

# Light pruning helps trees

Many home gardeners have the mistaken impression that pruning of fruit trees should only be done in the spring. This is not necessarily the case, says Ray McNeilan, Oregon State University Extension home gardening agent.

"A light summer pruning will help many fruit trees produce better next year, but the home gardeners should keep in mind that this pruning should be light," McNeilan says. "Heavy pruning of fruit trees should always be done in the spring."

McNeilan also reminds home orchardists that summer pruning in most cases should be restricted to healthy, vigorous fruit trees. Pruning a slow growing fruit tree during the summer months may severely stunt the tree.

One of the primary goals of

summer pruning is to eliminate water sprout growth on the fruit tree. Water sprouts are small branches growing upward from the tree's main limbs. Cutting this excess tree growth out enables the tree to channel its vigor into fruit-bearing tree limbs.

"Home orchardists should remember that pruning a tree later in the growing season lessens the likelihood that regrowth will occur," says McNeilan. "This means that water sprout growth pruned in August will have little chance to grow back because the tree will soon be dormant."

Another important goal of summer pruning is the training of the fruit tree. "Training is forcing the tree to grow the way the home orchardist wants it

to," McNeilan explains. "In pruning to train the tree, weak limbs and those limbs growing in undesired directions should be removed."

The gardening specialist adds that this will cause the other branches to experience more growth than usual and as a result, it may be necessary to head them back once or twice during the summer.

The goals of summer pruning are the same as those of spring pruning: to help the tree develop as desired and to control its size. But the home gardener should keep in mind that any pruning done now should be light and selective, McNeilan noted. Major pruning activity should be reserved for the early spring when fruit trees are still dormant.

## Extension Notes



from Lee Hamilton and Doris Brackett

# Pick vegetables regularly

Picking vegetables is probably the gardening chore home gardeners enjoy most and that's fortunate because regular harvesting is as important to garden performance as it is fun.

With fruiting vegetables such as squash, cucumbers, bush beans, tomatoes, peppers, egg plant and broccoli, regular picking encourages the plants to greater production, notes Ray McNeilan, Oregon State University Extension home gardening agent.

Even a few fruit left to mature on a cucumber plant will stop new fruit from setting, McNeilan explains.

Once a zucchini starts going to seed, the plant thinks its life is over and it will not develop any more squash. One way to halt an overabundant zucchini harvest—short of taking the plant out of the ground—is to let it go to seed.

McNeilan suggests looking for these ready-for-harvest indicators on the following vegetables:

**Cucumbers**—They should be picked before they turn

yellow. Small cucumbers make good sweet pickles, medium-sized cucumbers make good dill pickles. Large ones are best when eaten fresh. If cucumbers are too bitter to eat fresh, use them for pickles and relish.

**Tomatoes**—Size is not an indication of maturity with tomatoes. Look for proper color. Tomatoes taste best if ripened on the vine, but can be picked at any degree of ripeness. Green tomatoes are used for relish or pickling; firm ones are best eaten fresh; and overripe ones can be processed.

**Broccoli**—The stalks should be firm but tender. Buds at the top of the stalk should be compact and not showing the color that would indicate the plant is flowering. Cut the large central head just before it separates into several heads. After that, cut the side shoots that develop into smaller heads.

**Bush beans**—They should be picked when at least three inches long and when the beans are just beginning to make the pod bulge.

# Give irises more room

Iris in the home landscape that don't look quite as vigorous and healthy this year as they did last may be suffering from overcrowding.

After four or five years of growth, iris may lose their vigor because the root system or clump becomes dense and overgrown with individual roots crowded together, says Ray McNeilan, Oregon State University Extension home gardening agent. Iris plants can be revived by removing them from the ground, cutting the large root clump into several smaller pieces and replanting them.

As soon as the iris flowers

begin to fade, remove the clump carefully from the ground with a spading fork.

Wash the soil from the roots and trim the healthy leaves or fans to a 4 to 6 inch length. Remove all the dead flowers stalks and shriveled leaves. Discard or burn any stalks and leaves that show signs of iris borers.

Cut the fleshy outer roots away from the center root. Each cutting should have two fans or iris leaves. After cutting away all the outer roots, the center root can be discarded. Cut out any areas of the freshly cut roots that contain iris borers. Dust all cuts with a

fungicide to prevent rot.

