



CITY OF
TEA TREE GULLY
Naturally Better

Guide to pruning popular backyard fruit trees

cttg.sa.gov.au

Pruning introduction

Pruning of fruit trees should be for enjoyment and the satisfaction of growing and producing food in your own backyard. Getting out of the house and enjoying the outdoors while tending to fruit trees is a great way to keep active and healthy. Not to mention the excitement of providing fresh fruit for yourself, family and friends.

Trees require pruning to produce fruit but also to keep the trees manageable. Keeping the size of the trees at an easy picking and maintenance height is preferred for backyard use. If you have a current system of pruning that produces bountiful crops of fruit, stick to it. If not, use the tips on the following pages.

Factors such as soil type, fertilising, aspect, sun and wind exposure are all important considerations when planting fruit trees. Pollination by bees (native and exotic) is a big contributing factor to plenty of healthy fruit. Consider planting flowering plants near your fruit trees to attract bees, preferably white, yellow and purple colours, as this is the bee spectrum. Plant in rows as this is the path bees will take to pollinate.

Pruning tools such as secateurs, loppers and saws should always be kept sharp and clean to stop infections. Always create a cut near (10mm) an outward or vertical facing bud. And prune fruit trees after most of the leaves have fallen; starch from the old leaves will be taken back into the trees and stored as energy.

Best of luck!

Apple

Malus domestica — Originally from modern day Eastern Turkey.

Late winter to very early spring, after frost, is the best time to prune these trees.

Prune any water shoots as well as suckers and vigorous offshoots. Prune any branches growing downwards, rubbing or creating shade or generally impeding growth. You need to encourage a canopy that lets the sunshine in.

A central leader trunk with balanced branching is best. This helps to develop a strong frame.

When the fruit spurs begin to develop, identifiable by their short, knobby and often fat, furry buds, do not prune unless they get too long or tangled.

Summer is a good time to remove older limbs that are not producing fruit anymore and to see which branches are less productive. The hottest months are also a good time to check any diseased or damaged areas of the tree.



Apricot



Prunus armeniaca — Native of temperate Asia, long cultivated in Armenia.

Prune the trees in winter when tree is dormant.

Prune away crossing or tangled growth and reduce new wood to half its length.

Fruit is borne on spurs shooting from wood two or three years old.

Apricot trees should be pruned in the open vase method to allow light and air to the centre of the tree. Prune away any diseased, down-growing branches or suckers.

This type of pruning reduces disease and encourages strong leaders to carry the weight of the fruit.

Cherry

Prunus avium (sweet cherry),
Prunus cerasus (sour cherry)
— Originated from West Asia,
Europe and North Africa.

Vase shape pruning is best for
cherry trees, giving the trees
strong, radiating leaders and an
open centre.

Pruning is carried out in winter.

Fruit is produced on spurs
developed on old wood which,
unless injured or pruned off, will
continue to bear fruit for many
years.

Very little pruning is needed
except to keep the height of the
tree manageable and structurally
sound.



Citrus



Citrus are indigenous to South East Asia and the Malay Peninsula.

Most citrus trees need little pruning.

Prune to remove suckers; these are shoots that come up from the base of the tree. Suckers take energy away from the tree causing the tree to work overtime, affecting the crop.

Prune any dead or diseased wood and to keep the tree manageable for harvest and maintenance.

The removal of inside, shaded twigs will facilitate picking and spraying in older orange trees.

Peach and Nectarine

Prunus persica — Origin China, persica named after its wide cultivation in Persia. Nectarine is a smooth skin peach.

Pruning is carried out in winter when tree is dormant.

Prune in an open vase shape, shaping the tree to develop strong leaders and allowing light to enter the centre of the tree.

Fruit is produced on last year's wood, so pruning is necessary to bring out the fruiting wood.

Thin out the fruit buds/spurs to prevent over-cropping.

Cut back the tops and cut out any dead or diseased wood, weak stems and rubbing branches.



Pear



Pyrus communis — Originated in Europe and Western Asia. Belgian chemist Jean Baptiste Van Mons hybridised and modernised the fruit.

Pear trees need central leader pruning in winter when plant is dormant.

Fruit is produced on spurs of old wood. Robust pruning is necessary to retain these spurs and to thin the tree out to prevent over-cropping and quality loss.

