Pruning Demonstration Notes

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It is important to know where fruit is produced on the different species. This is called the **bearing habit.** Note: Spurs are very short shoots that grow <4 inches/year

Laterally on spurs (flower buds are produced laterally on the spur & gives fruit the following season. The center bud is vegetative and elongates the spur): Almonds + Apricots + European and Japanese plums + Prunes + Sweet cherries + some walnuts

Terminally on spurs: apples + pears + pecans + some walnuts

Laterally on one year old shoots: Peaches/nectarines + some fig varieties + pistachio + olives

Laterally on current season growth: Some figs + persimmons + pomegranate + quince + grapes

Complications: Some walnut varieties bear terminally and some laterally. Apricots bear mostly laterally on spurs with some on one year old shoots on the same tree. Figs will produce the first crop on one year old wood and a second crop on current season's growth. How much is produced on each type depends on variety.

It is also important to understand **apical dominance** and how trees (or any woody plants) grow naturally. The upper most buds send plant growth regulators to the buds below which produce:

1. Suppression of lower lateral bud growth
2. Slowing down the growth of lower lateral shoots
3. Influencing the angle lower shoots grow (narrow near the top & wider near the bottom)

It is also important to know the difference between **heading** vs **thinning cuts**. A heading cut shortens a shoot. A thinning cut removes the shoot at its origin. Heading cuts remove the apical dominant bud which releases buds below it. A thinning cut does not. Most pruning should emphasize thinning cuts over heading cuts. If you need to stiffen a branch, heading cuts can be useful. Even when lowering the height of a tree, thinning cuts are preferred.

Please check out these on-line pubs:

Fruit Trees – Training & Pruning http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/8057.pdf

Pruning overgrown trees http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/8058.pdf

Some publications on pruning, budding and grafting at
http://cemerced.ucanr.edu/Gardening_and_Master_Gardening/
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