

Welcome to our Fruit Tree Talk!



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**Fruit & Berries
Lists, Care etc.**

skynursery.com/fruit-trees-and-berries/



FRUIT TREE PRUNING

For Beginners

with Ian, Tree & Shrub Team



A Quick Poll



- 1. Basic Fruit Tree Needs**
- 2. Basic Pruning Techniques**
- 3. Structures for Young Trees**
- 4. Fruiting Habits**
- 5. Pruning by Fruit Type**

BASIC NEEDS

1



FULL

SUN

6+ hrs

GOOD DRAINAGE

No ponding
or mud



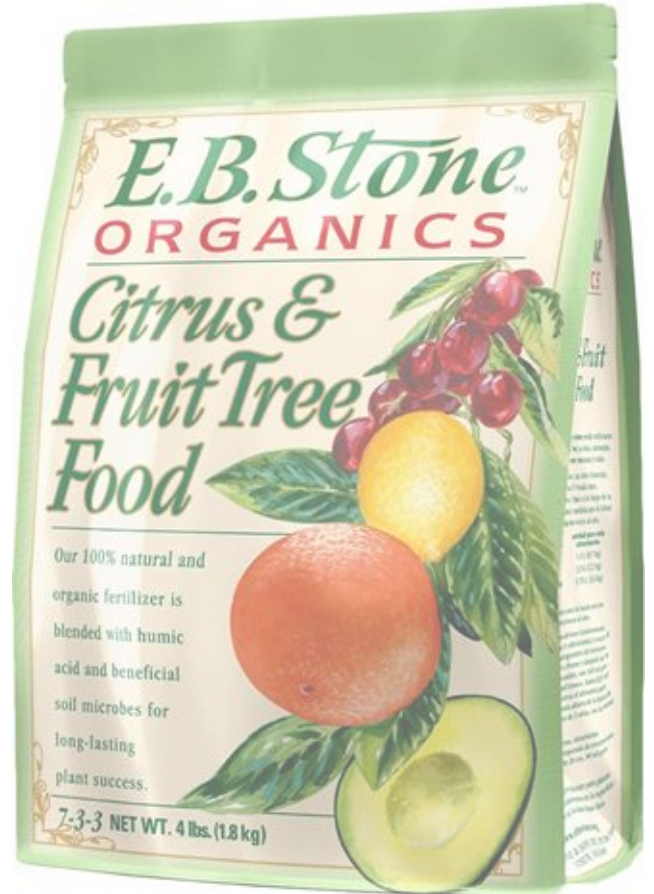
POLLINATION

**Many fruit
trees require
a 2nd tree**



FERTILIZER

Nitrogen in
the Spring, &
a balanced mix
in the Fall





WATER

1x/wk, deeply, in Spring

Use a gaiter bag, drip emitters,
or Berm + Hose on trickle.

Keep foliage & stems dry!

HEAT

Peach & Nectarine
can struggle to ripen
in cool NW summers





CHILL
Not an issue
in the PNW



BASIC PRUNING

2

Goals of Pruning

Airflow around all branches

Sunlight hitting all branches

Strong branches to hold fruit

Fruit somewhere you can reach

Tools



Terms

'THINNING' - Removing excess branches, twigs, or buds

'SPUR' - Fruiting wood of apples, cherries, & pears.
(Others fruit on branches)



'GRAFT'

Your tree is grafted onto the best 'rootstock' for the NW (good resilience & dwarf size)

'SUCKER'

a shoot coming from below the graft



‘PINCHING/ROLLING’ – If you spot unwanted branches early enough, you can use your hands:



