



Open Orchard Project Fact Sheet | [www.sces.org.nz](http://www.sces.org.nz)

## PRUNING

### General Tips

- The ideal shape for a home fruit tree is an open vase shape- like a wine glass. Think about this shape as you build up the base structure for your trees.
- Most gardening books have good diagrams to demonstrate pruning if you would like to see these instructions in a visual form.
- Clean tools well with methylated spirits between trees to avoid spreading disease.
- Cutting above bud- slight angle away from and just above the bud- use sharp secateurs.

### Cutting off branches big or small

- Cut exactly beside the collar of the branch- the 'rings' around the base leaving the rings in place
- Use the right size tool, if the branch is fatter than your little finger, use loppers.
- If the branch is wider than a broomstick, use a pruning saw.

### Pruning Fruit Trees - apples, pears, plums, red currants, gooseberries

It is important to prune your fruit trees well for their first four or five years to establish a strong frame and useful shape. Unpruned trees often grow high and ungainly, get more diseases from overcrowding of branches, tend to suffer from more structural damages. The fruit is slow to ripen and difficult to pick or thin.

### First year after grafting

Prune back to approximately 50cm high just above 3 good buds that face different directions.

