Fruit tree and shrub pruning

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Pruning

- Why
- When
- How
- With what
Why do we prune

• Shrubs
  – Control size and vigor of shrubs
  – Remove disease / decay
• Fruit trees
  – Reduce fruit set / increase fruit size
  – Ease of harvest
  – Reduce damage from heavy fruit set
  – Remove disease and decay
When to Prune

- Shrubs without showy flowers
  - Late winter / early spring before buds expand
- Shrubs with showy flowers
  - Immediately after bloom
- Ornamental shrubs / trees
  - Nov – Late Feb
- Fruit trees
  - Late winter / early spring before buds expand
Don’t get Lazy!!!

Branch collar

Branch bark ridge

Branch collar
Target pruning for tree health

1st = undercut
2nd = removal
3rd = stub removed

Branch Bark ridge
Branch collar
WOUND DRESSINGS

Orange Shellac
Asphalt Paints
Creosote Paints
Tar
Epoxy
Liquid Electrical Tape
...

...
Avoid Wound Dressings

- Kills cambium cells = slower sealing
- Seals wound and traps in moisture = increased decay rates
Managing Light Availability

Old style - one base breaks into 3 or 4 lateral trunks at 3’ above the ground
New style - one main stem with scaffold branches
Dwarf and some semi dwarfs designed for trellis systems
Semi dwarf to full standards are self supporting
Pruning Apple Trees in a nutshell

What to remove on a previously pruned tree – Old Style
1. Water sprouts
2. Branches that go straight up or down
3. Branches that are crossing/rubbing on other branches
4. Branches directly above/below other branches
   2-3 feet spacing above/below
5. No more than 30-40% removed in any one year

What to remove on a previously pruned tree – New Style
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4. Branches directly above/below other branches
   that are not spaced at least 2-3 feet above/below
Pruning Apple Trees in a nutshell

Where to start on an old neglected tree
1. Make 1 major pruning removal each year until center “core” of tree is open
2. Reduce the height of the tree by target pruning the top remaining branches should be lateral
3. Branches that go straight up or down
4. Branches that are crossing/rubbing on other branches
5. Branches directly above/below other branches that are not spaced at least 2-3 feet above/below
Fruit Tree Pruning - Pears

Managing Light Availability

1st rule – Pears do not understand what you are trying to make them do

2nd rule – Pears will grow up at all cost

3rd rule – Pears would rather give up and die than conform to your will
Fruit Tree Pruning - Peaches

Managing Light Availability

- Peaches have strong apical dominance
- Peaches have weak wood
- Prune to hollow the venter and create a vase shape
- Prune new wood back 30-50% to limit fruit production and breakdown
4-5 branches low

Minimize vertical branching

Reduce all new growth back 30-50 %
Pruning Overgrown Shrubs

**Step 1** - Gas up the saw and wait for spouse to leave!

**Step 2** - Working quickly but safely cut as close to the ground as possible and removal all debris.

****If step 2 is done correctly you will be at the store buying a new saw chain when spouse returns home – enter home carefully

**Step 3** - Wait! Coppiced shrubs will resprout from the root collar
Shrub Maintenance

• Regular pruning cycle for most shrubs
  – 5 year removal of old wood shoots
  – Renewed sprouts flower and fruit more
  – Control height and vigor
  – Less disease problems when pruned