# Pruning fruit trees

**Soil & More**
impacts

## 1 Regular pruning is important to control disease

Pruning means to thin out your tree, opening up the foliage. This controls disease because:
- It allows air movement & sunlight penetration
    → plants will dry more quickly, which reduces conditions for fungal diseases
    → the ultraviolet light in sunlight is fatal to many plant disease
- It allows better spray penetration
    → If trees are sprayed, the whole plant can be reached



Before Pruning    After Pruning    [1]

## 2 Pruning rules

Different fruit trees need different pruning, but generally these rules apply. You should remove:
- All dead, damaged or diseased branches (the three D's)
- Sprouts coming from the trunk ('suckers')
- Erect, vertical sprouts growing from main branches ('watersprouts')
- Branches growing down, toward the centre or crossing other branches
- Branches that compete with each other

**Aim:** to have evenly spaced branches diverging in a fractal-like pattern from the centre of the tree.

\* These pruning steps help to prevent disease. To stop your tree from growing too big, you may consider further pruning still
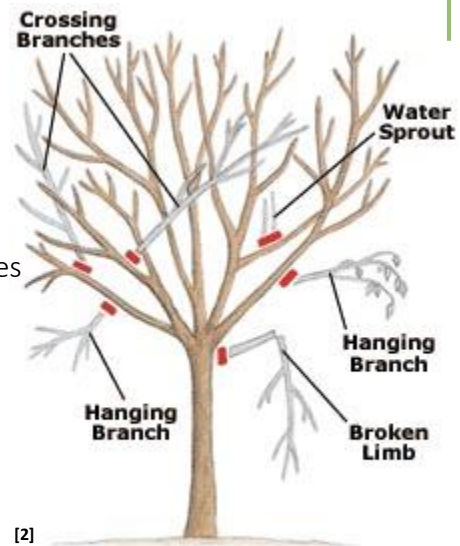


Crossing Branches · Water Sprout · Hanging Branch · Hanging Branch · Broken Limb    [2]

## 3 Pruning tips

- Clean your tools between each tree to prevent disease spread
    → Use a mixture of 9 parts water and 1 part bleach
- Use sharp shears to make clean cuts which heal more easily
    → No ragged edges, no torn or bruised bark
- Cut branches at the point where they diverge from larger branches
    → Don't leave stubs
- When cutting large limbs, use the three-cut technique to avoid damage
- Clean up after pruning: remove all the material you cut
    → Shred the cut material and use as mulch or compost

**! Keep the balance:**
Don't overstress trees by cutting away too much in one time
Leave enough shelter for small birds and beneficial insects



Too much surface · Too long a stub · Too close to bud · Correct surface    [3]