Each root division should be planted in a hole made by sinking a garden trowel to its hilt into the soil and then pulling it toward you up gradually.

Hold the cutting to the hole's straight side with the surface of the rhizome one inch below the surface of the soil. Fill the hole in until the soil is level and firm the area around the cutting gently.

An organic fertilizer such as bone-meal or a fertilizer with a 5-10-5 combination works best for iris, says McNeilan. Work the fertilizer into the ground around the iris after planting.

## 4-H & YOUTH



# Wasps can be controlled

Yellow jackets are one of Mother Nature's more potent insects in terms of ability to inflict pain on humans through a powerful sting.

"Yellow Jackets are most likely to sting people when they

get too close to a nest entrance. But they also are strongly attracted to cooked meat, especially salmon and can be nuisance at picnics and outdoor meals," says Ray McNeilan, Oregon State University Extension home gardening agent.

These pests often sting people without any provocation or warning, he cautioned.

Yellow jackets make nests in trees, large bushes, under caves or in attics, or in underground cavities. Control of yellow jackets can be accomplished through use of insecticides or traps.

Insecticides registered for yellow jackets—and other wasps—usually contain carbaryl, diazinon, or pyrethrin.

"Several of these products are sold in pressurized cans.

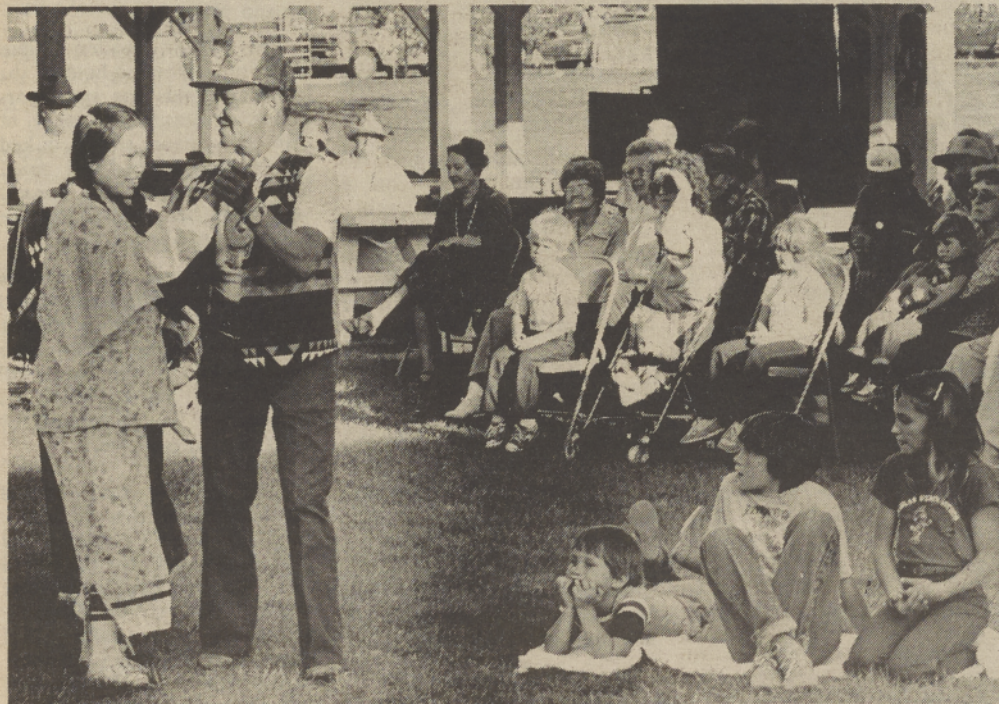
Other are available as wettable powders or liquids from which a spray can be prepared," says McNeilan.

Nests should be treated after dark when the yellow jackets have retired for the night. Be careful if using flashlights or lanterns because yellow jackets may be aroused by the light and leave the nest.

Treat the nest following the directions on the insecticide label, McNeilan stressed.

He adds that if the nest can't be located, traps containing an attractant may be the next best control. Commercially prepared traps can be found in most nursery and garden shops.

Traps should be placed around the periphery of human activity so they draw wasps away from the area.



Spilyay Tymoo photo by Shewczyk

Indian dancing at the Jefferson County Fair is always a big attraction. Reggie Winishut dances with his daughter Renita.

## Oregon State Fair

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