



Pruning Apple and Pear Trees

Apple and pear trees should be pruned every winter to ensure a good crop of fruit the following season. Trees that are not pruned become less productive, very large and congested, bearing fruit at the top of the tree, which may become out of reach for picking.

Apples grow on wood produced the previous year so if you want the tree to fruit leave a good proportion (about 50%) of the previous years growth for your tree to bear fruit after pruning.

Old and neglected trees are often very large and can be difficult to prune correctly in one go. Therefore it is best to prune over two or three seasons as cutting back to hard will promote lots of new growth with no fruit. Rejuvenate them by pruning back in stages.

Prune during the winter while the tree is dormant the aim is to create an open goblet shaped frame work but firstly start the 4 d's remove all the dead, dieing, diseased and damaged branches. When this is complete remove any crossing or inward growing branches, make a pruning cut just above an outward facing bud and slightly sloping away from the bud this will prevent rain water sitting on the cut. If the tree has reached the desired height cut back the main leaders by about two thirds.. If you want the tree to grow taller leave the leaders and cut back the lateral branches to six buds from the main stem, to achieve a goblet shape frame work remove any congested growth in the centre of the tree.