

Our January meeting took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> at Paul Pruden's garden for a pruning demonstration by a local Spanish gardener. We were divided into two groups with a one and a half hour session each. Rain had been forecast, but thankfully held off until 1pm when the second of the two groups had finished. However, the temperature of 4degC meant we had to do plenty of jumping on the spot and star jumps to fend off hypothermia!



Most of the demonstration involved the pruning of fruit trees which included the soft fruits (peach, apricot and cherry) and the harder fruits (apple, pear, plum). However, we also saw how to prune fig, grape and some flowering shrubs.

With the pruning of all of the fruit trees pruning one should attempt to cut out the centre of the tree, to allow light and air to the inner branches.



If there is growth up the trunk these shoots should be removed as they only take away goodness from the main tree.



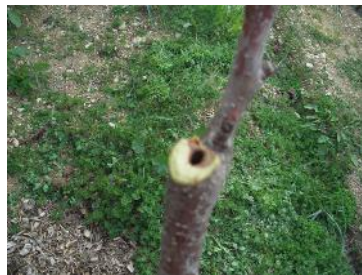
Clean up branches that have many side shoots appearing (especially so with cherries)



Remove dead, dying and diseased branches,



then look for branches that are crossing over each other and remove them, cutting cleanly and obliquely at the base of the stem on the main trunk. This allows for more rapid healing and so helps prevent pests/diseases entering the wound.



Put sealing cream on places where these branches are cut, especially if done when it is particularly cold (minus degrees C).



When cutting diseased branches a good tip was to clean the secateurs with diesel oil which prevents transfer of disease to other parts of the tree.

For soft fruits (such as peach and apricot), cut the tops more to encourage horizontal growth, which makes fruit picking easier. Where branches are pruned cut the leading shoot at a bud point. Fruit is formed on shoots that grew the previous year so it is important to prune to promote shoot growth. The longer the shoot the more buds it will have so they shouldn't be cut except where the shoot splits into two or more others. Here the central shoot can be cut away which will then shorten the branch if that is desired.

Citrus trees should be pruned in a similar manner to the other fruit trees but not until the period between Easter and 1<sup>st</sup> July. Cut out the middle to allow the sun in and then prune to the desired shape.

Fig trees and lantana should have hard pruning this month,



whilst bougainvillea need side shoots removed from the main branches to stimulate flowering shoots, and cut out all suckers (pale green straight stems with large leaves).



Hibiscus branches can be shortened between 20-50cm to produce a good shape.

Pruning of olives is really just about tidying up the tree and removing unwanted growth, especially near the base of the tree. Don't cut the top but take time to gradually achieve the right shape of tree.



Grapes should be pruned back to three main shoots only on each main stem, leaving only 2-3 buds on each shoot.



Nispero trees should be pruned in summer after the fruit in May, and Jacaranda should be pruned every two years.

On our travels around Paul's garden we came across a devouring insect! (a locust) and our Spanish gardener told us how to deal with such pests (they eat their way through 5 times their own weight per day!) by cutting off its head with the secateurs!!



Our next meeting will be at 10.30am on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February at Norman Peterken's new garden – we plan to visit it two or three times during the year to follow its development.

We will, hopefully, also hold a short meeting at Norman's where we can discuss future plans. Please join us there.

Chris & John Parsons