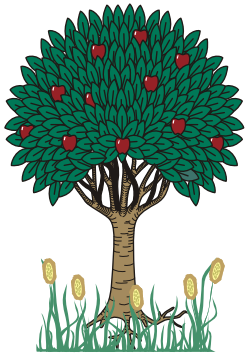
Objectives of Pruning

1. Remove dead diseased and broken branches.
2. Remove suckers, water spouts and other undesirable growth.
3. Remove weak, unproductive wood.
4. Thin out branches to admit sunlight. and good air circulation.
5. Shape and lower tree height if necessary.
6. Increase tree vigor.
7. Increase fruit size by increasing sunlight penetration.
8. Induce fruit bud formation for next year.
9. Prevent overbearing or biennial bearing.
10. Thin the crop and improve fruit quality.



The best time to prune is during the dormant season. February to April are ideal for most fruit trees.

Water sprouts (fast growing branches that grow straight up and often develop the next year as the result of pruning) are removed in midsummer, before they become woody and hard, by breaking them off by hand.

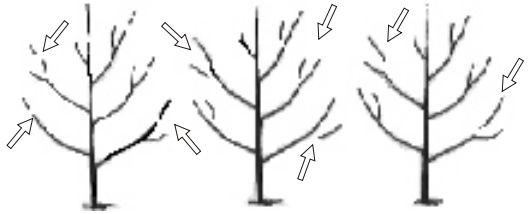
Pruning in the summer is done to limit the amount of regrowth. This is done on bearing trees that have reached full size.

Pruning young fruit trees.

Young non-bearing fruit trees are pruned to give them a desired form and develop a strong framework that will support fruit in later years.

Prune young trees lightly- too much pruning tends to dwarf the tree and slow down fruit bearing. A young tree that is pruned heavily will be smaller, come in to bearing later and bear smaller crops. Prune only enough to develop a strong framework of primary branches. After this framework has been established the trees need little pruning until they come into full production.

When removing a branch or shoot, make a parallel cut as close to the parent branch as possible. Position shears with the cutting edge next to the parent branch. Avoid bruising or tearing this young and tender bark.



There are 3 basic cuts:
Heading cut- where only the end portion is removed, ***Thinning cu***t entire limb or shoot is removed and ***Bench cut*** where the limb is cut back to where a shoot has begun.

Pruning steps

Plan to train the tree from day 1 to year 5.

Year 1.
All trees regardless of species should be cut back to the whip stage and cut down to about belly height. This gives the roots a chance to take hold.

Branches are now able to grow at a wider angle.

Year 2.
Maintain a leader for apple trees. Have lowest limb at knee height. Then alternate around the tree at fist size spaces to waist height. These are scaffold branches.

Year 3.
Maintain leader. Top others to make this the highest. Keep 3-4 laterals for more scaffolds. On last years scaffolds, save 2-3 laterals. Maintain a leader on each of these scaffolds as well.

Year 4.
Repeat 3rd year. Add another set of scaffolds

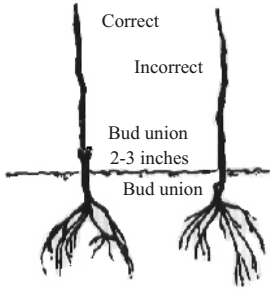
Center limbs cut out.

Year 5.
For semi drawfs cut out center limbs when their diameter equals the trunk. Then top off the tree at 9 to 12 feet.

M.9 **Drawf** 8-10 ft. | M.26 11-14ft. | M.7 15-18ft. | MM.106 MM.111 18-20ft. | Seeding **Full** 35-40 ft.

Semi Dwarf

Dwarf and semi dwarf fruit trees are easier to prune, treat for pests and harvest than full size trees. Smaller trees also begin to bear fruit at an earlier age. Trunk diameter should be 3/8 to 5/8 inches. For planting, be sure to have the hole large enough to accommodate the root system. Water at the to rate of 2 to 3 gallons per tree every 7 to 14 days or more. Keep the area around the tree clear, mulching works well.



	A	B	C	D	E
Apple					
Dwarf	7	13	2-3	6	20+
Semi	18	24	4-5	10	30-40
Standard	30	30	10-15	20+	40-60
Apricot	15	20	4	9	15+
Cherry	18	24	4	8	20
Nectarine	15	20	5	8	10-14
Peach	15	20	4	8	10-14
Pear	20	20	5	18+	40+
Plum	10	15	5	10	18

a= space between trees. b= space between rows. c= bearing age. d= full bearing age . e= productive life.

Thank you to Steve Fouch,
County Extension Agent for MSUE
for his great pruning tips.

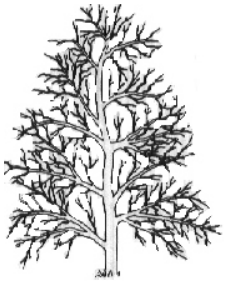
The information in this brochure is taken from the Master Gardener handbook put out by MSU Extension.
For more information on pruning contact your extension office.
Chippewa County 635-6368
Mackinac County 643-7345

Chippewa/ East Mackinac Conservation District

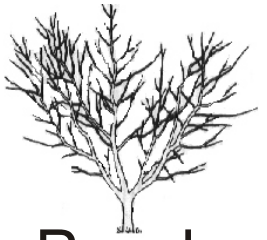
PRUNING TIPS for FRUIT TREES

Cherry

Apple



Pear



Peach