

Winter Edition
»» NEWSLETTER ««
FRUIT BURST



TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

Well it's been a bit busy at home for us here with family visit and busy family life, so sadly we just didn't have time to out Autumn Fruit Burst newsletter.

The time has finally come and we are ready to offer both sides of our small business, Dave will be continuing with all his services, and Bertie is jumping aboard with the Edible Garden side. All the information will be available on the website soon, but we are very excited to have reached this goal of ours.

We are adding the final touches as you read this to launch our 'new look', website and updated logo, and all that jazz!

PRUNING WORKSHOP

Our first Pruning workshop was held on Sunday 18th June, and it was great, apart from the weather!!

Good old Waikato weather forecast was back to front, but we made the most out of it and we hope that our participants learnt and enjoyed it.

Our next one is on Sunday July 8th, in Tamahere.

We will try to squeeze one more winter pruning workshop in August, tbc. Let us know if you would be interested in attending.



REVIEW US!

**WE WOULD LOVE OUR VALUED CLIENTS
TO LEAVE A REVIEW ON GOOGLE PLEASE!!**

PLANNING AN ORCHARD

IDEAS TO GET YOU ON YOUR WAY



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RESEARCH & PLANNING

Get to know the area you are planning to plant in such as the local climate, the topography, shelter, sunlight, prevailing winds etc. Big space, small space? Print off a map of your land from Google Earth. Think about your budget? Which methods and principles do you want to follow, e.g Organic, no-dig...?

Which fruit and nut trees do you and your family enjoy eating? Single tree orchards, fruit guilds, or food forest? So much to think about, but let's try to keep it simple by putting ideas to paper to start with, then the ideas will start flowing. Visit local food forests, or other peoples orchards and ask questions and get inspired!

WATER ACCESS

How do you plan on watering your trees in dry hot weather? On the other hand, are you prone to floods and surface flooding? You may be located on a slope, so surface run off may be a problem...but can we make it work in our favour?

Would a 'rain garden' work on your land, to help with drainage and self water the plants? Perhaps your soil needs some amending to create aerobic pockets?

Think about how close the water source is as ideally you don't want to be running back and forth to a tap in mid summer! Rain water collectors, or pipe irrigation may work for you.

SOIL

Now is the ideal time to prep your soil, especially if you are not in a hurry to plant as you can really get some good stuff going! Think about the overall picture, the nutrient and water cycles, pest & disease management, long term goals of healthy, productive trees etc.

Get back to basics before anything; grab some soil and feel it between your fingers, give it a smell! Is it crumbly, chalky, sticky, smell earthy, or foul? Are there any worms?

All of these things are important when looking at the quality of the soil.

Test your soil for pH levels. You can also test for lead and heavy metals by sending a free sample off to Soil Aotearoa.

Add organic matter - grass clippings, mulch, compost etc., to boost the levels of mycorrhizal fungi. Building the soil up before you plant will give your trees a great head start.

TYPES OF TREES

You may already have a clear idea on what you're going to plant, but have a think about these points; Are they suitable for your location? Do they grow well in the Waikato? Long term, is there enough space to grow?

Heritage trees offer the most resistant to disease and are suitable for the climate which they are grown in. A good rootstock and graft point is important and most good nurseries will have advice and help you choose.

SUN

Most fruit trees require 6-8 hours of sunlight for good growth and fruit ripening although as a general rule of thumb, cooking varieties need slightly less.

Buildings and trees are the usual sources of shade. Having a map with you and aiming to be on site around midday will help you to determine where south is, and how sunny the sight is when the sun is at its highest point. Try to identify useful microclimates, such as sunny vertical spaces for trained forms like fans. On a map of your location, write on North and South, and all the sun/shade parts throughout the day.

One of the most important things is that each tree is positioned in a place that receives sufficient sun and soil depth, is well drained and is not too close to other trees or large shrubs. Spacing between fruit trees should be generous to allow for competition-free root and canopy growth, however bear in mind that suitable companion planting is also beneficial.

