Pruning

Heritage Orchards
What is pruning?

Cutting away dead or overgrown branches to increase fruit production.
Why prune?

- Develop strong tree structure
- Provide light
- Control size
- Remove damaged wood
- Encourage balanced growth
- Maintain health
- Increase fruit production
When to prune?

- Late winter to early spring

Why?

- Trees are dormant
- Wounds heal easier
- No leaves make it easier
- Bark is less likely to tear
- Minimizes risk of infection
Sanitation

It is important to clean your pruners to prevent spread of disease among trees.

Always treat your tools with bleach water to disinfect.
Open vs Central leaders

Open Center AKA Vase
Best with peaches, apricots and plums

Central leader—central branch continues off of trunk
Best for apple, pears, cherry, plum
What to prune

- Suckers and sprouts
- Weak secondary branches
- Cross limbs
- Too much vertical growth
- Broken branches
- Double leaders
Tree pruning for storms

BEFORE PRUNING
Three leaders make a tree top-heavy.

A    B    C
Leaders

AFTER PRUNING
Trim made to one leader cuts out crossing branches, broken or dead branches.

B
Cut A

Cut C

Source: University of Florida
STEVE LOPEZ/Staff Artist
A Look at Pruning

Before Pruning

Well-Pruned, Open Head

Topping produces clumps of uncontrolled growth
Tree pruning for storms
The order of pruning is always the same:

1. Cut out dead, diseased and damaged wood.
2. Take out watersprouts.
3. Cut out crossing branches and those growing into the center of the tree.
4. Clean off small branches that clutter the center of the tree.
5. Select a well-spaced framework of branches and cut all others out completely.
6. Shorten branches to give a balanced head.

Before

Watersprout

Crossing branches

After

Dead branch

Source: University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

STEVE LOPEZ/Staff Artist