Twig Cuts

GOOD



BAD



BAD

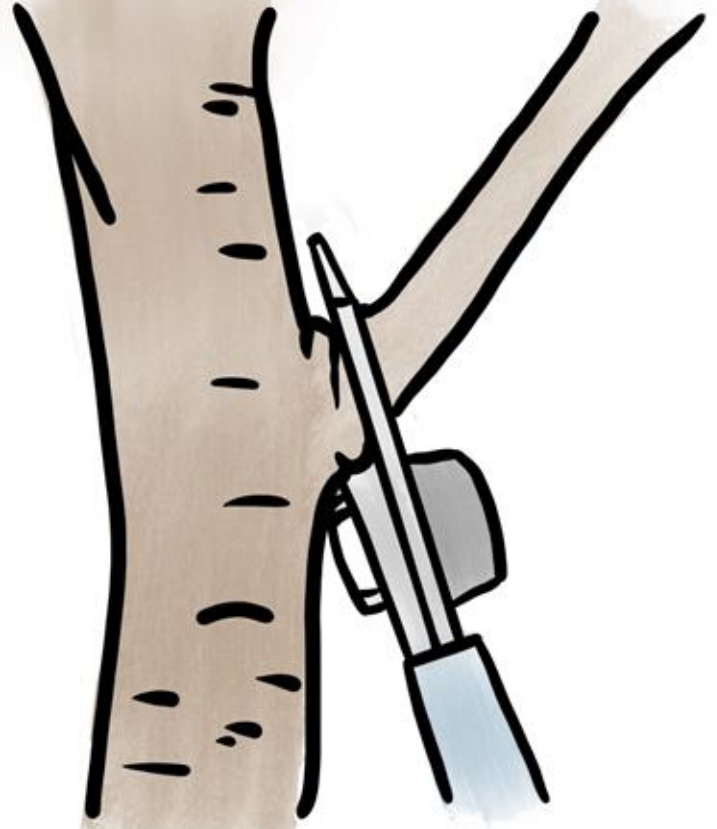


BAD



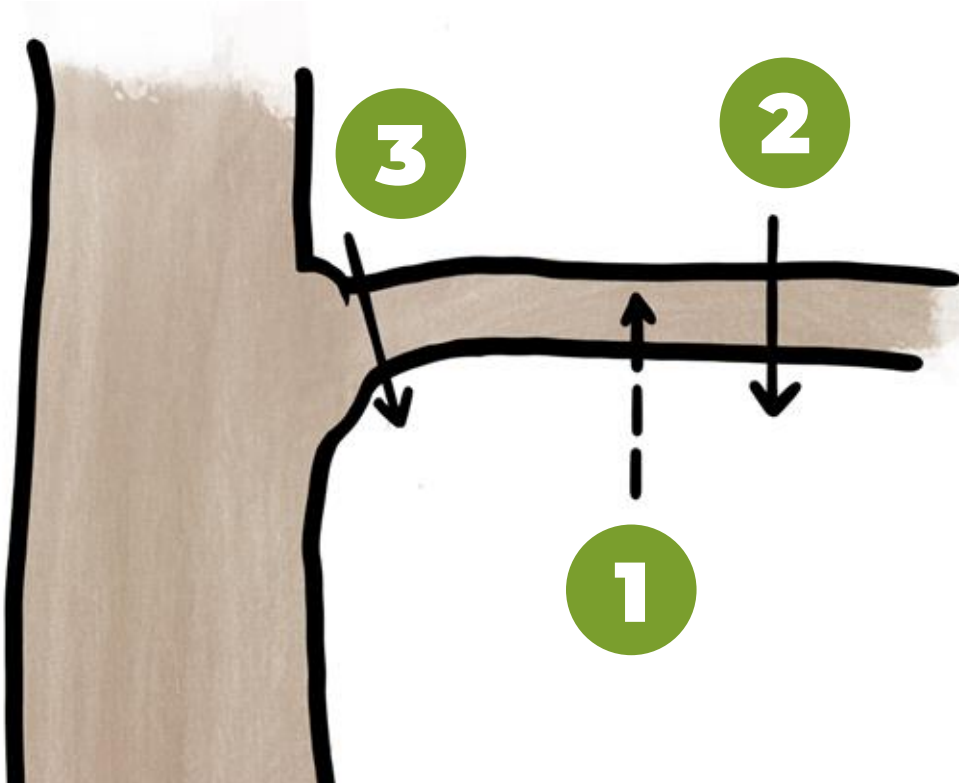
Branch Cuts

Cut above the
'Branch Collar'



(For heavy branches)

3-Point Cut



1. Upward cut, halfway through
2. Downward, messy cut
3. Final downward, clean cut

Timing

Winter - Most structural pruning on apples/pears. Buds below your cut will grow.

