

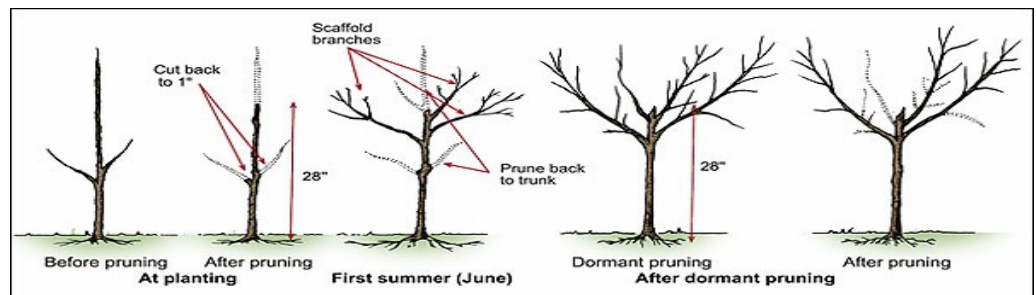
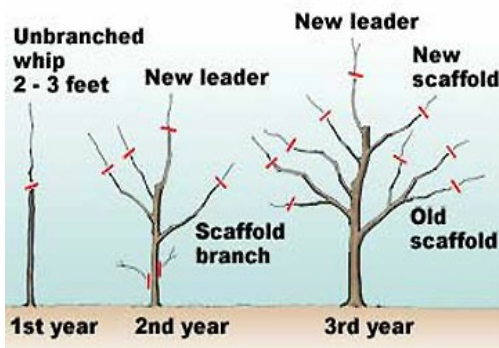
Planting Bare Root Fruit Trees, Step by Step

- The roots are typically covered in sawdust and plastic. The roots should be moist. If you keep them in a cool, dark place and make sure the roots stay moist, they can stay like this for a couple of weeks. If you need to wait longer than this, they will need to be heeled in.
- Mix root stimulator, epon salt or fish emulsion, (we use John's Recipe), according to package direction. Mix enough so that this solution covers the root ball. Allow tree to soak for at least 15 minutes, a couple of hours is even better. You can dig your hole while the tree is soaking.
- Plant the tree where water will drain off quickly after a rain. If you need to plant in areas where water stands after a rain, then build a raised bed with a good garden soil mix. Make the raised bed high enough so all water will quickly drain off.
- Dig a hole approximately 18 inches deep and 18 inches wide. This will vary depending on how small or big the root system is. Do not add any manure or fertilizers to the hole. The existing soil is fine for the backfill.
- Put the tree in the hole so the roots lay naturally. Keep the graft union (noticeable "bump" in the lower trunk) 2-3 inches above the ground.
- Make sure tree is straight, and backfill the soil a little at a time, adding water and tamping the roots lightly to ensure good soil contact to the roots.
- Thoroughly water your newly planted tree.
- Remember to MULCH!! Any organic matter will work. Compost is great to use as a mulch. It will fertilize slowly throughout the season. This is a great time to plant a living mulch in the compost. You could use Dutch white clover. It fixes nitrogen and attracts pollinators. You could also add a nutrient accumulator like comfrey or even certain herbs like oregano, which confuses pests with their strong smells. If you don't plant the compost, something will grow, so it's nice if we (as the gardener) get to decide what would be beneficial for the tree. Keep the mulch a few inches away from the base of the tree and cover the area under the canopy, spreading the material about 3-4 inches deep. This can be very effective in helping to maintain consistent soil moisture.
- Fertilizer is not necessary at planting time, but might be recommended for later in the growing season. Continue to use fish emulsion or John's recipe to ensure vigorous root growth and improve the soil
- Staking is generally not necessary either as there is no heavy root ball or crown to secure.
- Now it's time to prune your newly planted tree. Be sure to prune your tree immediately after planting.
- Why pruning is a must:
 - Survival: First, a tree needs pruning to help it survive after planting. In digging, a bare-root trees' roots have been disturbed. The trees have lost many of their tiny feeder roots, which are needed to absorb moisture and nutrients, but the top is still its full size! This imbalance can cause tree growth to be weak and slow.
 - Stimulation: In addition, cutting the tree back stimulates stronger, more vigorous, growth from the remaining buds. After a single growing season, a pruned tree will be bigger than a matching unpruned tree.
 - Shaping: The natural shape of a fruit tree is not always the best for maximum fruit production. It's best to start the shaping process as early as possible, particularly to balance the top portion with the root system.

Tips for Pruning

- Prune trees when they are dormant. Wait until a tree is dormant before pulling out the sheers. This is best for the tree and easiest for you. It's easier to see where to make your cuts when the leaves have fallen.
- Help the tree form a strong framework. Remove weak, diseased, injured or narrow-angle branches (the weaker of any crossing or interfering branches), and one branch of forked limbs. Also remove upright branches and any that grow toward the center of tree. You want to keep your tree from becoming too thick and crowded and to keep its height reasonable. All these objectives promote improved bearing, which is your overall aim. Try to achieve the general shape of the trees in the drawings provided, but be sure to allow your tree to express its own individuality.
- **Apple & Pear:**
 - These trees do best when pruned and trained to a central leader tree. This type of tree has a pyramidal shape with a single upright leader limb as its highest point. This leader is the newest extension of a long, upright growing trunk from which all lateral branches arise. As with all strong growing branches, the leader should be headed back each year. The uppermost bud on the leader produces a vigorous new leader, and no other shoot should be allowed to grow taller. Lateral limbs should be selected from shoots growing out from the central leader. These should be spaced vertically 4-6" apart, have growth that is more horizontal than vertical and point in different compass directions from the trunk.
- **Peach & Plum:**
 - These trees do best when pruned and trained to a vase-shape. This type of tree should have no central leader. The shape of the tree is controlled by selecting and maintaining three to five main scaffold limbs arising from the trunk. These limbs should point in different directions and originate no less than 18" and no more than 36" from the ground. Prune as shown, balancing growth evenly between the scaffold limbs.

Central Leader



TIPS FROM THE PROS

10 O'CLOCK PRUNING ANGLE Narrow, V-shape crotches are an open invitations to disastrous splitting later on, particularly when your tree is ripening a bumper crop. So choose wide 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock angles.



PRUNING TO A BUD Make sharp, clean cuts close enough so that you won't leave a clumsy stub that's hard to heal over. Stay far enough above the bud so it won't die back. Slant the cuts as shown, and the new growth will develop beautifully.



Just Right



Too Far



Too Close

ALWAYS PRUNE BACK TO BUDS AIMED IN THE DIRECTION YOU WANT LIMBS TO GROW Every branch has buds pointed in various directions. Since you want vigorous new growth to spread away from the center of the tree, make your cut above a bud that's aimed outward. This helps your tree grow into a spreading shape.

