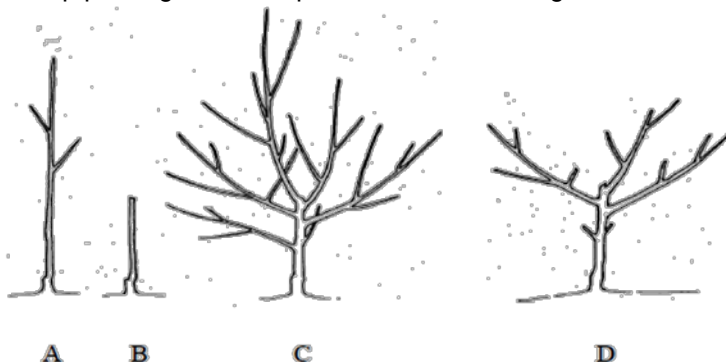
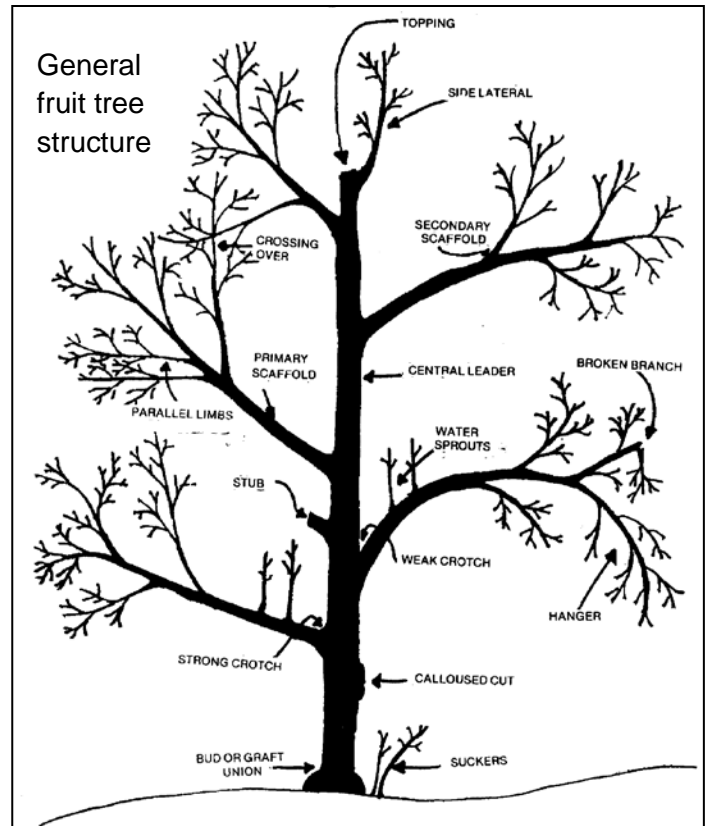


Why prune/ train fruit trees?

- Establish a strong scaffold structure with wide-angled, well-spaced branches that can support large crops without limb breakage
- Encourage young trees to begin production
- Manage pests and harvest more easily
- Allow large fruit growth
- Eliminate branches that produce poor quality fruit
- Allow penetration of light and spray materials
- Maintain desired shape, height and diameter of the tree

General rules for pruning/ training peach and nectarine trees:

- Prune at planting time to balance tops with the roots
- Prune young trees very lightly
- Prune mature trees more heavily, especially if they show little growth. Tree canopy should be kept open with enough thinning to cause annual formation of fruit-bearing wood. Fruit is borne on short spurs that live only 1-2 years and must be regrown.
- Carefully time pruning to minimize susceptibility of infection: Where silverleaf and bacterial canker occur, prune after harvest but before fall. Prune in spring and/or summer to expose fruit to direct sunlight and to remove water sprouts.
- One-year old shoots are often thinned out or shortened before bud break, and removed after cropping.
- Prune the top portion of the tree (where most vegetative growth occurs) more heavily than the lower portion. New fruiting wood must be produced along the whole length of the scaffold every year to prevent the tree from becoming larger and bearing fruit only at the outer extremities.
- Thin flowers by hand; this is necessary because peach and nectarine trees set overly abundant crops.
- Thin out more shoots toward the end of a well-pruned branch in a mature tree. This will increase fruit size and quality on the remaining shoots.
- Pruning too early in the dormant season can lead to the following problems:
 - Increased incidence of Cytospora canker, which enters the tree through pruning wounds
 - Increased internal damage
 - Increased sunscald of the bark
- Keep pruning tools sharp: dull tools make rough cuts, which can promote insect damage or disease.



Creating an open center tree:

- A. Bare root tree just planted.
 - B. Tree headed after planting.
 - C. Growth after one season.
 - D. Tree pruned after one growing season.
- Further development would be possible if tree was pruned in summer.

Illustration by Walter Dong.