Summer - Thinning - especially with more advanced tree shapes. Structural pruning for stone fruits.

Start with:
Dead, Diseased
or *Deranged* wood
before structure work.

A young tree in a nursery, supported by a wooden stake. The tree has pink blossoms and green leaves. The background shows other trees in a nursery setting.

STRUCTURES FOR YOUNG TREES

3

Why Bother?

Systematic approach ensures you are meeting all basic goals

Building the 'scaffolding' of your tree

Invest 3-4 years pruning now,
for 100+ year life span



BAD

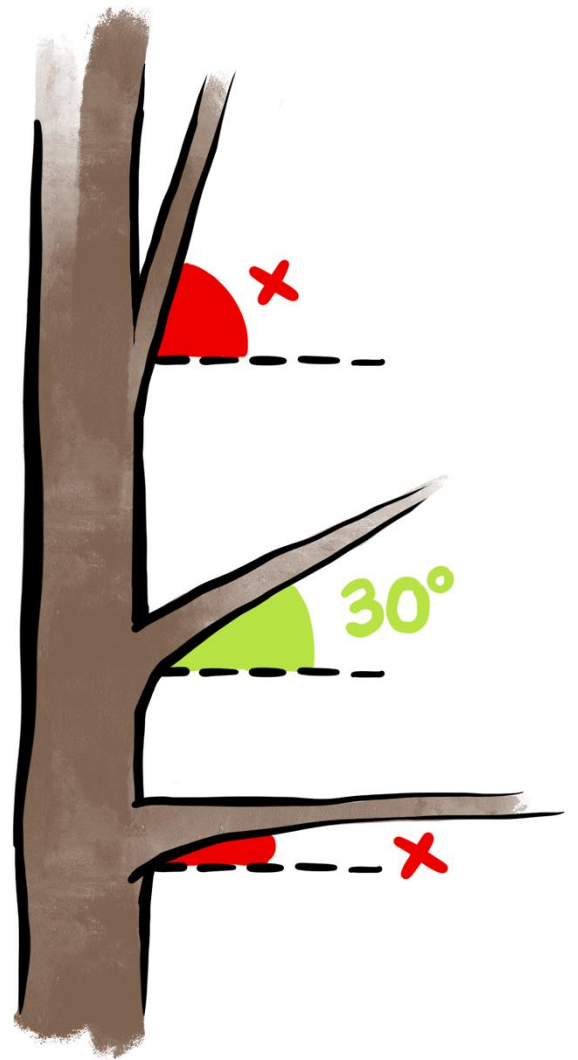


GOOD

BRANCH ANGLE

A tight V Shape will break at some point.

