

Simplified Pruning and Training Plan

Year of Planting – Plant quality nursery tree with 10-12 feathers and rootstock shank 4-6 inches above ground level while tree is completely dormant at no more than 3 feet apart. Remove feathers that are more than $\frac{1}{2}$ the diameter of the leader where they insert using a bevel cut. Only remove dead or broken ends of the leader and feathers. Irrigate or water trees as necessary to maintain excellent soil water status. Apply $\frac{1}{4}$ # of Calcium nitrate after the soils settles with a soaking rainfall. Apply another $\frac{1}{4}$ # CaNO_3 4 weeks later after shoot growth starts. Select the leader and remove all competitive shoots 4 inches below the selected leader. Install a 10 foot conduit stake shallowly and attach each tree to stake with a Max Tapener. Install support posts and wire as soon as possible and attach previously installed stakes to wire with a potato bag tie. Alternately use a 4 wire trellis using 12 foot end and inline posts, with a small bamboo training stake which runs from the 2nd to the 4th wire. If necessary weight or tie upright scaffolds to below the horizontal. Control all foliar feeding pests throughout the season ensuring near perfect foliage condition and growth.

2nd Leaf - At dormant remove scaffolds that are more than $\frac{1}{2}$ the diameter of the tree at the insertion point using a bevel cut. Single the leader removing any competitive shoots. Single scaffolds by removing forks. Bend or tuck uprights along the scaffolds that are appropriate for fruiting wood under adjacent branches to weaken them. Remove an occasional exceptionally strong sucker. Weight or tie down scaffold branches missed last year that are too vigorous and upright to below the horizontal. “Pinch” back all shoots in the top half of last year’s leader when they reach 3-6 inches by removing the growing tips. Repeat this operation as new shoots appear or previously pinched shoots regrow. This may take three passes for vigorous varieties. Thin crop to single fruit spaced 6-8 inches apart. Install permanent tree ties to stake or wire to help support fruit on the leader. Keep all insect and disease pests under complete control with frequent scouting and appropriate pest management practices. Control of foliar feeding pests such as aphids, mites and potato leafhopper are extremely important to ensure continued tree growth and fruit bud development. This year’s crop is very important to help ensure the profitability of this planting system. Crop can approach 100-150 bushels/acre on precocious varieties.

3rd Leaf – Remove only large scaffolds and broken branches using renewal pruning concepts. Select the leader by removing competitive shoots if it can be reached from the ground and single the ends of the scaffolds removing all forked ends. Remove all vigorous upright suckers from along scaffolds. Prune up ends of scaffolds to appropriate shoots that will not interfere with herbicide applications and support the crop load. “Pinch” back new shoots in the top $\frac{1}{2}$ of last year’s leader that can be reached from the ground. Thin fruit to singles by hand so that they are at least 4-6 inches apart or appropriate for the tree size and condition. Tie tree to stakes or wire with permanent tree tie at the top of the stake to help support crop load on the leader. Irrigate as needed to maintain tree growth and optimize fruit size. Lightly summer prune removing just a few shoots to open up tree. Keep all insect and disease pests under complete control with frequent scouting and appropriate pest management practices.

4th Leaf – Remove all broken branches, cut up scaffolds to facilitate herbicide applications. Remove large branches that do not fit the system. Remove uprights and weak hanging shoots and suckers. Tie tree to the top of the stake or top wire with permanent tree tie if not done in the previous season. Use appropriate rates of chemical thinner and follow up with hand thinning. Summer prune to open canopy and optimize fruit quality when seasonal growth has stopped. Keep all insect and disease pests under complete control with frequent scouting and appropriate pest management practices.

5th Leaf to 20th Leaf - Remove bottom scaffolds as appropriate until 3 or 4 remain. The remaining scaffolds are not permanent and can be removed as they interfere with equipment or become too large for the space. Remove other limbs throughout the canopy using only renewal concepts. Manage the tree top by allowing crop to bend leader above the support stake or wire. When broken or bent below the horizontal, leaders can be cut back to new upright, NOT BEFORE. Manage the crop load through chemical and hand thinning to ensure annual bearing.