

# Summer Pruning or Lorrette Pruning of Pip Fruit Trees

This time of year there might be a bit of let up in the garden work other than harvesting and a bit of weeding and last sowings and transplantings for autumn and winter produce.

Therefore it is opportune to consider what to do with any spare time if we have fruit trees.

**Particularly in stone fruit summer pruning brings about many benefits for the health and cropping of your trees.** (Stone fruit do not like being pruned when sap is no longer flowing, when it is cold, so summer pruning is best (cherries, plums, peach etc)).

This type of pruning was developed by Lorrette in France, where they **also** sophisticated pruning of Apple and Pear trees tremendously in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

## **What is summer pruning for pip or top fruit?**

By cutting back the new shoots, which grow on the leaders or secondary branches, we encourage the sap flow to slow down and we allow more light and warmth to ripen the vegetative buds to transform into darts on tip bearers and/or fruiting buds near the secondary branches or on the leaders, which will turn eventually into fruiting spurs.

## **Which types of trees benefit most from this type of pruning?**

Cordons, Espaliers, Dwarf and Bush varieties.

Apple Trees on following root stock:

- MM106&M7, BUSH TREE, LESS VIGOROUS, DRY, SANDY SOILS, EATING, 5-6M
- MM104&M26 BUSH, SEMI DWARF, STRONG ROOTS, PERFECT FOR COX 4-5M
- M9, DWARF BUSH, POOR SOILS, NEEDS STAKING, 3-4M
- M27, VERY DWARF, FOR TUBS, 1.5M

Pear Trees on following root stock:

- M111, VIGOROUS, PYRODWARF, 5-6M
- MM106, ST. JULIAN A, QUINCE A OR COLT, MODERATE, 4-5M
- M26, GISELA A, PISY, QUINCE C OR TORINEL, 3-4M
- M9, DWARF, NEEDS SYAKING, 2-3M
- M27, VERY DWARF, FOR TUBS, 2M

## **Why summer prune?**

*Depending on the vigour in the rootstock, the trees send out stronger or weaker shoots in spring. If we leave the shoots to develop, without 'summer pruning', the tree will bear most of the fruit on the middle part or even close to tips of the new branches in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. This forces the tree to put out excessive energy to drive the sap to the periphery of the tree to provide nutrients and water to swell the fruit and makes the branches and tip heavy with a drooping habit. This will encourage more fruiting at the tips and if these long shoots are not pruned back the tree will go into a two year habit of fruiting and sending out shoots. The likelihood is that the second year we get water shoots; also called 'suckers' close to the centre of the tree, which divert the sap from the tips and crowd the centre of the tree eliminating light and warmth reaching the branches, except at the periphery of the tree, where more and more fruiting will occur.*

Fruit/flower buds are developed the year before the fruiting if we have hot and light-filled summers, which can reach the rudimentary and auxiliary buds in the leaf axils (SEE DRAWING). If these auxiliary buds are in the shadow, they either stay dormant or develop nearer the tips vegetative buds. Or when a branch bows down it develops the suckers mentioned before. This makes a tree to create layers of branches at the tips and eventually the tree fruits itself to death or its lifespan is seriously shortened. This way the tree wastes lots of energy, and that ends fruiting only on the tips which will shorten the life of the tree.

### **How often is summer pruning done?**

Usually, summer pruning is done 3-4 times during the summer half year, starting in late May or June, when the young shoots are not more than pencil thick and can either be pinched out or cut off just above the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> bud of the new shoot. Also, each one of the leaders is tipped by 3-4 inches (7.5-10cm) just above a bud that faces downward.

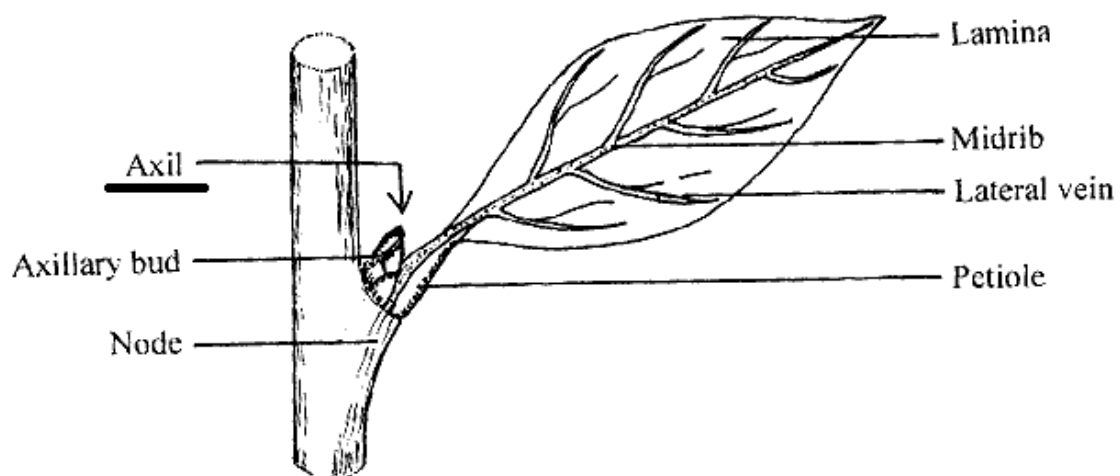
### **How do I know what is a vegetative shoot, a dart or a fruiting bud?**

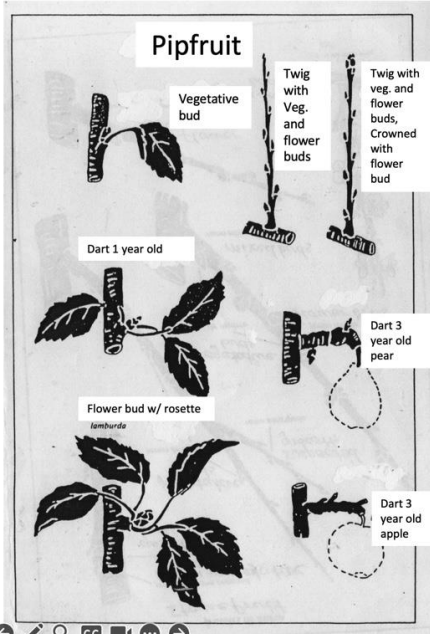
I include a couple of drawings to show the difference. We only want to prune back vegetative shoots.

If you are interested to learn the practice of how to rejuvenate your trees and how to have stronger cropping with less effort to pick the easily accessible fruit, p.m. me at 07852 917497 or write to [admin@wholisticliving.co.uk](mailto:admin@wholisticliving.co.uk) to be able to organize a practical workshop with you in your garden or area.

Happy pruning and fruiting

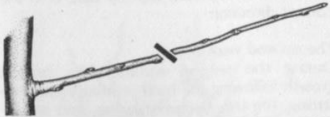
Hans-Günther





**Pip fruit summer pruning and recognition of flowering and vegetative buds**

Summer prune in May/June



Prune back to 3-4 buds  
To encourage flower buds

2. Summer prune in July



Prune back to flower buds

The 2. Year



July to September. Fruit is carried on the pruned-back lateral.

The fourth year



November to February. A spur system beginning to form.