning

Require
more pruning

- Pomegranate
- Citrus
- Fig
- Persimmon
- Genetic dwarf varieties

- Peach
- Apricot (summer pruning)
- Plums
- Apples and Pears
- Cherries (summer pruning)

Resources!

- <https://ccuh.ucdavis.edu/tric> - Tree Ring Irrigation Contraption
- <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm> - NRCS web soil survey
- <http://homeorchard.ucanr.edu/> - UC Home Orchard site (there is also a UC “Home Orchard” book)
- <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/> - UC IPM site!!!
- <http://pcmg.ucanr.org/> - Placer Co Master Gardeners
- <http://ncmg.ucanr.org/> - Nevada Co Master Gardeners
- Kevin Marini, Krmarini@ucdavis.edu
- Commercial sites but tons of info:
 - Dave Wilson Nursery <https://www.davewilson.com/>
 - Four Winds Growers (Citrus) - <https://www.fourwindsgrowers.com/>