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Summer Pruning For Fruit Trees  
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Did you know that fruit and leaf buds for the next year form in late summer, not in the spring before your tree blossoms? This is an important concept to note. Summer pruning helps your fruit trees form more buds for the next season.

We usually prune our fruit trees in late spring or early summer. Now is a good time. Trim off the vigorous upright growth, often called "water sprouts". Open up the canopy of the tree to allow good air flow and sunlight onto the lower branches of the tree. Good air flow helps prevent diseases, sunlight on the branches helps fruit and leaf buds form. We suggest a light pruning of the vigorous growth as we do want filtered sunlight on the branches, not direct sun, to prevent sunburn. You can also lightly shape the tree at this time. Pruning off the most vigorous growth may also slightly slow the growth of the tree and keep it more manageable.

Note that apricots and cherries should be pruned in late summer, July or August. They are susceptible to infection by a branch-killing disease called Eutypa dieback. Infection occurs on wounds caused by pruning in the wet weather of fall through spring.

You can also prevent sunburn by painting the tree branches with a whitewash of 50% interior latex paint and 50% water. Sunburn can cause large lesions in the branches that makes the tree weak and susceptible to infections by insects, bacteria, and fungus.

Master Gardeners recommend keeping fruit trees pruned to a size that does not require the use of ladders. Low growing trees still produce plenty of fruit without the danger of falling while using

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ladders. Summer pruning combined with a more thorough winter pruning keeps our trees low and healthy.

A free public education class on [“Summer Pruning”](#) is offered Saturday, July 28, from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the [Sherwood Demonstration Garden](#) located at 6699 Campus Drive, Placerville. Join us in the demonstration orchard and learn more about summer pruning. Bring your questions!

UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling [\(530\) 621-5512](tel:5306215512). Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. Visit us at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden, located at 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville, behind the Folsom Lake College-El Dorado Center. We’re open 9:00 a.m. to noon, Fridays and Saturdays.

For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at [http://ucanr.edu/master gardener e-news](http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news). You can also find us on Facebook.