

Winter fruit pruning

Why prune?

Pruning is done to remove dead, dying and diseased branches, and allow light and air to the centre of the plant. Lack of air movement encourages the growth of fungus and increases the chance of rotting.

Top Fruit [ie apple, pear]

Cordon

Plant sloping to the north , allowing sun along the whole of the tree so distributing growth along the full stem and better distribution of buds up the tree. **Cut off side shoots to 6 inches** to encourage fruit buds near the stem. Aim for 6 apples per tree. One shoot will grow as the leader showing apical dominance.

The **vegetative buds** are small and are at the top of the leader. Take the vegetative section back by about one third to about 6 inches. The **fruit buds** are fatter and grow on top of a wrinkly piece of wood.

Espalier

Cut off the tip of the leader. Cut off any branches which can't be tied into shape.

Bush

Treat each branch as a cordon.

Soft Fruit

Gooseberries

Fruit on old wood and basal part of young wood. **Take back side shoots to 2 buds.** [Pointy fat buds are fruit buds] Need to **make space round each branch** to get in to pick the fruit. Create space in the middle of the bush. Cut off any branches too near the ground.

Gooseberries, red and white currants need a 6 inch leg to keep the fruit off the ground.

Prunings as cuttings. About 8 inches in length – remove the buds from bottom 6 inches and insert in ground. When rooted, plant about 2 inches deep. The remainder will not shoot because you have removed the buds and will become the leg of the bush.

Soft Fruit continued

Red currants / whitecurrants

Related to gooseberries so take back side shoots to 2 buds. Need air in the centre and a basal leg.

Prunings as cuttings – take 8 inch cutting and remove buds from bottom 6 inches.

Plums

Only prune to keep within bounds. Prune thick branches in summer only but can prune thin small branches in winter. Fruit buds are on young growth. The thick wood is the structure of the plant.

Blackcurrants

Fruit on young wood of previous year's growth so need a lot of young growth ie shoots from the base of the plant. Remove crossing branches and clear out the centre. Don't tip prune unless the bush is much too tall

Prunings as cuttings - about 8 inches long, insert 6 inches in ground. Leave the buds on the cutting – these will become shoots when it is rooted and planted at around 2 inches deep.

Raspberries

Remove all old fruiting canes. Tie in new canes to wire. 6 canes per clump. Best on slight ridge.

Autumn fruiting raspberries. Cut down totally to ground in winter. If leave a leg, will produce summer rasps on the leg and autumn rasps on the new growth.

Loganberry, Tayberry, Bramble

Take out all old fruit branches to base since growth comes from ground. Allow 5 new strong canes per plant.

Remove excess side shoots from new shoots and shorten if necessary.

Bundle up loose shoots and tie to post or create a framework .

Cherries

Treat like plums so prune to keep within bounds. Cover with fleece in spring to protect flowers from frost.

Blueberries

Need a very acid soil. Fruit on 2 and 3 year old branches so only remove branches that are weak, crossing or close to soil, or are 4 years old and over.