Bare Root Fruit Basics

Benefits of planting a bare root tree vs. a potted tree:

1. Easier to handle and plant- light weight without any soil
2. Sustainable, no plastic pots are wasted
3. More cost effective - usually significantly cheaper
4. Avoids transplant shock - experience less or zero stress during dormancy
5. Natural and faster root development - roots spread out and develop more naturally with time to adjust before the intense heat sets in

1. Create a Microclimate

a. Improve soil conditions by adding organic matter
b. Identify sandy or wet spots
c. Provide shade
d. Mulch & cover crop bare spots

2. Chill Hours

a. Select varieties with low chill hours
b. Phoenix area averages 400 chill hours per year
c. A chill hour is when temperatures are between 32-45 degrees
d. Is it self-pollinating or does it require a mate?
e. Plant for successive ripening

3. Understand Rootstock

a. Don't use it for size control, dwarf, etc.
b. Prune to control size
c. Want adaptability for our climate and soil conditions
d. Look for Nemagaurd Rootstock (well suited for our climate)
a. Greenlife, A&P, Whitfills - reputable nurseries that sell trusted trees

4. Choose Location

a. Not too close to a house, walls, or brick/block walls. 20ft at least.
b. Clear rocks 20 feet away from the tree.
c. Afternoon shade is best, so on the East side of houses or to the East of
d. Shade trees to protect from afternoon sun

5. Planting

a. Dig hole same depth as roots and 2x as wide
b. Do not cover the graft
c. Leave root flare exposed
d. Create berm to absorb water
e. Back fill hole with 50% compost / 50% natural soil
f. Compact soil to get rid of air pockets, can cause root rot
g. Sprinkle castings on top, then mulch 4-6” inches deep
h. Mulch - keeps ground cooler, reduces watering needs by up to 50%, feeds beneficial bacteria, fungi, that feed the roots, worms, and other organisms

6. Apply Worm Tea

a. Living microbes
b. Stimulates root growth
c. Foliar feeds through the leaves
d. Provides some extra protection against sunburn and frost damage.

7. Fertilizing

a. Use natural and organic - compost, castings, worm tea, and BSFL fertilizer
b. Valentine’s Day, Memorial Day, and Labor Day
c. Castings - slow release, microbes that feed the plants.
d. Compost - organic material, feeds the microbes, provides nutrients to the soil
e. BSFL Fertilizer - Slow release, evenly balanced NPK, made here on the farm, sustainable. (Use only when needed)

8. Pruning

a. Sharpen and sanitize tools
b. Prune in January when tree is dormant
c. Size control
d. Goblet shaped scaffolding branches
e. Scaffolding branches should be about knee high
f. 4 - 6 scaffolding branches
g. Cut at 45 degree angle down at outward facing node
h. Apply spacer if needed
i. Prune any broken, crossing, or damaged limbs
j. Keep the center open for air circulation and sunlight

9. Watering Mature Trees

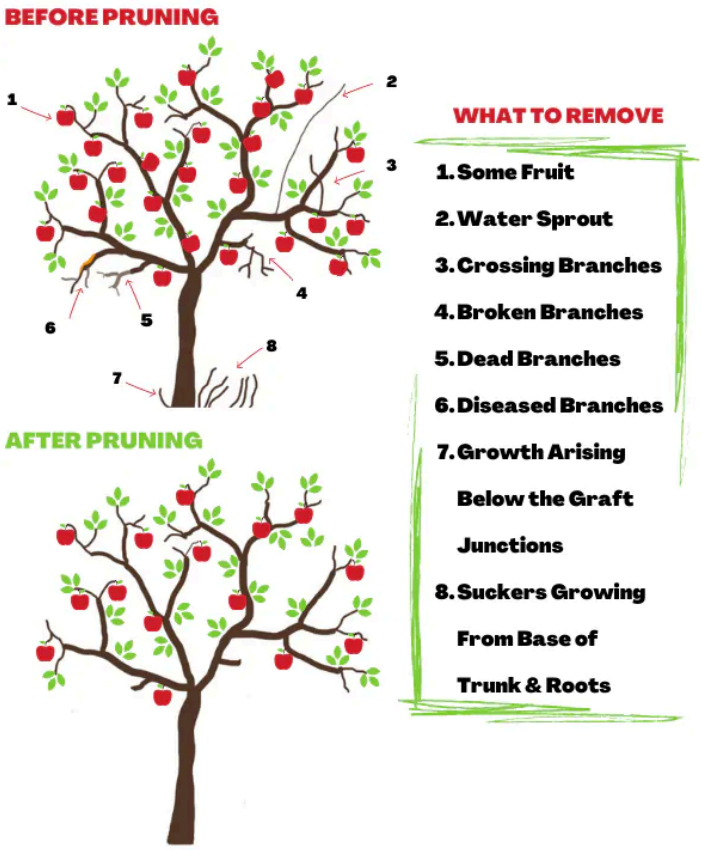
a. Infrequently - once per week (April - June) fill berm
b. Finger test or Moisture meter
c. July - September (2X per week)

d. Oct - December (Every other week)
e. December - March (every 2-3 weeks depending on rain)