RESEARCH - PLAN - PLANT - CARE - ENJOY

FRUIT & NUT TREES

WINTER TO DO - JUNE, JULY, AUGUST

This is when the most care and maintenance is carried out in your orchards. Your trees are in winter dormancy with no growth happening in this period meaning it is the traditional time for pruning and planting. In the winter months we should be:

- Planting/transplanting trees
- Pruning most trees with the exception of stone fruit.
- Topping up/apply mulch
- Feeding and fertilising.
- Over wintering spray treatment.
- Enjoying the open winter structure of your trees

WHAT'S IN SEASON

Although it's the dark winter months, citrus trees which are evergreen, offer a bright bit of sunshine.

- Citrus fruits- grapefruits, lemons, mandarins.
- Kiwifruit, olives and tamarillos.
- Remember if you store you pip fruit you can enjoy it though a good part of the winter.

EDIBLE GARDENS

MAINTENANCE -

Winter is a great time to catch up on jobs such as tidying up the shed, decluttering, washing pots and giving your tools some TLC.

Sort seeds out.

Top up or add mulch.

Give your plants a good feed of organic fertiliser, if needed.

Prepare beds for spring and summer planting e.g lay cardboard and add layers for a no dig bed.

Make sure you have cloche or old sheets to use for frost protection for frost tender seedlings and plants.

PLANTING -

There is never a bad time to plant, just some prefer different conditions.

Sprout potatoes for planting in August or September.

Sow seeds such as beans, cabbage, broccoli, spinach, lettuce.

Plant out Bok Choi, cabbage, garlic, kale, lettuce, mesclun, onion, peas, radish, rosemary, thyme. Plant dense!

Divide Rhubarb while it's dormant.

Lift & divide crowded asparagus.

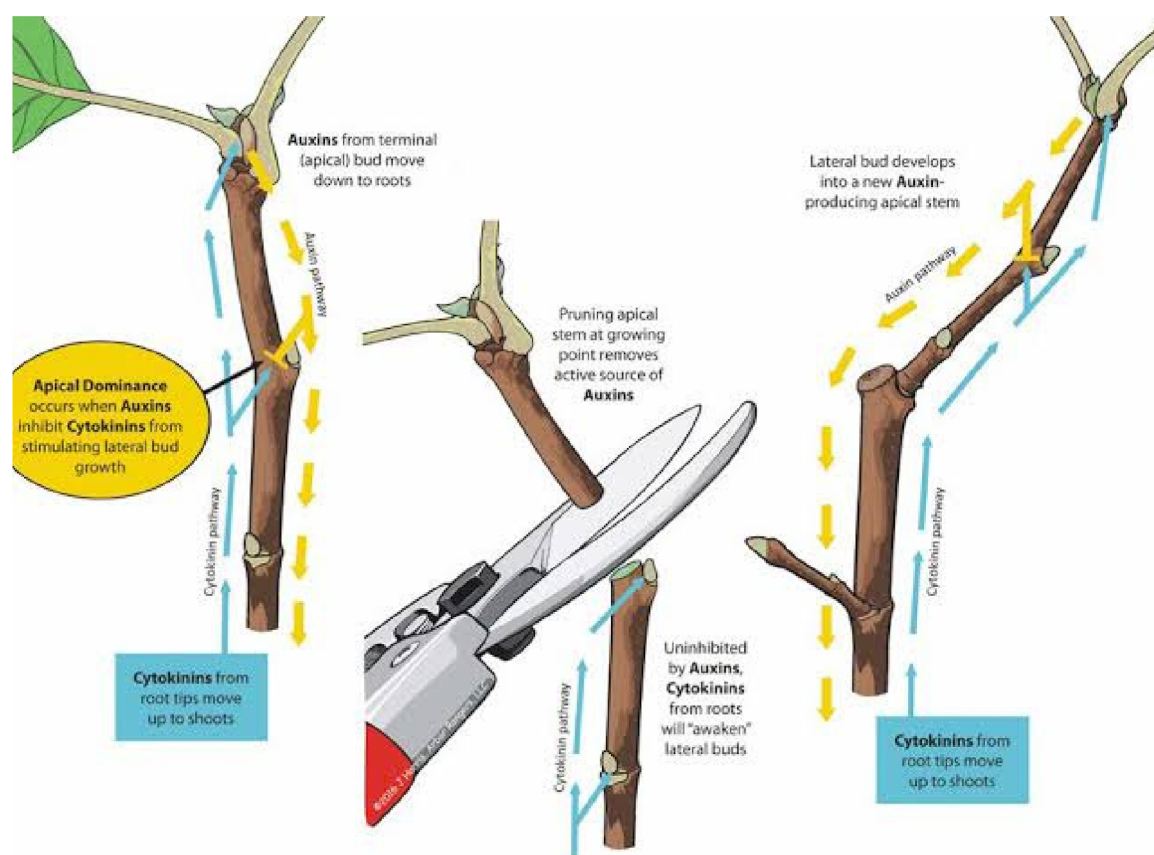
Get planning for Spring & Summer planting!

