

Pruning Fruit Trees

Mid-February through late March is fruit tree pruning season. That means, so long as the wood isn't frozen, it might be time to think about caring for those fruit trees. For mature trees, follow these steps in order until you reach removal of 30 percent of the tree:

Start by removing broken, damaged or diseased branches.

When two branches form a narrow angle, prune one out. Narrow angles are weak and more prone to breaking during wind or ice storms.

Remove suckers – branches that grow straight up from the trunk or major branches.

If two branches cross and rub against one another, remove one

Cut back or remove branches that are low and interfere with harvest or pruning.

Cut back branches to reduce the total size of the tree, if necessary.

Thin branches on the interior of the tree.

When cutting back a branch, always cut back to another branch or a bud. Do not leave a stub. Always cut at the branch collar when possible.

For more specific detail, check out the following publications: *Pruning Apple and Pear Trees*: <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3450.pdf> or *Pruning Peaches, Plums, Cherries and Other Stone Fruits*: <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3451.pdf> . Both publications are available online or upon request from a District Extension Office.