Prune to cut back the tops, bring on new fruiting wood, and to cut out all dead, diseased, weak stems and rubbing branches.

Plum

Prunus domestica — Originated from the temperate zone of Eurasia.

Pruning is done in winter when the tree is dormant.

Plum trees are pruned to develop an open centre with strong leaders.

The plum is borne on spurs year after year, so continued pruning is needed to bring on new fruiting wood.

Reduce the number of spurs to prevent over-cropping and improve fruit quality.

Cut back the branches to help keep the tree at a moderate height. Prune out dead wood and weak and rubbing branches.



Pruning overview

There are many more fruit trees but the basic steps on the previous pages will help with pruning most fruit trees. The following diagrams help explain these pruning styles.

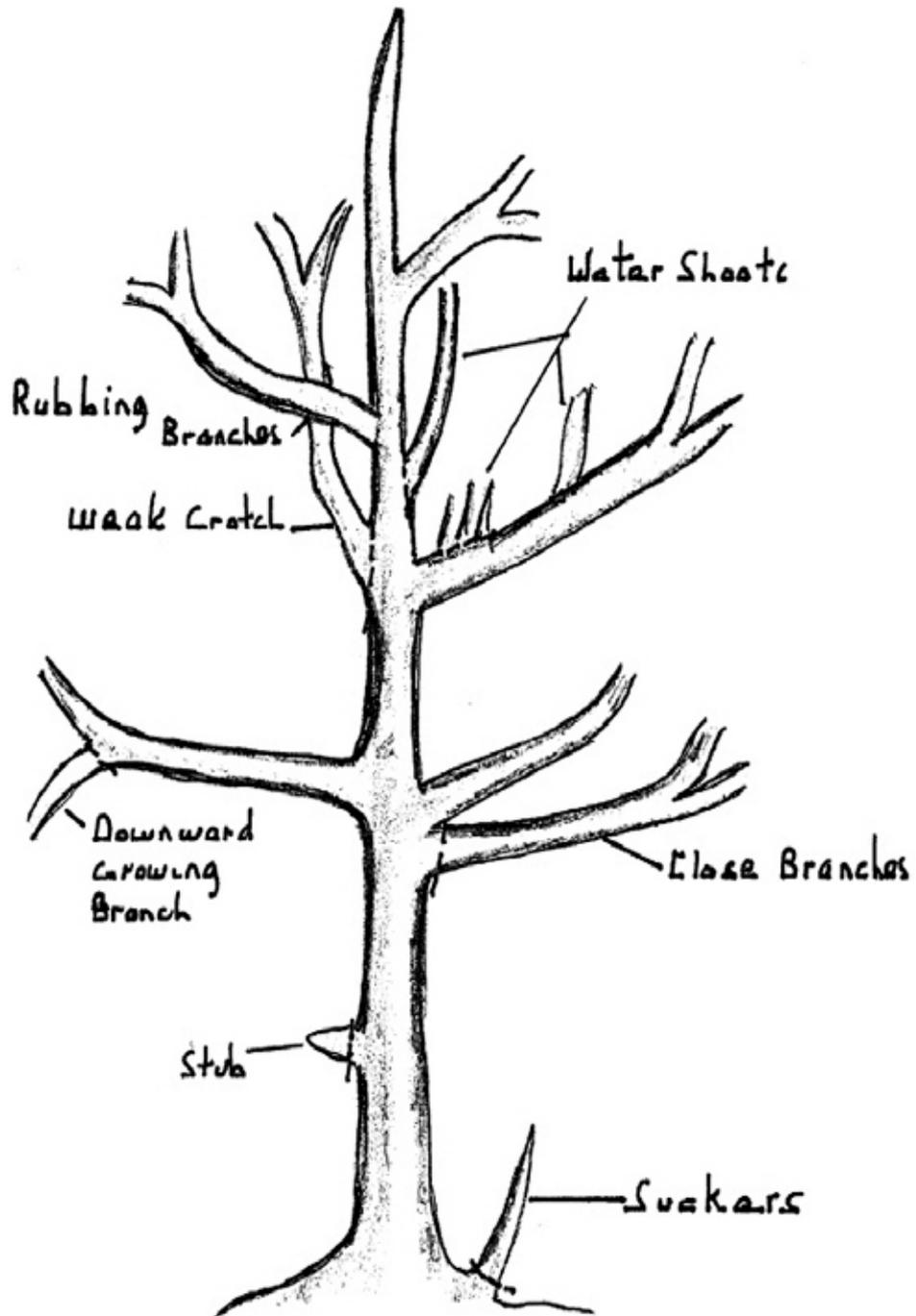
- Central leader (apple)
- Vase shape (apricot)
- Natural (orange).