(As always, there is differing advice for times of plantings- this is a guide!)



STRUCTURE, FORM & PRUNING

So if we cast our minds back to Summer and part one of the pruning form and structure article, we covered some of the different forms and their pros and cons. This time we are going to look into how to actually do the pruning, to create these forms. When we have a desire to create any form in a tree, we always have to start in the early years of the tree's life, the first 1 to 3 years is optimum. This formative pruning is going to be the foundation of your desired structure and form.



The key thing to remember whenever you prune a fruit tree is your affecting the apical dominance. Apical dominance is how a plant controls which leader, branch or shoot will grow the most. The apical bud is on the end of the branch and releases auxin which is a growth hormone to make sure that the bud grows more than the surrounding buds. When we prune fruit trees we change the apical dominance to suit our needs.

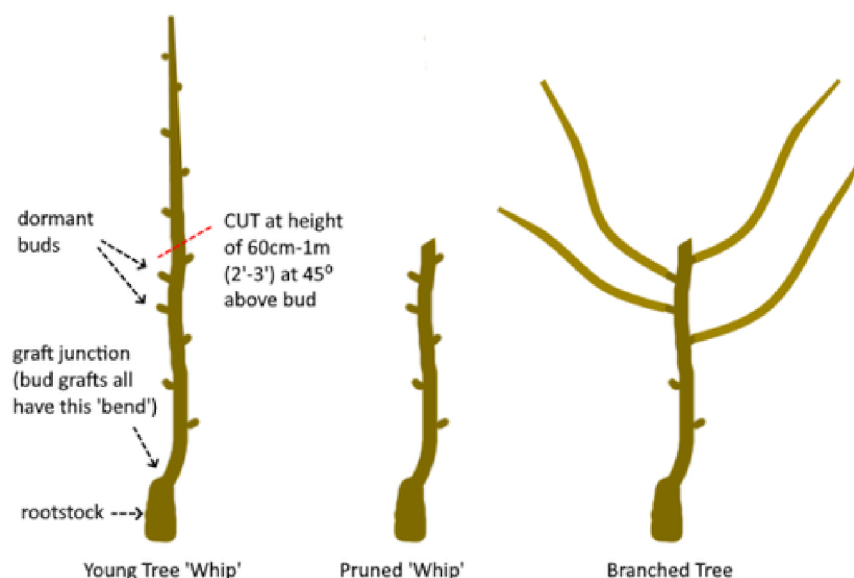
So when we want to formally prune our young trees to create a set form or structure, we have to make sure we are going to manipulate the apical dominance to suit our needs. The general rule of thumb is that the next healthy bud will gain that dominance and become the most vigorous leading stem, but nature being nature, be aware that this doesn't always happen.

The next thing to bear in mind is how much you prune off, will affect the regrowth response of the trees. Hard pruning, removing over 70% of a stem or branch tip, will encourage strong long regrowth. Hard pruning will often result in epicormic growth to shoot from the pruned stem; these are dormant buds in the stem that react to the loss of wood above. Sometimes this is a desired effect but often they will need to be grubbed/rubbed out as they form, or prune off. Medium pruning removing around 40% to 60% of the stem or branch tip, will result in a more balanced response with moderate stem regrowth and some fruit wood development on some species. Light pruning removing only 10% to 20% of the tip of a branch, will result in only light stem regrowth and more fruiting wood development, this is often called tip pruning or heading back. We also need to pay close attention to the direction of the bud, or shoot we're pruning back to, as we need to ensure that the bud or shoot is facing/heading the direction we want the tree to grow.

