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Growing good fruit depends on many variables but one of the most important management factors is proper tree pruning annually. Fruit tree pruning is a hard, labor-intensive cultural practice that is easy to avoid. However, if fruit trees are left unpruned, the result is weak trees, overproduction, increased disease, and most important, short tree life. Peach trees bloom and bear fruit on second-year wood; therefore, the trees need to make good growth each spring and summer to insure a crop for the next year.

If the peach trees are not pruned annually, the volume of fruiting wood reduces each year, and the fruiting shoots move higher and higher, becoming out of reach. Alternate-year Pruning in most fruit trees results in excessive growth the year following heavy pruning, so annual, moderate pruning is essential for the long-term control of tree vigor and fruiting wood.

Late spring frost is the most significant factor in Texas fruit production, and the grower does not want to prune too early. The fruit tree will bloom soon after pruning when chilling is satisfied and warm weather follows. Growers with only a few trees can wait until bud to prune. Growers with large crops should not prune earlier than necessary. Pruning in Texas should occur at least by the middle of February, just prior to bloom in March. The average last freeze date for Henderson County is the later part of March.

The main idea in pruning is to remove old, gray colored, slow growing shoots, which are non-fruitful. The second objective of pruning is to lower the fruiting zone to a height that makes hand harvesting from the ground possible. A third objective is to open the center of the tree; this increases air circulation, reduces disease pressure, and allows sunlight into the tree to accelerate fruit color. Another goal of pruning is to remove diseased or dead shoots, rootstock suckers, and water shoots. Detailed pruning and care guides for your fruit tree can be found at <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/fruit-nut/>.

COMMITTEE NEWS:

The Henderson County Beef Cattle Committee started 2018 off with its annual installation and awards banquet on January 18th. Korey Brown of Athens was installed as the 2018 Chairman of the eighteen member committee. He will oversee the activities of the county-wide committee as they work towards developing educational programs designed to bring about solutions to problems common to the beef cattle industry.

Other officers installed to help direct the committee were Vice-Chairman Mike Bradshaw of Brownsboro, Secretary Laura Downe of Tennessee Colony and Treasurer Cliff Smith of Brownsboro, Kyle Forester of LaRue, Sam Walzel of Palestine, Roger Berry and Rusty Herrington of Brownsboro and Casey Herrington of Murchison were installed as new members to assist the committee in various programs. Both the officers and new members were officially installed by Henderson County Leadership Advisory Board member Lee Tackett of Athens.

Members Shary Thomsen (l) and Sharon Adams (r) received the award for “Member of The Year” from outgoing Chairman Adam Davis.

Newly installed Chairman Korey Brown stated that the committee has several programs slated for this year including a Cattleman’s Cow-Calf Clinic, Forage Field Day Cow-Calf Roundtable, and a Winter Pasture Seminar.