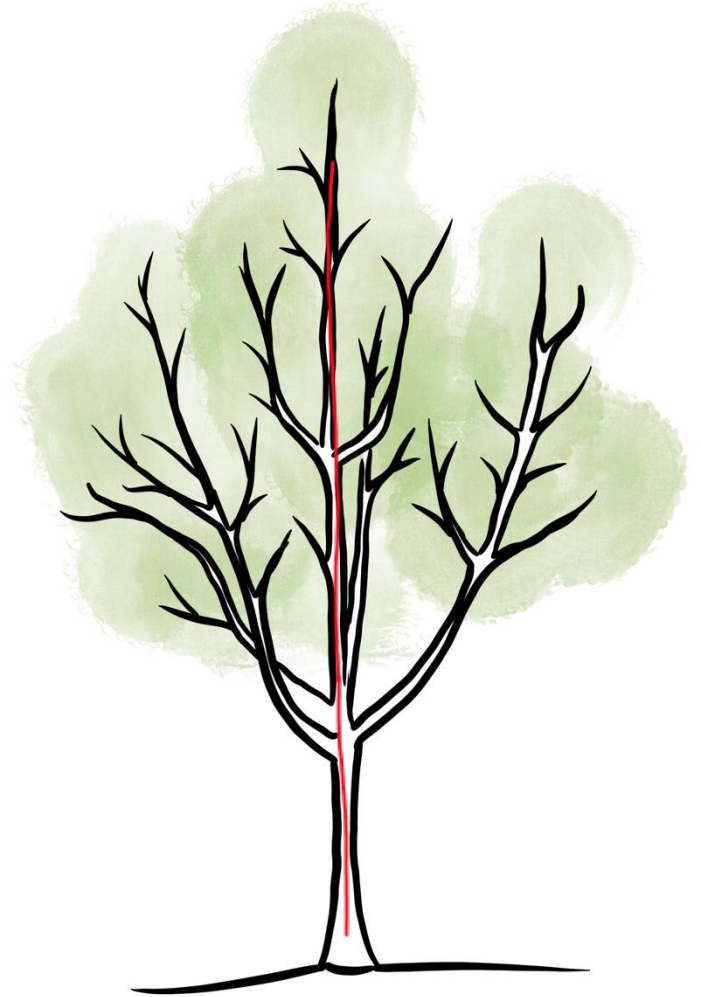
The best angle for a 'keeper branch' is 30 degrees. It will flatten out with weight and age.



Framework Terms

'LEADER'

The main, central
stem of the tree

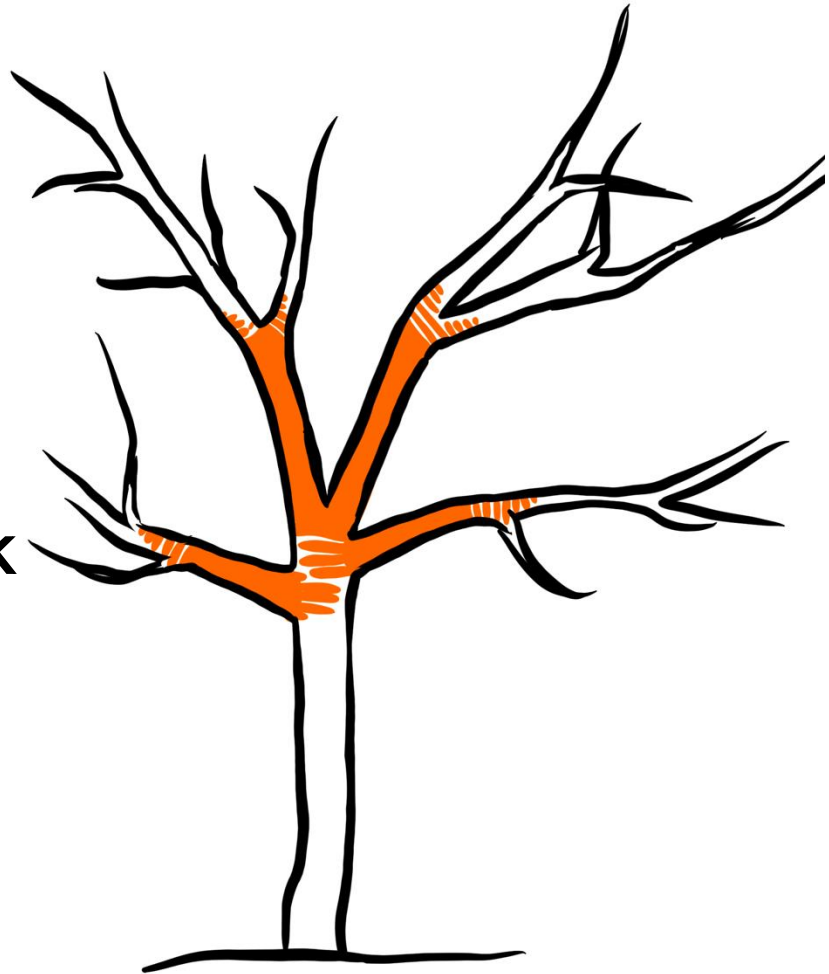


'SCAFFOLD' BRANCHES

Once selected, treat these like the trunk.

