

Pruning and Training in Young Trees

Sensible pruning and training of young trees allows them to establish strongly and can result in good yields in the shortest possible time. Be prepared to hand thin or remove flower clusters in the first season. For most training systems it's highly advisable to remove any potential crop in the first season as the crop can significantly affect canopy development and subsequent cropping potential.



Figure 1: Clipping leaders

For an ideal balanced tree structure, young trees should have a strong base of fruiting wood with thinner, more temporary wood at the tops. When there is too much wood in the tops of the trees there will be less fruit production lower down where it is most desirable. Controlling growth at the tops can be achieved by breaking out vigorous growth, heading back the leader to weaker growing shoots and stripping the leaves off the leader in early spring.



Figure 2: Installing 50cm guiding strings

Things to remember:

- Minimal tree pruning in the early years is optimal
- Bending of branches to avoid narrow crotch angles
- Promote rapid tree formation and cropping—limit pruning at and after planting