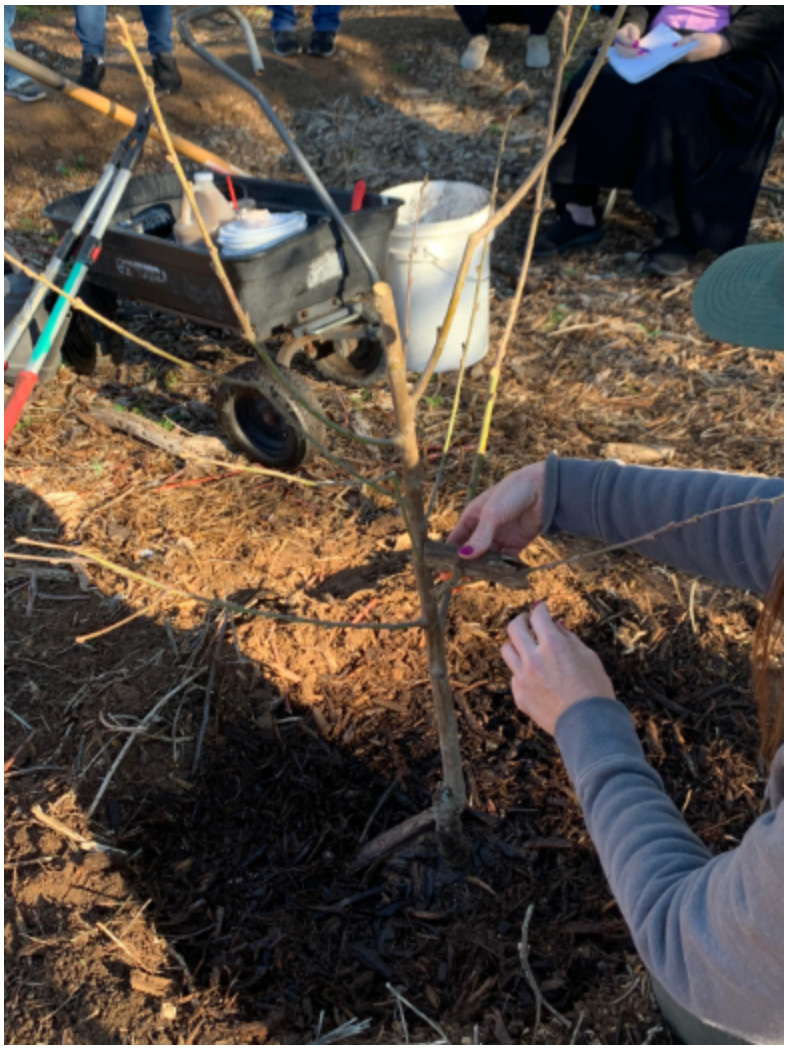
10. Fruit

a. For the first 2 years focus on protecting your tree and maximize root growth. Roots, shoots, then fruits.
b. Year 1 - very little fruit, probably bitter or sour.
c. Year 2 - more fruit, better tasting.
d. Year 3 - first full yield and crop of fruit.

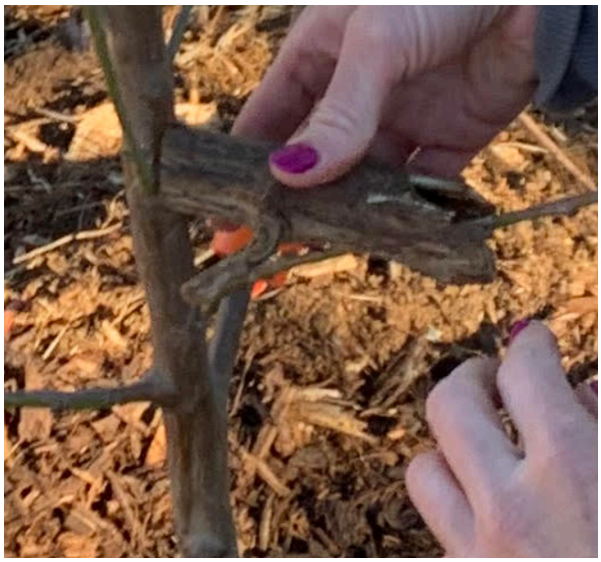
Helpful Pictures



https://www.naturehills.com/blog/post/pruning-fruit-trees

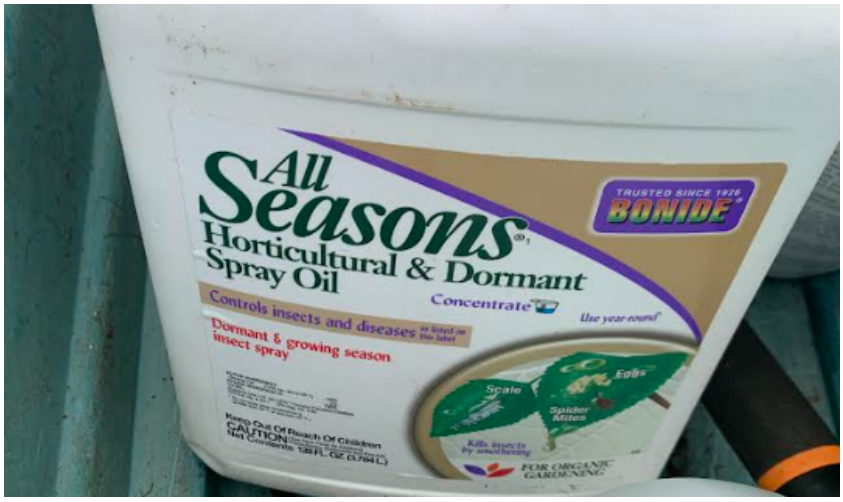


Adding a Spacer



Sharpening Tool

Pruning Spray



Disinfectant & Biodegradable Wipes for tools