

# THE 'MUSTS' FOR SUCCESSFUL FRUIT GROWING

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## **1. PRUNING**

- Why?   ▪ To control the size and shape of the tree (easier to pick, etc).  
          ▪ To enhance continuing fruit set, evenly spread over the tree, and help regulate the amount of fruit produced.  
          ▪ For sunlight penetration, to retain fruitfulness low down and improves fruit colour and flavour.  
          ▪ (Also, wide crotch angles, unclustered branches and fruit reduce areas where pests and diseases can build up.)
- When?   ▪ Winter: major cuts and detailed pruning.  
          ▪ Summer: removing unwanted shoots and suckers, reducing height, sunlight penetration, etc.
1. Must be pruned every year: peaches, nectarines, persimmons, grapes, Kiwifruit, blueberries and trailing berries.
  2. Should be pruned every year or two: plums, apricots, apples and pears.
  3. Winter thinning out every three or four years: citrus, figs, nuts, mulberries, feijoas, guavas, cherimoyas and other tropical fruits.
  4. Respond to annual tip pruning (to encourage extended flowering): lemons, passionfruit, tamarilloes and many of the tropical fruits such as cherimoyas & custard apples.
  5. Shaping/training young trees or size/growth control of mature trees: prune stonefruit every 5-8 weeks, grapes and pomefruit every 8-10 weeks, citrus & other evergreens can be done three or four times per year.

## **2. TWO 'BORDEAUX' SPRAYS EACH YEAR**

(A copper-based fungicide to which the trace elements zinc & manganese may be added. Can be added to oil sprays. The best formulation for home gardeners is copper-oxy-chloride, which is sold under a variety of trade names).

- Why?   ▪ To control the common fungal diseases (Leaf-curl, Shot-hole, Sooty mould, etc.).  
          ▪ It can double as a trace element spray.  
          ▪ It can deter snails and some other pests.
- When?   ▪ In autumn at the beginning of leaf fall.  
          ▪ In spring at the start of budswell.

## **3. OIL SPRAYS:**

### A) Deciduous Fruit Trees:

- Why?   ▪ To help prevent both mites and scale insects.  
          ▪ It can sometimes help to promote a stronger flowering.  
          (Copper can also be added to this as an extra fungicide application)
- When?   ▪ Only during dormancy (around July) as it will burn green growth.
- What?   ▪ Petroleum based winter oil spray or a dual purpose such as D-C-Tron® or Pest Oil®.

### B) Citrus & some other evergreens:

- Why?   • To help control scale insects (Red scale, White-wax scale, etc.) & Citrus leafminer.
- When?   • Early summer for wax scales, mid summer for other scales; anytime of active growth for leafminer.
- What?   • White oil (add insecticide if a severe infestation), Summer oil, D-C-Tron® or Pest Oil®.

## **4. PROPER NUTRITION**

Most fruit trees prefer moderately acid soils (pH 6.0 – 6.5) to access all the necessary elements. Also, good multi-purpose granular fertilisers should be used in small quantities on a regular basis, but only during times of active new growth.

- Late winter to early summer:    Mulching, manures, blood & bone, pelletised manures, etc, PLUS trace elements.
- Summer to early autumn:       Foliar sprays and soil applications of liquid improvers such as Seasol®, etc.

## **5. PROPER WATERING**

- Regular watering encourages surface feeding roots and allows roots to absorb nutrients right throughout the summer.
- Gives bigger, juicier fruit, and helps in getting repeat crops year after year.
- Healthier, stronger trees suffer less from pests and diseases.

## **6. FRUIT FLY CONTROL**

- Baiting and trapping an absolute must. Cover spraying when necessary. Dispose of all fallen fruit properly.
- Keep trees pruned and manageable. Thin out clusters of fruit, ideally don't have more than two fruit touching each other.