



Pruning fruit trees... ...the bare basics

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Fruiting habit - APPLE

- Apple fruits on two year old and older wood
- Flower buds develop on spurs (short shoots) on two year old and older wood
- Best fruit occurs on 2-, 3-, 4-year old wood
- Buds/spurs weaken as they get older
- Shade is your enemy
- Horizontal wood preferred over vertical wood

APPLE – fruiting habit



APPLE pruning – goals

- Create a balance between fruiting wood and new shoot growth (which will become fruiting wood)
- Remove old wood, stimulate new growth
- Create an even light environment (as possible) throughout tree
- Open up tree for spraying, etc.
- Create a structure to support crop load

APPLE pruning – basics

- Central leader tree
- Cone shape tree
- Dormant pruning (January-April) more invigorating than summer pruning (July)
- Heading cuts increase vigorous response at location of cut
- Thinning cuts are more desirable because they create balance between new and older wood
- !!!Thinning cuts are almost always preferable to heading cuts!!!

APPLE – central leader

Note:

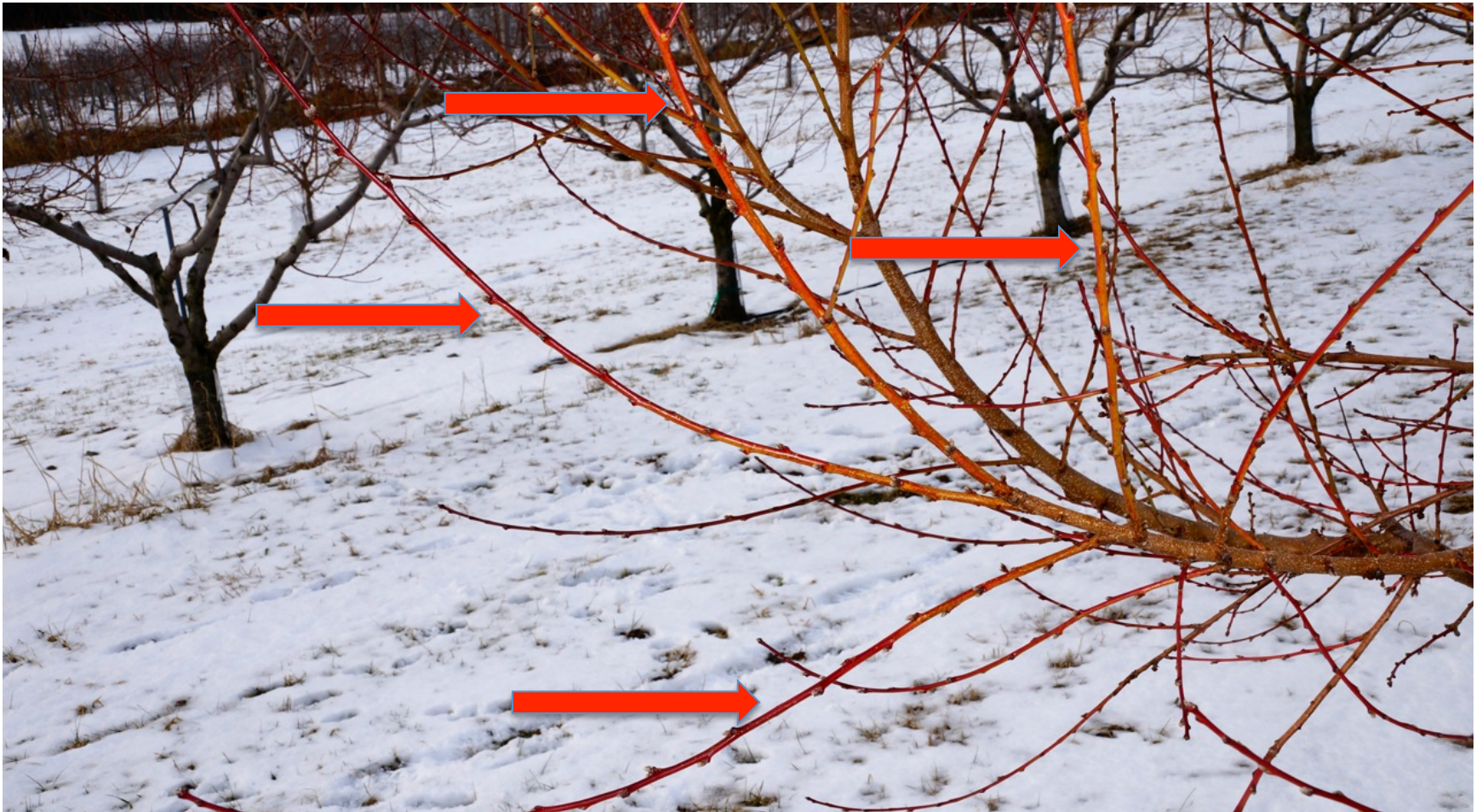
- Dominant central leader (trunk)
- Branches get smaller as you move up the tree (cone or Christmas tree shape)
- Permanent “scaffold” branches at bottom
- Smaller, shorter branches as you move up the tree, may be permanent or temporary