Trunk + Scaffold = Framework

Need Spacing, because fruit branches will stretch out from these



OPEN CENTER

1. Select 3-4 strong branches facing different directions
2. Remove leader



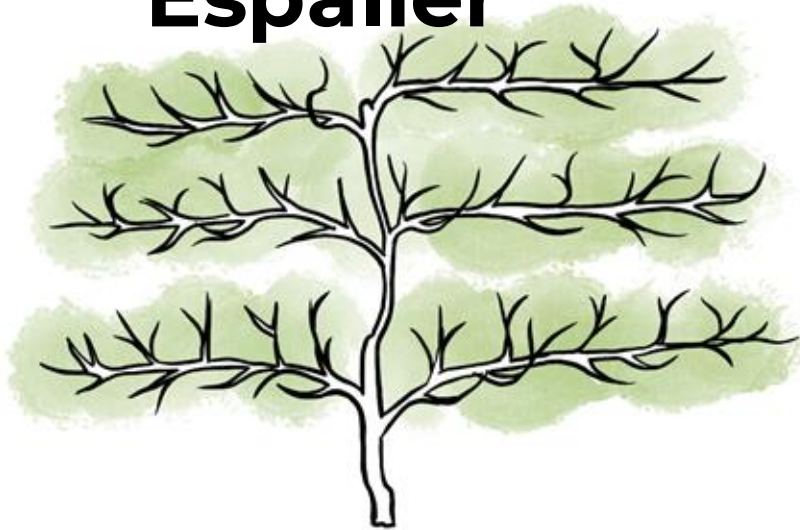
CENTRAL LEADER

1. Cut leader
2. Select new leader & scaffolds from new growth
3. Repeat

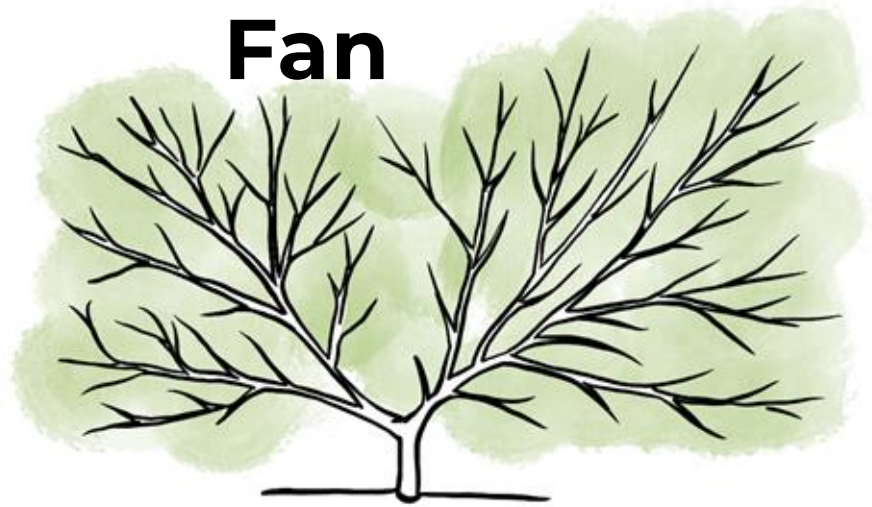


ESPALIER +

Espalier



Fan



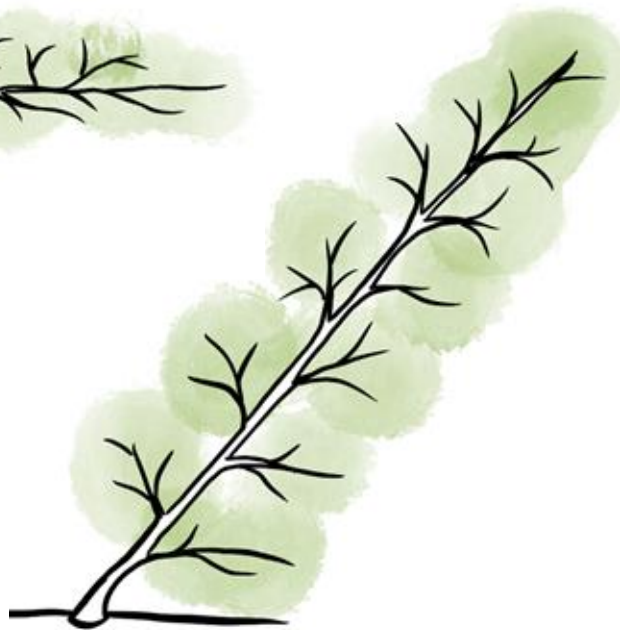
JUST FOR FUN

Double
Cordon



Stepover

Cordon





FRUITING HABITS

