**Just Cut It vs. Think Twice**

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| **Just Cut It**  (Easy cuts, little thought needed)  ***Dormant Season*** (do as late as possible in the winter to avoid damage from freezing temperatures on fresh cuts)  -broken/damaged limbs  -dead limbs and stubs  -diseased limbs  -weak limbs  -rubbing/crossed limbs (generally use thinning cut, not heading cut)  -suckers from roots  -large water sprouts  ***Summer Season***  -some new water sprouts  -new suckers from roots  ***General*** (also apply to cuts over on the right)  -remember that all cuts create wounds that must heal  -the larger the diameter of the cut the greater the healing needed  -don’t use any sort of sealant on the cuts (it increases the chance of decay at the location of the cut in the tree)  -check out <http://mercyacres.com> for good article on sterilizing cutting tools (find under “Resources” menu)  -recognize that pruning practices differ between kinds of fruit trees (i.e., peaches are not pruned like apples)  - -almost always cut to outward facing bud  [This summary was compiled by Mike Chase in 2016 from various ag bulletins and pamphlets on pruning, as well as You Tube presentations and pruning workshops.] |  | **Think Twice, Cut Once**  (Harder, more thoughtful consideration needed to make these cuts)  ***Dormant Season***  -selecting which limbs to become scaffolds and which to remove in first year and second year of training (different for different kinds of trees)  -dealing with narrow angle scaffolds (using spacers, string, bench cuts, etc.)  -selecting limbs to use spacers/spreaders on  -dealing with downward facing limbs (when and how)  -selecting among competing limbs to be thinned  -determining optimal branch length to reduce end weight  -considering the consequence of using a heading cut  ***Summer Season***  -selecting water sprouts to pinch back to create fruiting spurs (use the Richard Bird pruning book for guiding cuts)  -learn how to manage the sprout activity resulting from wider branch angles (again, see Bird’s pruning book)  ***General***  -consider spreading as an alternative to cutting  -recognize the tension between cutting and not cutting:  a. minimizing cuts in the early years usually results in earlier fruiting and greater “calm” for the tree  b. certain cuts must be made in the early years to establish good tree structure  -dormant season pruning usually stimulates vegetative growth and summer pruning tends to suppress growth  -learn about “dynamic pruning” to get a better handle on the use of pruning to balance vigor and fruitfulness in branch renewal (google “dynamic pruning wsu” to get a You Tube and article by Dr. Musacchi on this topic)  -learn about the pruning techniques used in managing alternative tree structures used in intensive plantings  -apical dominance principle=if you cut off terminal bud you get lateral shoot development (terminal buds have a hormone that stops lateral buds from growing to form lateral shoots)  -when “ending” a central leader you prune to a lateral and then cut out the dominant shoot in preference for the weaker shoot  -master fruit bud renewal in older trees with long-lived fruit buds |