



EXTENSION

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Pruning for Good Fruit Production in the Home Orchard

Last week I said that for the next few weeks we would be looking at great new plants to consider for this summer's gardens. But we're taking a detour this week for a great reason, which I'll let you know about in a minute. So this week, let's talk about pruning fruits- both tree fruits and small fruits.

Benefits of Pruning

Productive fruit plantings with an abundance of high quality fruit don't just happen. They result from good cultural practices, including pruning. However, pruning of fruit producing plants is often neglected by the home gardener either due to a lack of pruning skills and knowledge, or due to fear that the plants will be damaged or killed by incorrect pruning.

The goals of fruit pruning are many, including 1) removal of old, non-fruiting branches, 2) to obtain maximum light exposure for both leaves and fruit; 3) provide uniform distribution of fruiting wood along the scaffold branches; 4) control plant size and vigor; 5) reduce limb breakage due to excessively heavy fruit loads; and 6) produce high quality fruit of good size.

When to Prune

Most fruit pruning is done during the dormant season. Cultivars or plant varieties most susceptible to winter injury are pruned in late spring just before growth begins, rather than in January or February to minimize the potential for cold temperature damage.

Fruit Training Systems

There are many training systems for fruiting plants, which is one of the difficulties home orchardists face. They need to learn the correct pruning form, timing and techniques for each different type of fruit – whether that's apples, grapes, raspberries, etc.

Here's the exciting opportunity I have to pass along to you this week.

Pruning Workshop – Saturday Feb. 23

Kimmel Orchard & Vineyard is offering a hands-on pruning workshop for those wanting to get more in-depth pruning instruction. The workshop will be held Saturday February 23 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Kimmel Orchard in Nebraska City, NE. Join Vaughn Hammond, orchard operation manager, and the Kimmel Orchard team to explore proper pruning techniques for fruit trees, grape vines and blackberry



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bushes. Participants will start the day covering pruning basics in the classroom, before heading out to the orchard for hands-on experience. The cost is \$40.00 per participant, with lunch, handouts and some break refreshments included.

Don't miss out on this great opportunity! Contact Vaughn at vaughn@kimmelorchard.org or (402) 256-5032 to register or with questions.

Pruning Resource

If you can't make it to the pruning workshop, the Midwest Home Fruit Production Guide, <http://bit.ly/homefruit>, is another great resource. It outlines specifics on the best pruning practices for each type of fruit, both tree fruits and small fruits.

Your Suggestions are Welcome!

Is there a lawn and gardening topic you would like to learn more about? Sarah Browning is an Extension Educator with Nebraska Extension and can be contacted by phone 402 441-7180, by mail at 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE 68528: or by e-mail sarah.browning@unl.edu.

Images from Pixabay.



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