4

Fruit does not grow evenly across a tree

Understanding fruiting habits
= planning ahead well
= better harvests

Apples & Pears

Heavily branched
spur systems

Spurs form on
2-3 yr old wood &
bear for 5-10 years



Sweet Cherries, Plums & Apricots

Stubby unbranched spurs

Form on 1-2 yr old wood

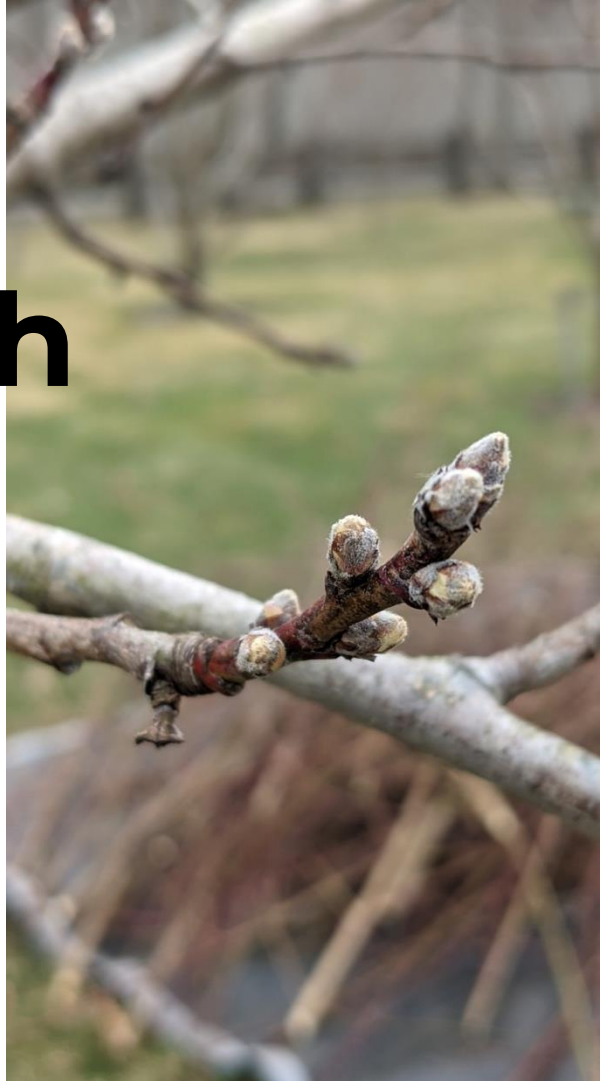
Lasts 2-3 yrs only



Sour Cherries, Nectarine & Peach

Blooms & fruits on 1 yr old
wood (last years' twigs)

Fruits at tips, so
bushier plants = more fruit.





