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Plan on Pruning Your Fruit Trees

By removing growth you can actually stimulate more growth. Research indicates pruned trees will outgrow unpruned trees of the same age during their early years.

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Pruning fruit trees is a critical orchard management technique needed to improve overall fruit quality. However, during a fruit tree's lifespan the reason for pruning will change.

A newly planted bare root tree needs the top pruned back to match the bottom of the tree. When a bare root tree is initially dug up, it loses a considerable amount of its roots. The decreased root system will not be able to support an unchanged top. By pruning

the top back, you balance the tree and provide it with a good foundation for future growth.

During a tree's juvenile years (ranging from 1-6 years), pruning stimulates growth. Producers often think this sounds counterintuitive, but by removing growth you can actually stimulate more growth. Research indicates pruned trees will outgrow unpruned trees of the same age. During these early years, it is also time to start training fruit trees by shaping their growth. Through manipulation of the growth pattern, you can increase production and decrease the likelihood of breakage. By opening the center of some fruit trees you can increase air flow and

PRUNING TIPS

PRUNING TO A BUD

1 Make sharp, clean cuts close enough so that you won't leave a clumsy stub that's hard to heal over. Stay far enough above the bud so it won't die back. Slant the cuts as shown, and the new growth will develop beautifully.

AIMING OUTWARD

2 Every branch has buds pointed in various directions. Since you want vigorous new growth to spread away from the center of the tree, make your cut above a bud that's aimed outward. This helps your tree grow into a spreading shape.

10 O'CLOCK PRUNING ANGLE

3 Narrow, V-shape crotches are open invitations to disastrous splitting later on, particularly when your tree is ripening a bumper crop. So choose wide 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock angles.