

## **Fruit Tree Pruning by Barton Morse**

***When pruning fruit trees the overall goal is to shape the fruit tree like an umbrella with fruit pickable from the ground ideally. There are 11 different reasons to prune.***

- 1. Rubbing branches***
- 2. Bad Angles***
- 3. Weak branches***
- 4. Dead branches***
- 5. Branches too close***
- 6. Saving branches with lots of fruit spurs or buds***
- 7. Suckers growing straight up***
- 8. Too close to other trees***
- 9. Too tall***
- 10. Too thick, need room for fruit***
- 11. Open up tree for easy spraying***

***You will need a small pruner, a large pruner and a live wood saw small and large. Also***

***sunglasses as you will be looking up a lot. Long protective pants, long sleeves and gloves. A scratch can get infected and I personally have gotten blood poisoning and a nasty scar by wearing short pants.***

***March is usually the best month to prune, but you can start as early as the end of February and as late as June. Maples and birches are the exception; they are only pruned in November. The sap has to be down and the tree dormant so the sap does not flow out of the cuts. Grapes can be pruned severely, leaving only a scaffolding and maybe 3 buds every 18 inches. These buds will grow up to 20 feet in one season. A well-pruned tree will grow well and produce larger fruit with the total weight more than if you had twice as many fruits but smaller.***

***When you make a cut be sure to cut just above the node. When cutting large branches be sure to undercut it so as not to tear the bark, and cut flush against the trunk. Use sharp tools and alcohol (on the tools) between tree jobs. Spray 91% rubbing alcohol on the pruner just before pruning the second fire-blighted tree, and when starting to prune a new orchard.***

***Lilacs are pruned by taking 1/3 of the largest branches all the way to the ground. That will lower the tree without losing your lilacs.***

***When you are pruning look for egg casings wrapped around branches as these are tent caterpillar eggs and must be disposed of.***

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***neck GARLIC. Come see my 1000 Peony  
blooms in May!***

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