

Pruning Hazelnuts: by Les High (2022_Update 2)

Year 1 to later Years, a Practical Guide

Structure cut to one central leader (use a 5-7 bud selection **in the first year or if re-whipping**. A vertical bud and prevailing wind one, usually Southwest is best to obtain height over time. Select good diameter wood at the best height you can get. Keep bud numbers low at planting.

1- Generally, choose **one primary vertical scaffold leader, until at some point apical dominance is being lost by the single leader or crowded by other secondary scaffolds off the vertical leader**. Then remove the center for better air and light penetration. **The multiple scaffold structure is eventually selected in later years**. (3 to 5, fewer is best for balance) Ground stems for multiple trunks are less preferred but can serve as regeneration backups. Remember trunk hazelnut suckering and harvesting impediments, the nemesis of hazelnuts.

2- Next are **branch** crotch areas that need pruner cuts to remove secondary shoots **on older trees**. Established branches need shoot or secondary branch cuts 1-2 feet out from their origin to increase light and reduce entanglement. (Pruner or small saw cuts)

3- Single out branch **leader shoot ends**, to control length or do side **shoot removal** to continue to elongate the branch growth. However, branches somewhat straight and stiff are desired.

4- Remove branches with **inclusion crotch angle lines** to eliminate weakness.

5- Reduce **excessive density of parallel or crossing branches & shoots** that occur.

Notes: Hazelnut production occurs on 1-year old bud wood so be careful not to excessively detail prune once the trees establish a larger network of branches.

Structure cuts may suffice. Balance prune for vegetative and fruiting buds when younger. Fruit trees require this annually for size and crop control. Nut trees much less so as they grow older. Varietal differences are common for crop bearing age to occur.

A good demonstration assists to illustrate the above. Any methodology adherence to a systematic approach makes for efficiency, uniformity and job satisfaction from consistent decision making. You will then enjoy your pruning! It saves money on costs too.

The tree at hand will also lead you in the direction that is best if you can recognize the five or so points laid out above. Please note a couple of helpful identity hints below.

Older hazelnut trees should have any primary scaffold crotch angles cleared of branches and shoots 2 -3 feet out from the main trunk. **Consider this a lower pruning circle.** Diameter branches here can go sideways out of territory and congest.

Envision a second circle about 8 feet up on the backside of all scaffolds. Remove any backside competing diameter branch. Structural integrity and air with light penetration will improve.