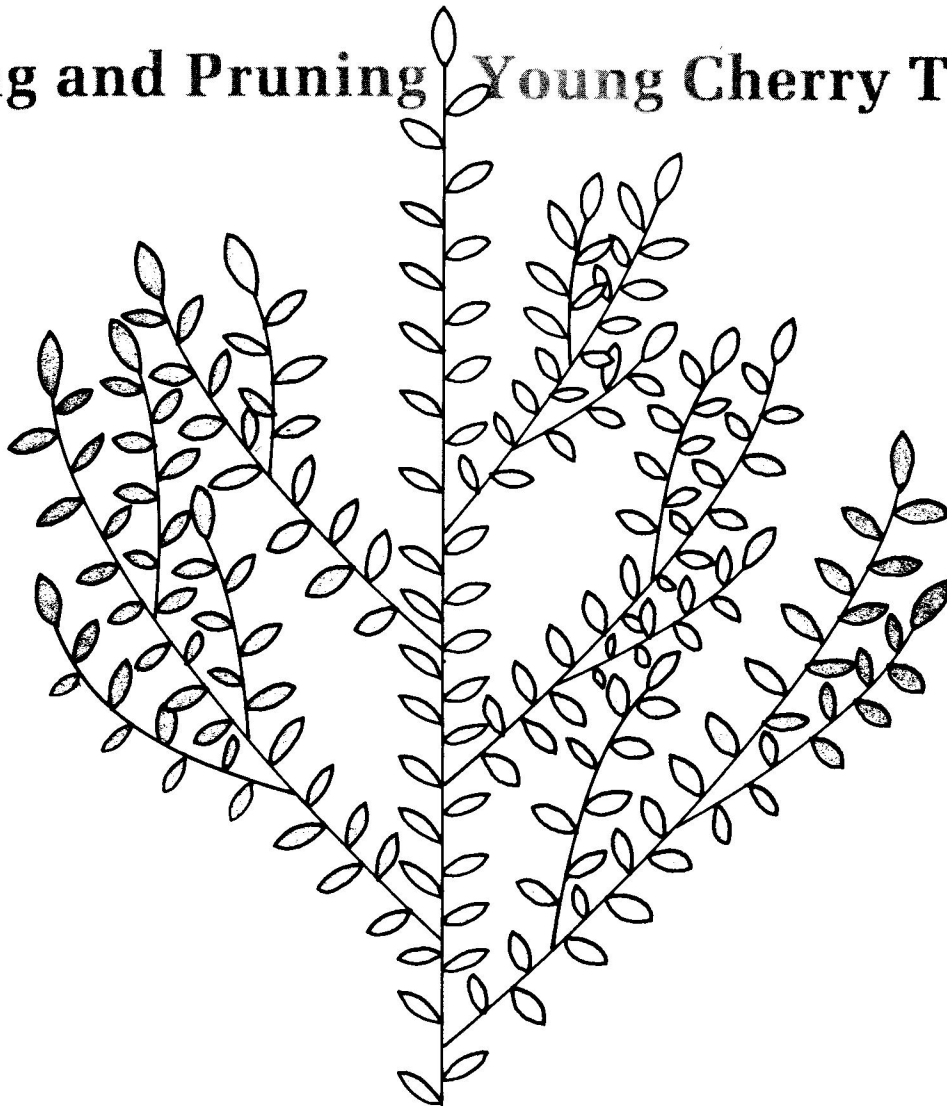


Training and Pruning Young Cherry Tree



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Many cherry orchards are now planted at closer spacings than in the past. Older sweet cherry plantings have trees spaced 24 x 24 ft to 26 x 26 ft, or even 30 x 30 ft (48 to 75 trees/acre). Trees in such plantings were originally trained to an open center system allowing for a very spreading type of tree suitable for hand harvest. Older sour cherry plantings were often 22 x 22 ft to 24 x 24 ft (75 to 90 trees/acre) and trained low and spreading for the same reason.

Machine harvesting has resulted in a rather drastic change in cherry orchard and tree design. Lower limbs should be a minimum of 30 inches above ground level to accommodate trunk-shaking equipment. Low, spreading trees are not desirable. The modified leader tree training system is more adaptable to modern cultural practices and closer tree spacings. Sweet cherry orchards are now commonly

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planted with 110 to 120 trees per acre rather than 50 to 75, and sour cherries at 150 trees per acre rather than 75 to 90.

This publication describes a modified leader training system. This can be a successful training method for either close or wide plant spacings and provides trees well adapted to machine harvest.

Red Tart (Sour) Cherry— Modified Leader System

Obtain nursery trees with a trunk diameter of $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch.

Year of Planting: Remove all lateral limbs (whip) at planting time. Nursery limbs seldom, if ever, provide a suitable framework to begin training a sour cherry tree. The lateral limbs produced in the nursery generally have narrow crotch angles where they join the central leader, are too low to be saved for permanent scaffolds, and often are broken or injured in shipping. It is critical to have the lowest permanent