When we formative prune tree were often utilising the strong regrowth of hard pruning to help develop our structure, then as the year progress and our desired form is reached we soften our pruning to allow the tree to develop fruiting wood and crop, rather than strong growth.

Creating a good fruit tree form and structure takes time to achieve, but once it has been done, the reward will pay off with easy maintenance and strong cropping. So when you buy your fruit tree make sure you do your research, check how you need to formative prune to create your desired form, and if it's suited to the the form you want. This is just a very brief guide and if you want to learn more I suggest finding a good fruit tree pruning book or attending one of our Fruit tree pruning workshops. Feel free to contact me(Dave) with any questions.

Pruning a Tree 'Whip' to Establish New Branches and Begin Vase Form



PEST CORNER



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As we move into the full depths of winter, it is ideal conditions for fungal spores to hibernate ready to attack when the conditions allow. To keep on top of this becoming a problem and developing to diseases, and attracting unwanted pests, which can lead to a battle in controlling, if not removing trees, we can do a few things to prevent it from happening.

1. Clear up all damaged, diseased and dead limbs and leaves from around the tree.
2. Make sure all rotten fruit is picked up and disposed of.
3. By adding plenty of organic matter on top of the soil will help keep it tip top shape. Think grass clippings, leaves, twigs etc.
4. Know what to look for e.g. do you see damage to leaves, or trunk? See below for pests we found in our garden! We have hand picked off the scale, taken off damaged parts and sprayed with eco neem oil.
5. Spray with an organic Eco Neem oil. Seaciff Organics has a great one! Mix it with potassium silicate for an even better coverage and protection.

Codling moth over-winter as mature larvae in a cocoon under loose bark of the tree, wood piles and old picking bins. Place sticky bands on trunks. Remove all fruit, leaves and growth around trees - anywhere pupae may be hidden. Scrub trunks with a stiff brush and clean. Encourage wax eyes into your garden - they're known to be one of the best pest-eating birds around.

SCALE



COCKROACH DAMAGE



WOOLLY APHID



We often get asked by our customers here in the Waikato, '***why are my Apricots not fruiting?!***' and there is a simple answer: It's not cold enough! Apricots have a winter chill requirement where they need a certain amount of exposure to cold temperature to break down the inhibitors of the flower buds. Without this exposure they stay in dormancy till the warmer spring weather breaks the cycle, and gives us a late bloom and poorer harvest. This might not be the only reason you have poor harvest but if you live in a warm, milder area this could well be a factor. It's always best to grow trees that are suited to your area, soils and climates, so you work with nature rather than against it.



I have existing trees, is it too late to start companion planting?

Answer is no, it's not too late! Planting under and around trees is otherwise known as guilds, or understory planting. The idea is to create more biodiversity, repel pests, attract good insects, nitrogen- fixing and weed suppressor, to name a few benefits! Even by adding comfrey, which is a nitrogen fixer, will benefit your tree. Contact Bertie for more about creating guilds and companion planting.

I'm a beginner gardener, what are some of the easiest vegetables to grow?

Leafy greens such as lettuce, spinach and silverbeet, radishes, and zucchini are all great plants to start with. We are in a temperate climate in the Waikato, which is good for growing! Grow what you and your family enjoy to eat. Sowing from seed is rewarding and more cost effective, but buying seedlings from a nursery is great too, especially when starting out.

Why do my peaches rot on the tree?

Peaches, and also nectarines, cherries and apricots, are notorious for rot. Brown Rot (*Monilinia fructigena*) is a fungal disease. It enters the fruit through bruises or damaged areas, which can cause fruit to fully rot within days and remain on the tree while shedding their spores until eventually becoming mummified. Infection begins in spring, causing the blossoms to turn brown and wilt. A few infected flowers can produce enough fungal spores to ruin a whole tree. The spores are shed by the millions, spread by wind and rain, latent until the fruit is almost ripe. Treatment is to prune at the right time, spray with a copper based treatment prior to blossom, and if you are planning on planting new trees, choose early-ripening varieties, to avoid the humidity which breeds the spores.