Experience is the key to pruning, but there are general rules that we should all follow. When it comes to actually making the cut, it is more art than science.

Gaze at the tree and imagine where you need to prune the branches; this is part of the pleasure of fruit tree pruning.

Then you can imagine the harvest you will reap and enjoy the fruits of your labor.

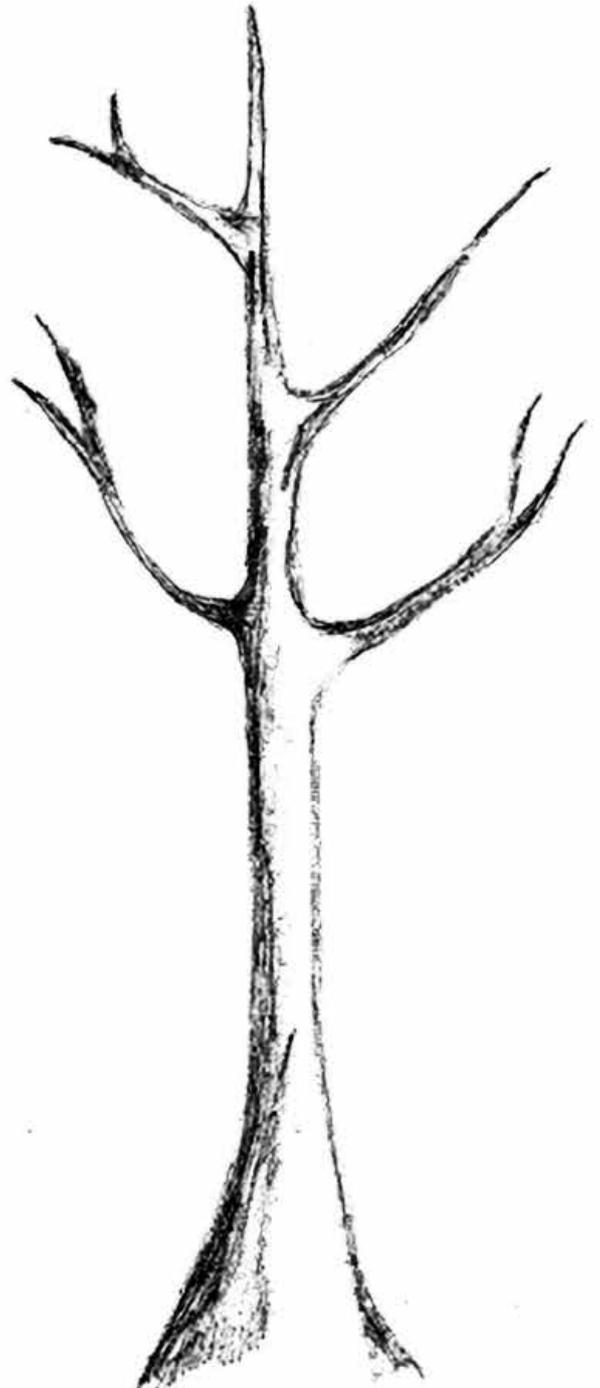
Pruning unwanted branches



Central leader pruning



Before Pruning

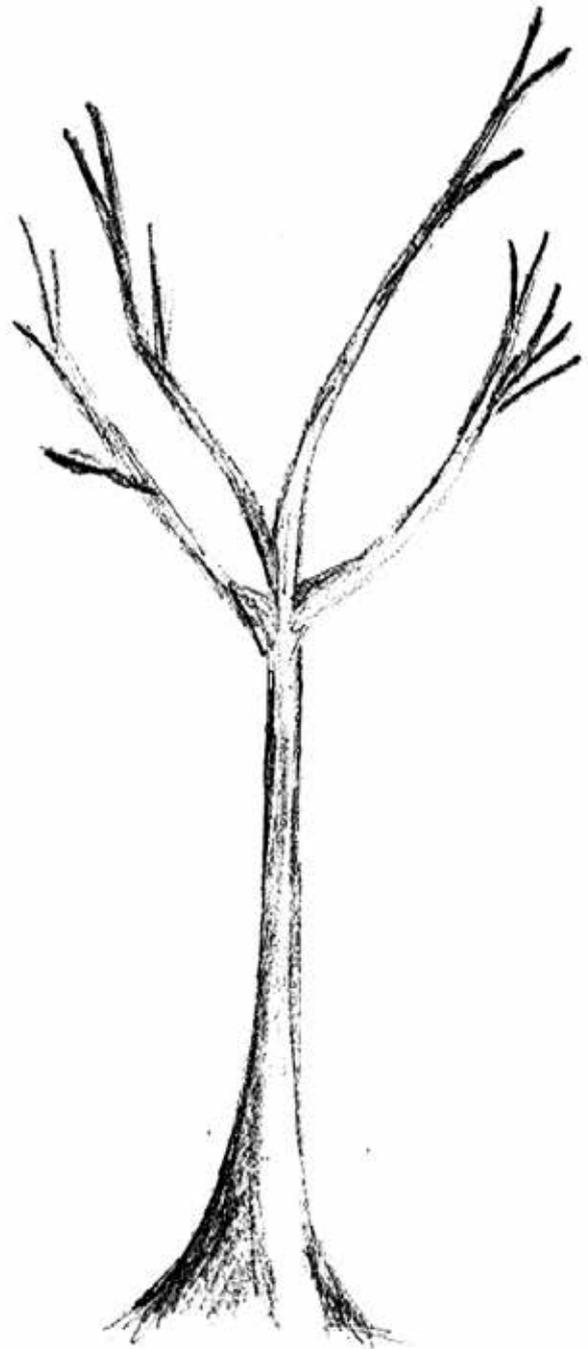


After Pruning

