

The Canadian Horticulturist

Vol. XXXV

MAY, 1912

No. 5

How Shall I Prune?

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HOW shall I prune? The question has been asked over and over again, and answered as many times; but seldom answered twice in the same way. The great amount of perplexing detail, and the mixing of different pruning sys-

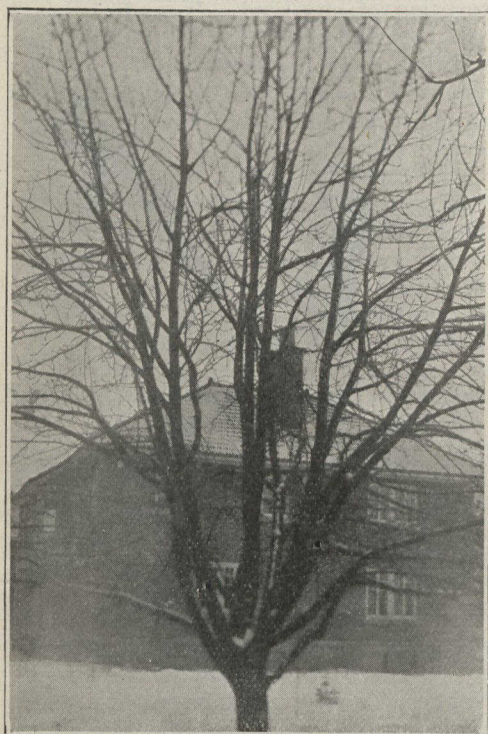
and the other the centre-shoot system. They both have their advantages and disadvantages. Personally, I prefer the open-headed system; hence this article will treat on that system only. If the grower favors some other method and intends to follow that, he should not read this article, for it will only lead to confusion.

When you receive your trees from the nursery, it is evident that they have much less root than they had when growing there. Every care may have been exercised in the digging, yet the greater part of the roots are left in the ground, and it is better so. While the young tree was in the nursery row a balance existed be-

young tree may be started off in the way it should go, better then than at other times. These branches should not be numerous and should be shortened. It is important to remember that the pruning of the top should be somewhat more severe than has been the pruning of the roots, because the demand for water which is made by the growing parts cannot be so successfully met by a newly transplanted tree as by one thoroughly established. I am not in favor of much root pruning. All mangled roots should be removed and all broken roots cut back into fresh tissue, as new roots arise more readily from clean cut surfaces.

THE HEIGHT OF PRUNE

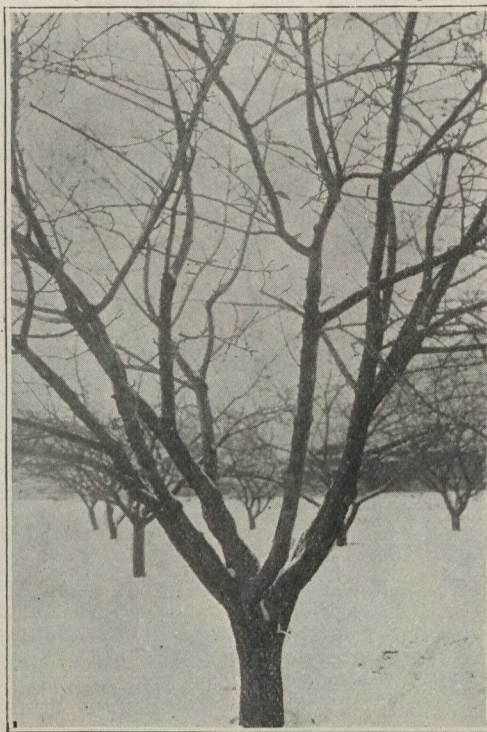
The locality in which you live will determine to a large extent the height of the first branch from the ground. The tendency among growers is to get the head nearer and nearer the ground; and there are many advantages arising from this system; but we must not fail to count the cost. In Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, where the snowfall is heavy, if the head is very low down you will lose it entirely. I have seen trees two years after planting stripped to a whip as the snow subsided in the spring. I think it is not safe to form a head lower than thirty inches in these provinces.



An upright grower. Should have been headed back.

tems have led to such a confusion in pruning practice that many growers do not prune. Other would-be experts attack trees as if they thought that some "cussedness" existed somewhere within the tree and that it must be got rid of by means of the saw and the pruning shears, and so they cut and saw. They could do the work with eyes closed, and do it just as well. This reckless pruning and its dismal failure have forced other men to abandon all pruning endeavour and so the trees grow as best they may.

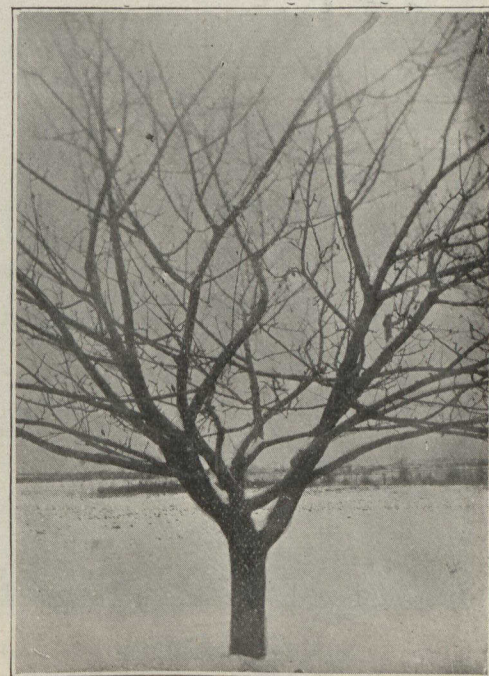
The first important thing for the grower to do is to form an ideal. By that I mean, let him choose that system of pruning which suits him best and stand by it. After having started off in any one direction he cannot afford to change to any other. Two leading systems are recognized, one being the open-headed



A short trunk and open centre. Pruning to outside laterals would have produced a better shaped head.

tween the root system and the top of the tree—both increased together; but when the root area was shortened in digging we must shorten the part above ground to maintain the balance. Many growers take off all branches, leaving nothing but a whip. This is not necessary and not wise. Figure number one shows how the root growth is affected by transplanting.

If a few desirable branches are left the



Not a bad type. It needs some thinning.