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## **FRUIT TREE PRUNING SEMINAR**

### **Fertilizing**

**When:**

Three times a year: March, June and the last two weeks of August.

**What kind of Fertilizer:**

Dr. Earth Fruit Tree Fertilizer or 16-16-16

**How:**

Feed at dripline, as feeder roots are not effective at base of trunk



Poke holes 4 – 6 inches deep in the ground and distribute the fertilizer evenly around the dripline. The amount of fertilizer to be used will be noted on the package according to the size of the tree.

### **Watering**

**New fruit trees:** Water twice a week during the summer, a good deep soaking.

**Established fruit trees:** Water once or twice a month, a good deep soaking during the heat of the summer.

Always mulch your fruit trees to retain moisture and reduce weeds.

Cut back on watering three or four weeks before harvest for better fruit flavor.

## **Dormant Spraying**

**Dormant Fungicide:** Copper fungicide

**Dormant Insecticide:** Pest Fighter Oil is often used in the dormant season to smother unwanted insect eggs. It can be used as a sticking agent when used with a fungicide.

## **When to Spray**

**Peaches and Nectarines:** 1<sup>st</sup> spray – Late fall before winter storms. 2<sup>nd</sup> spray – Early January. 3<sup>rd</sup> spray – Early spring, just before buds break. This last spray time is the most essential. Copper can be used.

**Apples:** To avoid scab, apply liquid copper post harvest before fall rains.

**Apricots:** To prevent brown rot or shot hole fungus, apply copper in late fall/early winter before heavy rains and again just before bud break. DO NOT spray when trees are in leaf.

## **Fruit Thinning:**

When fruit trees set too much fruit in one year, the stress can reduce the size of the following year's crop. Thin young fruit to prevent future crop loss, especially in apples. Since fruit trees initiate flower buds for the following season only 4 – 6 weeks after full bloom, try to thin fruit no later than 50 days after full bloom. Thinning delayed until midsummer cannot influence next year's crop, but it can improve the size, color and shape of the current season's wood. Pull excess fruit off by hand when it is  $\frac{3}{4}$ " in diameter. You can follow up and thin again several weeks later, this time removing the smallest fruit.

## **Dormant Pruning:**

When you dormant prune, it is preferable to prune stone fruits in late February to early March than in the fall or early winter. Pruning cuts/wounds made late in the dormant season close faster than those made earlier, allowing less time for disease organisms to infect the wound. Since there is usually less rain after February, many disease causing spores are less prevalent. This is especially true with apricots causing severe gumming and dieback. So it is important to prune apricots late in the season. Apples and pears can be safely pruned at any time.