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Yard 'n' Garden

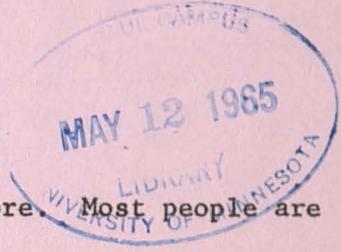
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PRUNING FRUIT TREES

Pruning is an often neglected but necessary garden chore. Most people are either afraid to prune a fruit tree for fear of ruining it, or else they put it off until it is too late. The best time to prune is in late winter or early spring before growth starts.

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In pruning young fruit trees, eliminate narrow V-shaped crotches. Select only wide-angled, well spaced branches for the permanent framework. If more than one branch comes out from the same point on the trunk, cut off all but one. Have the branches 6 to 8 inches apart and well distributed around the main trunk.

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On larger trees, cut out all dead or diseased branches or those that cross or rub each other. In the center of the tree remove all water sprouts and branches that have stopped growing at the tips. These branches will only produce small, poorly colored fruits. Make all cuts close to the trunk or main branch or just beyond a bud pointed in the direction you want the new growth to grow.

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Paint all wounds over 1½ inches in diameter with orange shellac or a suitable wound-preserving compound.

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If trees are too tall, cut back the tops to a side branch. Do not leave stubs. Keeping trees shorter will facilitate spraying and harvesting fruits.

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