

Spring Pruning

Spring Pruning: How & When to Prune Fruit Trees & Shrubs



March is the ideal time to prune many fruit trees and shrubs to promote healthy growth, improve fruit production, and shape plants for the season ahead. The main reason being that the trees & shrubs are still dormant, reducing stress and the risk of disease. Also, it's easier to see the plant's structure before leaves emerge. Once the tree is covered in leaves it is hard to properly see what your tree is trying to become. Lastly, pruning encourages strong new growth as your tree breaks dormancy and sends nutrients from the roots to the buds.

Which Fruit Trees & Shrubs to Prune Now

- Apple & Pear Trees – Remove dead or crossing branches and thin to improve air circulation. Pick three or 4 main branches every few feet to be your layers up the center trunk of the tree. There should be a top leader that is alternated out every other year.
- Peach & Nectarine Trees – Prune to an open center shape to maximize sunlight. Instead of having a main trunk, it should take on more of a vase shape.
- Raspberries & Blackberries – Remove old, unproductive canes to encourage new fruiting wood. These unproductive canes are usually the ones that produced fruit the previous year.

How to Prune for Best Results

- Use sharp, clean tools – Disinfect between cuts to prevent disease spread.
- Remove dead, diseased, or damaged branches first.
- Thin out crowded branches to increase airflow and reduce disease risk. If two branches overlap, pick your favorite and take out the other.
- Make cuts at a slight angle just above a bud facing outward to direct new growth.



Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Over-pruning – Removing too much wood can stress the tree and reduce fruiting.
- Leaving stubs – Always cut just above a bud or branch collar.
- Painting the cut – The cut will heal on its own if you just let it dry naturally.
- Crotch angle – You want to remove any branches that are less than 45 degrees away from the trunk. Parallel branches cause weak crotches and will eventually lead to damage to the tree.

I know it can be a scary concept to prune your own trees, but once you know the right principles, doing anything is better than nothing. Your trees will be happier, healthier, and will thank you with years of production.

Joseph Sagers, Extension Educator



FREEZING FOOD TO MINIMIZE WASTE

Did you know that “the average American family throws out an estimated 25% of the food and beverages they buy”? (NRDC.org) Freezing food is one of the simplest forms of preserving it, and if done correctly, can extend the time that the food can be kept to be used later. The science behind freezing is simple: it is the process of slowing down the enzyme activity that causes food to spoil, and preventing microorganisms from growing. Freezing produce at its peak of freshness and nutrient content locks in flavors. In a recent publication by FightBack.org, Dr. Donna Garren identifies that University of Georgia and University of California conducted a study that concluded that frozen fruits and vegetables are as rich in nutrients, and often more so, than fresh-stored produce. [Take a Fresh Look at Frozen Foods | Partnership for Food Safety Education](#)

It may not be surprising to learn that just under 40 percent of food produced in the US is wasted. Consider the loss in time, money, energy, and lost opportunity. When food can be saved for later, preserved from our harvest, or purchased frozen, it is less likely to go to waste, and more likely to feed our families.

Review these Frozen Food handling tips to make your dollar, time, and energy go a little further.

Links found at <https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze> otherwise they should be clickable from your digital source.

✳ **Always follow package directions to ensure safe food temperatures.** Pizza or Broccoli instructs to keep frozen until baking begins? Don't store in the refrigerator (above freezing) before making your meal. Leaving food to thaw on the counter for longer than 2 hours can lead to food illness. Thaw appropriately, and heat ready to eat meals (even leftovers!) to at least 165°F before serving. Precooked breads, cakes and cookies can be thawed at room temperature without risk of foodborne illness. [Thawing & Preparing Foods for Serving](#)

✳ **Do I have to blanch it?** Blanching Vegetable is the process that stops the enzymes from causing additional lost of flavor, color and texture. It assists in cleaning the surface of dirt and organisms, brightens the colors, and helps slow the loss of vitamins. Blanching is crucial and varies depending on the vegetable and size. Check out this handy chart to refresh or learn how to blanch, and for how long: [Blanching Vegetables](#)