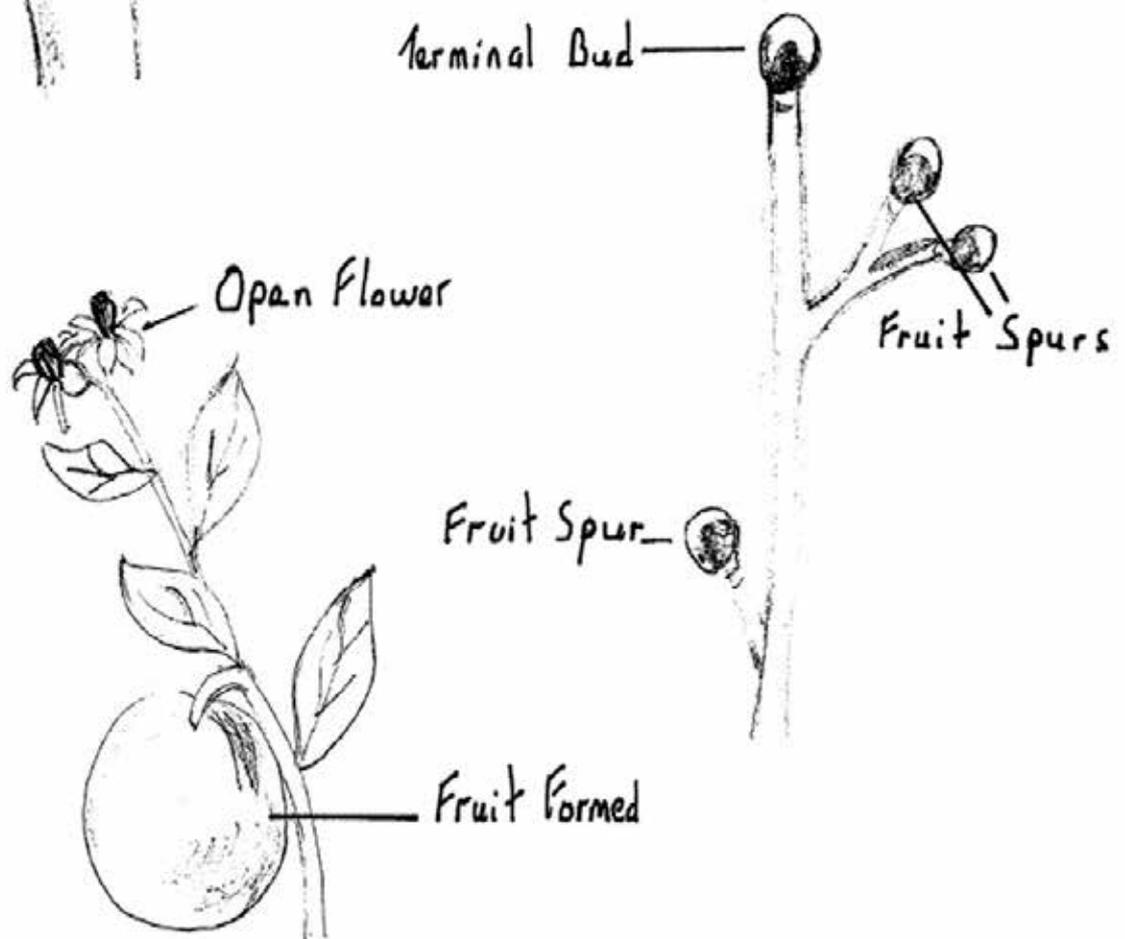
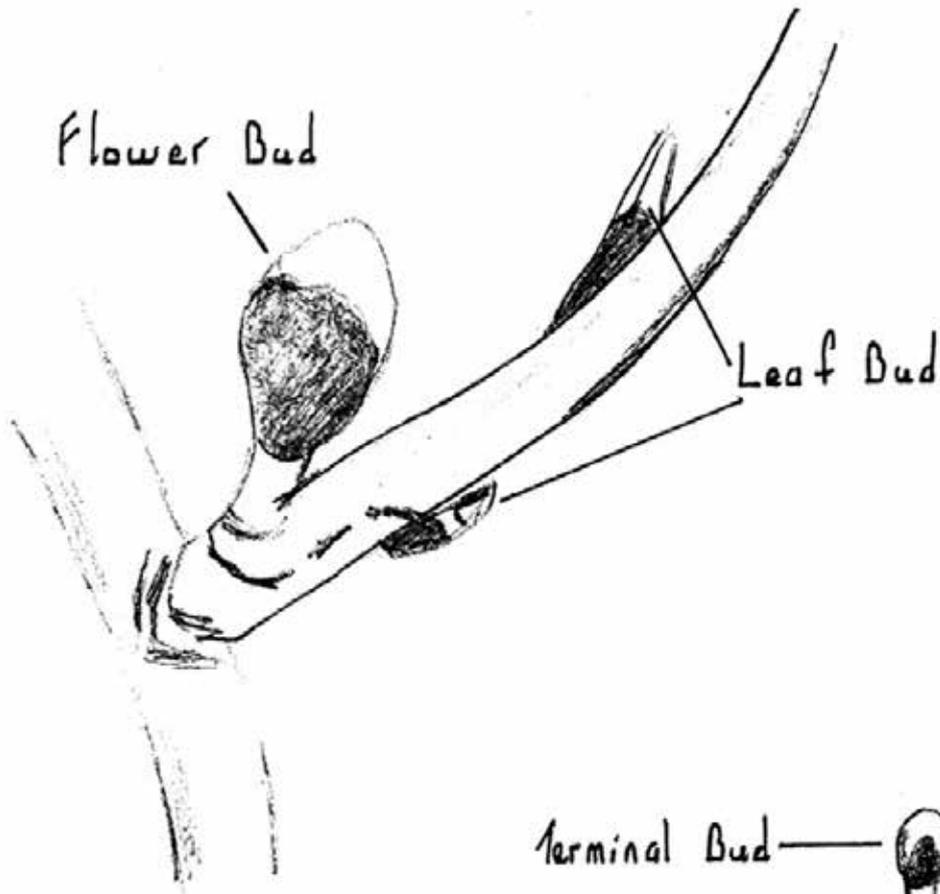
Vase shape pruning



Before Pruning



After Pruning





C I T Y O F
TEA TREE GULLY
Naturally Better

571 Montague Road, Modbury 5092

PO Box 571, Modbury 5092

Telephone 8397 7444

cttg.sa.gov.au