

# When to Prune Pear Trees

## Overview

Pear trees produce fruit for 75 to 80 years when properly cared for, and they are a low-maintenance way to add beauty and shade to your yard. Regular pruning of pear trees is essential to increase sunlight penetration, ensure fruit production and quality and to prevent pest infestation and disease. Pruning also allows you to access fruit on higher branches, which means more pears for enjoyment by your family.

### Step 1

Develop a 3-year pruning and training plan as soon as you plant your pear tree. Determine how you want your mature tree to appear, and set a schedule to prune the tree into the desired shape and size. If your tree is already mature and overgrown, avoid attempting to prune it into a fruit-bearing tree in just one year. Thin the tree over several years to obtain the desired shape and ensure an abundant fruit yield.

### Step 2

Prune away oversized branches at planting, when necessary. Remove any branches exceeding 1/2 the diameter of the trunk in size. Make certain to cut away the entire branch to minimize the risk of infection and disease in your tree.

### Step 3

Remove diseased, damaged, crowded, upright, and crossing limbs during the first year. Also, remove any suckers and thin the lateral branches of your pear tree. Trees with more than six lateral branches during the first year may experience crowding and fail to produce fruit and flowers.

### Step 4

Cut down the height of your tree during the second and third years. Reducing the height of your tree will enable you to access fruit on the top branches. Waiting until the tree is more than three years old to begin controlling its height increases the risk of fire blight on the branches.

### Step 5

Prune heavily during the dormant season, before spring arrives and active growth begins. Prune during late winter or early spring if your area is prone to extreme winter conditions and frost. Be careful not to over-prune. Over-pruning delays fruit production and increases the chance of fire blight.

### Step 6

Thin your pear tree during the summer to remove waterspouts, diseased wood, and root suckers, and to increase sunlight penetration into the center of your tree. Thinning during the summer may help [improve](#) fruit size on your tree, but it will not increase the number of the following year's flower buds.

### Step 7

Hand thin fruits to reduce your harvest and improve the health and size of the remaining fruit on your tree. Leave a minimum of 5 inches between each fruit. Remove the fruit carefully by holding the stem between your thumb and forefinger and pushing the fruit off the stem with your remaining fingers. This prevents damage to the fruit and leaves the stem attached to the spur.

### Step 8

Check your tree regularly during the growing season for signs of damage and disease. Remove unhealthy branches to prevent the spread of disease and to improve air circulation.

**SOURCE:** <http://www.gardenguides.com/69821-prune-pear-trees.html>