✳ **For best quality, your freezer should stay at 0°F.** Be attentive to not overload the freezer with unfrozen foods, as the air needs to circulate around sealed packages to efficiently freeze them. Once completely frozen, the food can be stacked closer together. [Maintaining & Caring for your Freezer](#)

✳ **Maintain a freezer inventory (by shelf or compartment) so you can rotate appropriately.** Practice “First in, first out” and use ‘older’ foods before newer foods. Keeping the freezer full in more energy efficient, so keep that rotation going strong. [Storing Frozen Foods Time Frame Reference](#)

✳ **For quick dinners, make freezer meals!** See our comprehensive guide to Simplify Dinnertime for instructions and recipes: [Simplify Dinnertime | UIIdaho Bul 963](#)

Deanna Poulsen

FCS Extension Educator

Come Join us for upcoming classes

Plant & Preserve

<https://forms.office.com/r/rm04AJLDbb>



Thursday, April 17th, 6pm-8pm

Jefferson Extension Office
Presented by Tom Jacobson,
Joseph Sagars, & Deanna Poulsen

Freezer Meal Boot camp

<https://forms.office.com/r/rFVt8yjYMP>



Friday, April 18th 6pm-9pm OR
Saturday, April 19th, 9am-12pm
Jefferson Extension Office
\$50 per set of 4 meals

Freeze Drying

<https://forms.office.com/r/SyEuQdzLmJ>



Wednesday, April 23rd, 1pm-2pm

Jefferson Extension Office
Kari Ure, FCS Educator,
Bear Lake County Extension

Register (even for free classes!) to let us know you're coming. This way we have enough handouts, swag or refreshments. We often teach the same classes in neighboring counties. Feel free to call and inquire if you're looking for a different date or location.



JEFFERSON COUNTY 4-H SHOWCASE NIGHT



March 24

4-7 pm

Jefferson County Fair Grounds

Come join us for a variety of 4H activities.

** Pay Fees * Learn about 4H camp * Learn about Market Rabbits * 4H Science Fair * Showcase 4H Robotics * Plus so MUCH more! **

Returning Horse Kids: Come sign your declaration forms! If you have the same horses, just come sign and don't worry about declarations for this year. If you have new horses or are a new kids we will see you April 28.

Winter and Spring 4-H Calendar

March 24—Rigby **4-H showcase**, 4-7 pm
 March 28—Rigby **Pentathlon** Meet up, 1pm
 April 1—Rigby **Pentathlon**, Astronomy, TBA
 April 15—**Horse** Registration Deadline
 April 28—Rigby **Horse** Declaration, 6-8pm
 May 1—Rigby **Swine** Weigh-in, 6-8pm
 May 5—Mud Lake **Swine** Weigh-in, 5-7pm
 May 16—Breeding/Pet Declaration Deadline
 May 17—District **Rifle** Fun Shoot
 May 22—Rigby **Sheep and Goat** Weigh-in
 May 30—**Shooting Sports** Record Books Due
 June 2—Mud Lake **Sheep/Goat** Weigh-in, 6-7pm
 June 6-7—State Shoot, North Idaho
 June 12—County **Shotgun** Shoot
 June 13—County **Archery** Shoot
 June 14—County **Rifle** Shoot

June 23-25—Alpine 4H camp
 July 8-11—Alpine Horse Camp
 August 5-9—Mud Lake Fair
 August 11-16—Rigby Fair

Check out our
Facebook Page



Stay Updated!



4-H Summer Camp

June 23-25 Alpine Wyoming

A Bugs Life



Costs \$80

Everything is covered

Transportation

Food

Lodging

Crafts

Swimming

Carnival

Camp fires

Skits & songs & stories

Lots of FUN!!!



To sign up call the office
208-745-6685

Paper work is on Zsutes or
in the office to fill out and
bring in.

Deadline to sing up is
June 16

4-H Camp Counselor Applications

Due by April 18

Age: 13 (as of January 1st) and up

Cost: \$60

Applications on ZS & in the office.

Jefferson County Extension
210 Courthouse House Way,
Ste.180 Annex Building
208-745-6685
jefferson@uidaho.edu
Monday to Friday 9:00-5:00
Lunch from 1:00-2:00

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