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# Pruning and Training Fruit Trees

Prune fruit trees when the leaves are off (dormant). It's easier to see what you are doing and removal of dormant buds (growing points) invigorates the remaining buds. Summer pruning removes leaves (food manufacture), will slow fruit ripening, and exposes fruit to sunburn. Summer pruning can be beneficial, however, when used to slow down overly vigorous trees or trees that are too large. It is usually done just after harvest.

Young trees should be pruned fairly heavily and encouraged to grow rapidly for the first 3 years without any fruit. Leave most of the small horizontal branches untouched for later fruiting.

Upright branches generally remain vegetative and vigorous. Horizontal branches generally are more fruitful. A good combination of the two is necessary, for fruiting now and in future years. Remove suckers, water sprouts and most competing branches growing straight up into the tree. Downward bending branches eventually lose vigor and produce only a few small fruit; cut off the part hanging down.

New growth occurs right where you make the cut; that is, the influence of the cut only affects the buds within 1 to 8 inches of the cut surface not 3 to 4 feet down into the tree. The more buds cut off, the more vigorous the new shoots will be.

Do most of the pruning in the top of the tree so that the lower branches are exposed to sunlight. Sun exposed wood remains fruitful and produces the largest fruit. Shaded branches eventually stop fruiting and will never produce without drastic topping and renewal of the entire tree.

Make clean cuts (within ¼") of bud; don't leave stubs.

Peach and Nectarine: remove 50% of last years growth. Fig, Apple, Pear, Plum and Apricot: remove about 20% of last years growth. Cherries: only summer prune the first 5 years.
(Adapted from homeorchard.ucdavis.edu)

# Trellising

There are several different styles of trellises to choose from. Unless you have a particular decorative style you wish to achieve, then by all means construct something that is durable and easy to maintain. You will want to construct a trellis system that is also eye appealing and allows you to prune and harvest vines. Many gardeners choose to use wood to frame a trellis. Treated (CCA) lumber will last many years, however some folks do not want to risk using lumber treated with toxic chemicals. You can purchase non-treated lumber, but posts will tend to degrade underground due to soil organisms feeding on the wood. Also, above ground wood will tend to rot and fade due to exposure to weather. Above ground wood can be painted, but trying to repaint once the vines are established could be challenging. Wrought iron trellises are very nice to look at and are relatively easy to maintain, however they can be quite expensive to install depending on how elaborate the structure.
One important aspect of constructing the trellis is to place the posts (wood or metal) securely into the ground at least 2-3 feet. You may choose to set posts in concrete (much like clothes line poles). Once the concrete is hardened, the wood supports and/or wire can be attached. The grapevines, once mature, will produce considerable foliage so it is important that the trellis will be able to hold the weight of the hanging vine. Metal or wood braces should be added for support. If you choose not to pour concrete around posts, then metal screw anchors should be placed in the ground (1-11/2ft.) at each end with #9 wire tight-ened down as a brace support. All materials can be purchased at your local lumber yard or home improvement store.
(Adapted from Maurice Brown, OSU Extension Agent at oardc.ohio-state.edu)

For diagrams and further information, please use

**OhioLine: Yard and Garden** *From the Ohio State University* ohioline.osu.edu/lines/hygs.html