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**THE EVENING NEWS**  
 BY R. W. BATES

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1909

**HOW TO CARE FOR TREES.**

**Instructions That Will be Helpful to  
 Fruit Growers.**

Men who own a tree will soon find out that it must be trimmed and cared for fed and nursed, and sympathized with in its peculiarities, characteristics, and whims. Every tree has its notions as surely as every man, and you can do nothing with it unless you are willing to study and understand what the tree means. We should like to advise you how to take care of your own trees, and that in a very simple manner. Select a fine hand saw and a sharp pruning knife. Begin at the bottom of the tree and first of all clean away every sign of "suckerage"—that is, of useless growth. Next you will work your way steadily up the body of the tree, and over all the limbs until you have removed every shoot that has grown since the large limbs began to bear. These shoot or suckers, as they are rightly called, take the vitality of the tree away from the established limbs that carry blossom buds and fruit. If they have been left there already so long as to have killed the bearing limbs, you must select a few of the very largest and strongest to make a new head for the tree. Use your saw on big limbs only when you find them too brittle and useless to recover a flow of sap. It is not impossible that the removal of suckers will renew the vitality of some of these old limbs, enough to make them fruitful. It makes but little difference at what time of the year you work in these old orchards. We have done the cutting in mid-summer and in mid-winter, and at any other season most convenient.

With pear trees you will find less difficulty than with apple trees that have grown old, but almost certainly a neglected pear tree gets to be over-ridged and unsightly. I advise you not to cut it down hastily, for a very old tree will bear you some most delicious Sheldons, Seckels, and Bartlets, while you are starting other and fresh trees to ultimately take their places. Just clean out the dead wood and the suckers, and let the dear old tree go on trying to do its duty. If you are dealing with plum trees and cherries, which are short lived at the best, my advice would be to dig them out and plant anew. A plum tree six feet high will come to bearing in the second year from planting, and a cherry tree will bear when only four or five feet high, although the sweet cherries take longer than the sour varieties.

**Care of Young Trees.**

You will bear in mind that so far we have been talking about old places where trees have been neglected. If you make a mistake in your management with these trees, it is not a very vital matter, though we suppose you are going to plant more trees, and will keep them in order as they grow. I propose now to tell you what to do with these new trees, and how still to be able to keep out the professional trimmer. As soon as you receive your trees—and let me tell you they must be ordered from an honest dealer, and should be at least four or five feet high, and stocky—you must begin your knife work by cutting them sharply back. Take off all feeble wood and shoots as well as all that are bruised and broken by shipping, cutting close to the body of the tree. When this is done your tree will stand about three feet or four high, and for limbs will have only spurs of two or three inches. If peach trees, remove every limb and

plant a straight stick. As soon as planted spread about the roots a mulch three or four inches in thickness, and reaching out two feet from the tree in all directions.

Now you have to learn how to manage the first few years of growth, and that is what most people neglect. Just as soon as they begin to grow, buds will push out all over the tree, from bottom to top. You must pinch out most of these growing buds as quick as they start, after this, at least once a month, you must go over your young orchard, and keep up this die-budding business, leaving only those shoots to grow on that will be needed to make a good top. Now you have allowed perhaps six or eight limbs to grow, aiming to have them constitute a good head for the tree; but you will notice that the latest growth is the weakest, and most liable to be frozen in winter. In October or November, when growth has stopped, with a sharp knife cut back these limbs about one-third. Always leave the last bud pointing outward—that is, in the direction you would wish the limb to take. That last bud, if left as we tell you, will spread the tree more open in the top next year and let in air and sunshine.

This sort of trimming must be kept up during the first four or five years of the tree's life—that is, if you want a perfect orchard. Each year cut back from one-third to two-thirds of the new growth, until the tree gets well up out of reach. We go over our young pear trees with a step-ladder, heading them in till they are at least ten feet high. Meanwhile understand that every sucker or useless shoot is to be quickly removed from body and limbs. Do not let one of them draw vitality from the good limbs for a month.

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