PRUNING BY TREE

5



Apples | Any Structure

Heavy Fruit - needs strong branches

Need fruit-thinning

Use protective bags

Some apples need tip-pruning to encourage spur formation





Pears | Central Leader Best

Tendency to form large vertical trunks (especially Asian varieties), height is a challenge

Readily forms spurs - no need for tip pruning

Will need fruit thinning



Plums | Depends on Variety

European Plums - Central Leader

Asian Plums - Open Center

Minimal pruning beyond thinning
and removing dead/crossing wood

Prune in summer if possible, less
infection risk & suckering



Apricot | Fan or Central Leader

Fan pruning structure allows for under-eave placement out of rain

Like plums, minimal pruning except to maintain fan shape or open spacing



Sweet Cherry | Open Center

Fruits easily but wants to grow tall

Best to prune in August, after harvest. Reduces infection risk & suckering

No need to thin fruit

Bird netting is easier on a short tree



Sour Cherry | Open Center

Shorter & bushier plants

- Different species from sweet

Can prune in winter

Tip bearing, prune annually to stimulate growth for next year

Bird netting is a good idea



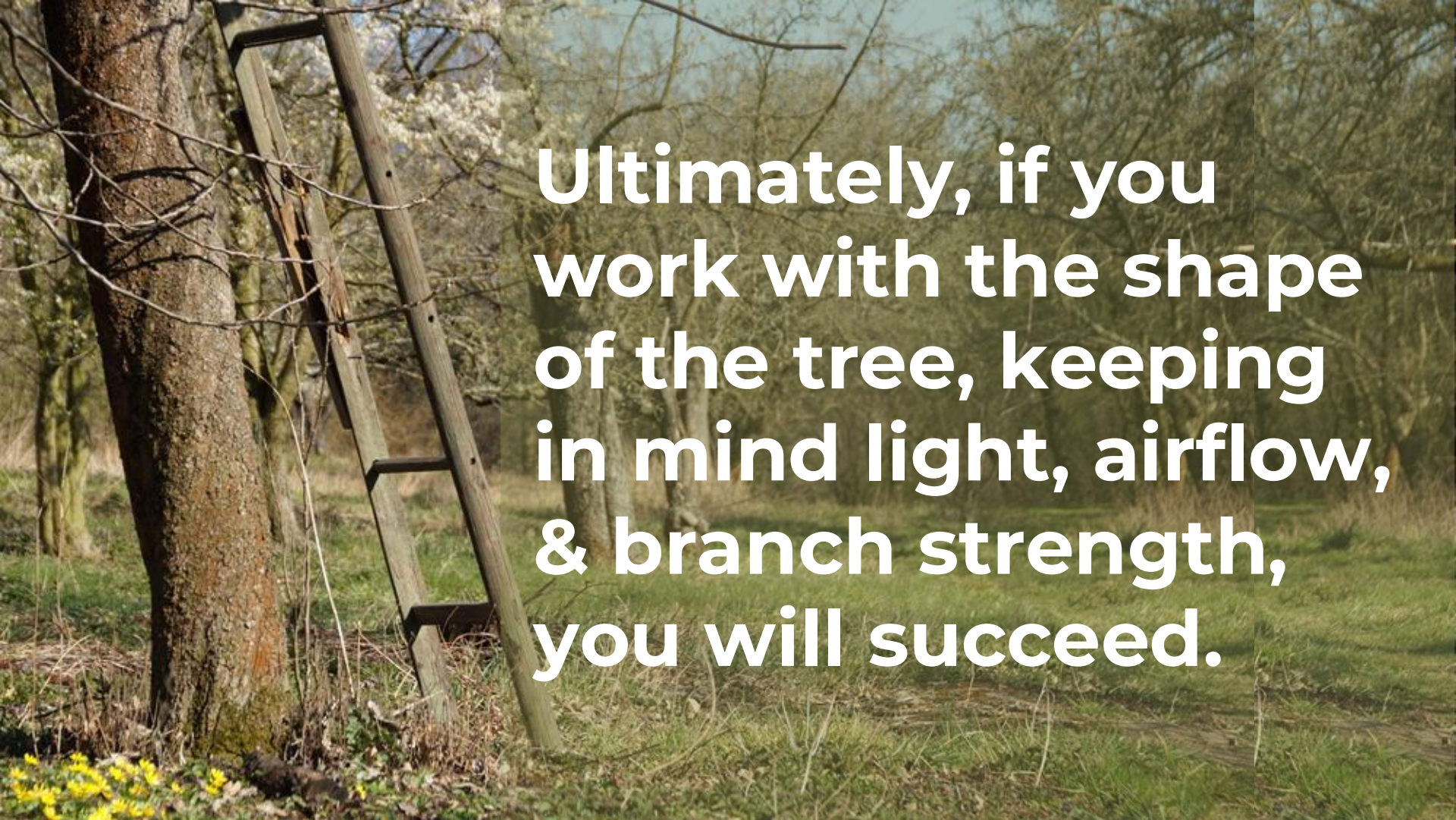
Peach & Nectarine

Open Center or Fan Shape

Require sunlight on fruit to ripen &
LOTS of heat - plant on S facing wall

More Heat = More Sweet

Tip bearing, prune following harvest to
stimulate growth for next year

A wooden ladder leans against the trunk of a tree in a grassy field. The ladder is made of weathered wood and has several rungs. The tree trunk is thick and has a rough, textured bark. The background is a soft-focus landscape with green grass and trees. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**Ultimately, if you
work with the shape
of the tree, keeping
in mind light, airflow,
& branch strength,
you will succeed.**

CITY fruit

You might get more fruit than you can eat!

Plums 1600lbs, Apples 1000lbs

Share with neighbors in need by getting on their harvest list. They also offer tree maintenance services.





FRUIT TREES & BERRIES

You can grow a TON of fruit in the Northwest, from fruit trees, to berries and beyond. Whether you're a seasoned orchard keeper or brand new, we're here to help.