Fruiting habit – PEACH

- Peach (and nectarine) fruit mostly on last season's shoot growth (1-year old wood)
- Flower buds form right on shoot
- As long as you leave some 1-year old shots you will have peaches!
- Compared to apples, peaches are a weed!

Peach – fruiting habit



Peach pruning - goals

- Shade is your enemy!
- Open up tree, remove old wood, favor pencil-diameter 1-year old shoots that are 1 to 2 feet long
- Provide a structure to support crop load
- Limit tree height, avoid “creepitis”

PEACH pruning – basics

- Most often pruned to “open center”
- Older, upright fruiting wood removed
- More horizontal, younger wood and shoots preserved
- Tree height generally limited
- Shade is your enemy!

Peach – open center



“OTHER” fruit trees

- PEAR is identical to APPLE
- SWEET CHERRY is almost identical to apples, except heading cuts are used more often
- TART CHERRY treat like a large bush or central-leader, fruit on older and newer wood, goal is typically just to thin out tree (using thinning cuts!) and create an even light environment (as possible)
- PLUM are not my specialty, but I prune them like TART CHERRY (maybe some peach tactics) typically
- In all cases goal is to create light environment favorable to growing new wood and creating fruit buds, maintaining structure to support fruit, and creating a balance between old (structural and fruiting) and new (1-, 2-, 3-year old) wood

PEAR – fruiting habit, central leader (essentially same as apple)



Sweet CHERRY – fruiting habit



Sweet CHERRY – central leader



Tart CHERRY – central leader



PLUM – fruiting habit

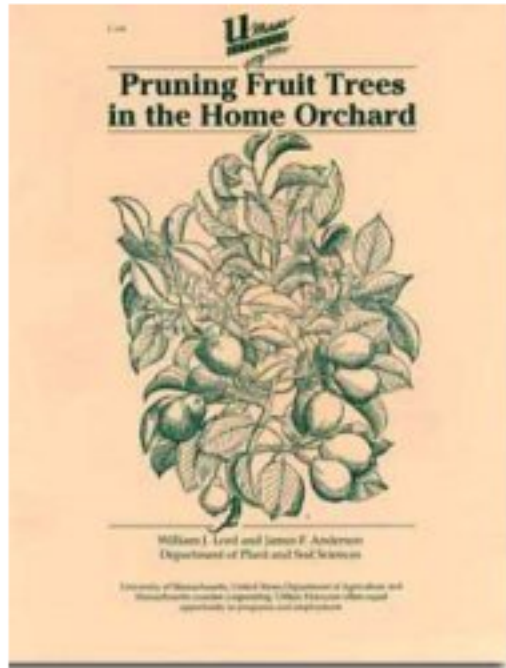


PLUM – central leader/bush hybrid



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Pruning Fruit Trees in the Home Orchard



37 photos and illustrations enhance the detailed text covering apple, pear, peach, plum and cherry trees.

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