

SUMMER PRUNING

Summer pruning is done to restrict growth and to encourage fruit buds to form. The fruits included in this sheet are all grown on the Caley Demonstration Allotment at Bridgend Allotments in Edinburgh.

- ❖ **TOP FRUIT** (i.e. apples and pears) – grown on the allotment on dwarfing rootstock and in varying shapes – cordon, espalier and bush. Summer pruning helps to restrict growth and to maintain the shape of the tree. Remember that apples fruit on old wood.

Cordon – A cordon consists of a single main stem along which lateral (side shoots) are pruned to form fruit bearing spurs. Cordons are planted at an angle of 45° so that the sun will shine on the full length of the stem. Stop the growth on the main shoot at a height that will allow easy access from the ground. Prune the side shoots to 3 or four buds from the base. The section left will produce the fruiting spurs.

Espalier – shorten the lateral or side shoots to concentrate growth on the branches which can be trained along the wires. Look for branches growing out at right angles which are much stronger. Any branches growing out at the front or back of the plant or that are crossing over, remove completely.

Bush - for this shape, you want to create a tulip effect. Cut back on growth as above, remove crossover branches. Open out the centre of the plant.

If shoots appear from the rootstock i.e. below the graft, remove by tearing off. If you cut them off, you will leave buds which will grow again. If these shoots are left to grow from the rootstock, you will end up with the rootstock variety (which tend to be much stronger than the grafted varieties) taking over.

Top fruit is grown on specialist root stock. For small apple trees - M9 rootstock will give trees up to 1.8-3m; M27 rootstock will give trees up to 1.5-1.8m.

- ❖ **STONE FRUIT** (plums, cherries)

Plums - fruit on 1-year old wood. The pruning of plums and other *stone fruits* (cherries, peaches and apricots) must be done in summer to avoid the introduction of diseases such as **Silver Leaf** and cankers which can enter through the wounds made by pruning. Cut back only to keep the desired size and shape. Remove any dead wood in late summer or autumn. Help to control plum aphid by removing affected shoots.

Cherries.

Fruit on the young growth. For cherries that are being espalier trained, look for branches which can be tied into the wires. Add more wires if necessary.

❖ SOFT FRUITS

Gooseberries - fruit on old wood so need to concentrate growth on the old stems.

For new fruit bushes, you will need to create a leg – about 6 inches - in order to lift the fruiting branches off the ground and allow air into the bush. You will also need to create a shape which allows safe picking (gooseberries are very prickly) so ensure there is space for your hand to get in round each branch. Try growing as cordons or espaliers to give easier access to the fruit.

Remove the tips of the new growth and take out the cross stems.

Established bushes – remove about 10 inches of new growth. In winter, remove about another 2 inches of growth.

Currants

Red currants and white currants – Fruit on the old wood so you want to encourage new growth on these. These plants need to grow on a leg about 6 inches long to lift the fruiting branches from the ground and let air into the plant. Remove low growing branches if necessary. Remove crossover branches and cut back the new growth.

Blackcurrants – Fruit on the young wood. You can cut off the fruiting branches when picking the fruit to make it easier but remember to cut them off completely. Create an open bush and encourage new growth to come out from the bottom. **No winter work needs done.**

Common disease of blackcurrants is '**big bud**' – a disease which is spread by mites. The buds should be pointed so if the fruit buds are like tiny golf balls then the bush has big bud. It is best to dig up and destroy any affected bush, but you can leave and monitor. If possible, buy a big bud resistant cultivar such as 'Ben Hope'.

Raspberries

- **Summer fruiting** – once the fruiting is over, cut the fruiting canes down to the ground. The old canes are brown, and the new canes are green. Allow about 6 new canes to grow on each planting station and remove the others. Tie into the support to reduce wind damage.
- **Autumn fruiting** – the canes grow in the year of fruiting so cut down to the ground in January. Can leave some on a leg for summer and autumn fruiting from the same variety.

Brambles/Loganberries/ Tayberries – After fruiting, remove all the fruiting canes and train in the new canes. Can be helpful each year to train all the new canes to one side and the fruiting canes to the other.

Strawberries – After fruiting cut off all the leaves, feed and water. Remove runners unless you wish new plants.