On This Page (click to scroll):

- [Fruit By Difficulty](#)
- [What Fruit Needs to Thrive](#)
- [Fruit Trees - Basic Info](#)
- [Berries & Small Fruits - Info & List](#)
- [Searchable Fruit Tree List - 2025](#)
- [Fruit Pest & Disease ID & Treatment](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Where to Begin?

EASIEST TO GROW

These are adapted to PNW climate, fairly pest and disease free, and require minimal training & pruning.

- Aronia
- Blackberry

MODERATELY EASY

These are adapted to PNW climate, fairly pest and disease free, but may need training and support.

- Crabapple
- Cherry, Pie

CHALLENGING

These are well-adapted to PNW climate, but will need extra attention for pest and disease issues, in addition to training and support.

- Apple

MORE CHALLENGING

These fruits do not naturally thrive in the northwest, often needing a longer, hotter summer with more disease and pest pressure. They will also need pruning.



INFO LIBRARY

GENERAL GARDENING

Bagged Material Price List
Bulk Material Price List
Container Design Tips
Cover Crops
It's Going to Freeze/ Thaw
Lawn Care
Noxious Weed List (WA State)
Planting Instructions (Basic)
Pruning Videos (Plant Amnesty)
Raised Bed & Tarter Pricelist
Soil, Amendments & Mulches
Waterwise Gardening

VEGETABLES & HERBS

Cover Crops
Garlic - Fall 2023
Neonics & Our Growers
Peppers: 2023 List
Perennial Vegetables
Potatoes: Growing
Potatoes: 2024 List
Seed Starting Indoors
Tomatoes: Care
Tomatoes: 2023 List
Vegetable Gardening:
Getting Started
Vegetable Gardening:
Fall & Winter

FRUIT TREES & BERRIES

Blackberries 2024
Blueberries 2024
Edible Ornamentals
Fruit Tree List 2024
Fruit Tree Care
Gooseberries & Currants 2024
Grapes 2024
Hops for Brewing
Kiwis 2024
Pollination Chart: Apples
Pollination Chart: Cherries
Pollination Chart: Hazelnut
Pollination Chart: Pears

INDOOR GARDENING

Air Purifiers: Indoor
Aroid & Moss Pole Basics
Begonias: Indoor
Bonsai: Indoor
Carnivorous Plants
Citrus Care & Varieties
Common Houseplant Pests
Ficus Care
Gardenias
Poinsettia Care
Terrariums
Tillandsia
Christmas Cactus Care

Thank You! Questions?



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