Can I grow fruit trees in pots?

Absolutely! The key things are to choose a pot big enough, have a good quality medium such as a mix of organic compost, potting mix, fertiliser etc. Black pots dry out quicker so keep that in mind. Make sure there is drainage and also adequate irrigation. Position in a sheltered position with enough sunlight, and of course, choose a dwarfing variety otherwise you'll be growing a full size tree on your balcony!!



**IF YOU HAVE ANY BURNING QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT US!
WE ARE MORE THAN HAPPY TO HELP! CONTACT DETAILS ON THE LAST PAGE**

We love learning more about our natural world and are going to recommend to you a book or podcast that we think you might like

»»» READING

The Holistic Orchard- Tree Fruits and Berries the Biological Way by Michael Philips

The Abundant Garden - A practical guide to growing a regenerative home garden from Pakaraka Permaculture

Gaias Garden - A Guide to Home- Scale Permaculture by Toby Hemenway

Moon Gardening - Planting your Biodynamic Garden by the Moon by Matt Jackson.

Thrifty Gardening Money-saving tips and know-how for a flourishing garden by Country Womens' Association Australia.

»»» PODCAST

Dave's choice - The Urban Forestry Radio Show covers fruit trees, food forests, and permaculture. This great podcast/ radio shows is live once a month and covers all things fruit trees, and with an excessive back catalogue. It's well worth a listen.

TOP TIPS

OUR ADVICE IS TO READ AS MUCH AS YOU CAN, FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES, TO GET AN OVERALL PICTURE AND UNDERSTANDING. EVERYONE WILL SAY SOMETHING SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT. IT'S ABOUT PICKING THE RELEVANT INFORMATION WHICH WORKS FOR YOU, AND FOR THE CLIMATE WE LIVE IN.

»»» WEBSITES

Gubba.co.nz is a great NZ owned website with tools, seeds, pots, fertilisers etc.

Seaclifforganics.co.nz based in Dunedin has living soil and a great selection of fertilisers, soil enhancers etc.

Treecrops.org.nz all things orchard related and more. membership available.

Subscription

If you're new to fruit Fruit Burst and don't want to miss out on future issues, just click the link below to subscribe.

<https://forms.gle/JkHrTEqMMFRF9ZDD8>

FINAL THOUGHTS..

»»» MINDFULNESS IN THE OUTDOORS

Gardening can often allow us the time to have that moment of peace and quiet. Away from the hustle and bustle of everyday lives to allow ourselves to be in the present. It grounds us in the moment, releases our creativeness, connects us to the source of creation, and that even on rainy, murky days there is beauty, as without rain nothing will grow. It teaches us patience, alleviates stress, good for your immunity and releases the happy chemical, serotonin. Scientists have discovered that the mycobacterium found in soil can improve brain functions while boosting moods. The mycobacterium vaccae found in the soil increases serotonin produced in the brain.

»»» GET THE KIDS OR GRANDKIDS INVOLVED

Winter is a great time to get the kids outside building and make bug, lizard and bee hotels! Scavenger hunts are always a great activity. If you're planning on planting more trees, get them involved by helping you choose and then plant!

DOC have a great activity programme called Kiwi Guardians where kids can earn medals. perfect for the school holidays.

»»» FORAGING IN YOUR BACK GARDEN

Take a look outside as I guarantee that some of the 'weeds', trees and plants are edible and can make great concoctions. For example, plantain can be made into balms. Dock leaves are great for stings and bites. All of a Dandelion is edible and making tea, balms and honey from them are great. Onion weed is commonly found too. If you're unsure, please don't pick and eat! There are plenty of guides and books all about foraging if you want to know more, such as ***A Field Guide to the Native Edible Plants of New Zealand by Andrew Crowe.***

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE US TO WRITE ABOUT NEXT ISSUE? LET US KNOW!

CONTACT US

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