



# HUME CITY COUNCIL CARE OF FRUIT TREES

## SELECTION - SIZE

- Consider area you have
- Rootstock, dwarf (4x4 m ) or new dwarf (2x2) or superdwarf (1x1m) – not much fruit
- Buy grafted trees. 'Pink Lady' was the result of a cross between Lady Williams and Granny Smith, but was chosen/developed from 30,000 seedlings
- Espalier, against a wall
- How many trees can you fit in?
- Double grafts

## SELECTION - WHICH FRUIT?

- Flavour
- Availability at shops
- Pollination - Pomme fruits need 2 varieties, stone fruit self –fertile. Check online
- Heritage fruits - Werribee, free info sessions every Friday morning, Gate 5
- Quantity - how many figs can you eat? Citrus – neighbours may have, swap?
- Citrus, lemon Eureka, OrangeValencia, Lime Tahitian, Finger Lime, Grapefruit Star Red and Rio Ruby

## SOIL IMPROVEMENT

- Prepare 3 months before planting
- Dig hole, 600mmx 600 x 300mm deep, add 3 spades of manure to hole, return soil to hole, mix together, remove the mix. plant tree. If bare root, spread roots over a mound of soil/manure mix. return half the soil, firm down , water, add rest of soil mix, make a moat and water again, about ½ water can all together. Water once/fortnight if it doesn't rain
- Mulch with peastraw/lucerne 70mm thick, Mulch and compost every October

## PRUNING - NEW TREES

- Vase shape -prune 4 branches back to about 400mm long, outward facing bud, Remove centre stem (leader)
- Ladder –choose tree with 5 branches. Leave central leader, prune to 400mm long. prune other 4 branches to 200mm long

## PRUNING - ESTABLISHED TREES

- Prune in winter JUST to remove dead, diseased and damaged wood
- Prune in summer to limit growth. Prune in winter to encourage growth.
- Pruning encourages growth, but we want flowers
- Water-shoots takes lots of water and nutrients but are unproductive, so undercut under the 4th bud from the main branch. The bud draws sap up the tree, pruning like this causes die back which will change the bud to a flower bud.
- Difference between growth bud (small and pointed) and fruit bud (fat and furry/shiny)

## PRUNING - AFTER HARVEST

- Especially important for peaches and nectarines
- Prune back by 1/3 per season if getting too tall
- Prune close to the bud on an angle, sloping down from bud
- Steriprune - spray on anything bigger than a broom handle.
- Pruning kit - Sharp secateurs, sharp loppers, pruning saw, spray bottle with undiluted methylated spirit

## THINNING THE FRUIT

- When fruit is the size of a fingernail/small grape, thin each bunch of fruit to just one fruit, and each fruit to be 4 fingers apart

## WATERING

- Slowly, mimic rain, hose on 'shower' setting or watering can, water once, water others, return, water again and then a third time. once a week when fruit is forming and after harvest until the leaves fall

## STAKING

- Usually unnecessary unless espalier. remove bamboo stake the tree may come with

## FERTILISING

- Change each season. In August feed before bud swell, Suphate of Potash (to encourage fruit), Blood and Bone and Dynamic Lifter, Rooster Booster- higher in Nitrogen for good leaves. Dolomite lime for strong fruit stems. FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS, too much will affect balance. Rock dust good for micro nutrients.

## PEST AND DISEASES

- CURLY LEAF - peaches and nectarines, apricots and almonds. Soil borne fungus, Spray with Copper Oxychloride or lime Sulphate, Late winter (mid July) and at leaf drop (April/May). also just as buds are swelling (mid August). Spray till dripping. Spray feeder roots
  - Collect and dispose of all affected leaves. (leaf fall Autumn, leaves dry, release spores to soil, rain splashes spores back to tree where they germinate. Mulch with peastraw/bark. OAK LEAVES
  - Hydrated lime, mix to white paint consistency paint on up to 1 metre high, when dry repeat till bright white/
  - Apply to all fruit trees except citrus, late Autumn/Winter
- CODLING MOTH- mainly apples, but pears as well
  - October, eggs hatch, crawl up stem to flowers, or over-winter in flaky bark
  - Plant garlic, nasturians
  - Sticky Bands, cardboard, empty every few days

## ■ PEST AND DISEASES (CONTINUED)

- LEAF MINOR – citrus, pomme
  - Pest oil, apply at flush growth periods, spring and summer
    - 1 cup vegetable oil, 1tsp detergent, dilute 40:1 with water and spray early morning
  - Remove new young leaves which are curled up and put in trash
  - Don't feed tree in summer
  - Wasp, Diglyphus isaea will kill mining larva
- APHIDS
  - Plants to attract predators, Calandula, Marigold, Salvia, Brassicas, Rocket, Coriander, Dill-allow to go to seed
- CATERPILLARS
  - Buy predator wasps
  - Plant white pansies, viola
  - Eggshells (in halves)
- GUMMOSIS
  - Wait 3 weeks after harvest then prune. Feed summer to winter – compost and mulch
- CITRUS GALL WASP
  - Eco oil. detergent as surfactant, add 1tsp chilli, 1 tbsp garlic, crush together, strain and dilute in 1 litre bottle of water
  - Prune tree in August- remove swollen lumps
  - Potato peeler on fresh swellings

### MORE INFO?

For more workshops and information to help you live green in the Hume area:



[hume.vic.gov.au/livegreen](http://hume.vic.gov.au/livegreen)

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