

# Logan County Teaches Hands-On Pruning

## Public Value Statement

Properly pruned trees and shrubs are healthier, stronger and produce better quality fruit. They also provide better wind break, live longer and are more aesthetically attractive. These benefits add functional, monetary and aesthetic value to a property.

## The Situation

Through office calls and home visits in Logan County, it is not uncommon to come into contact with a homeowner or landowner who demonstrates or admits a lack of knowledge for pruning trees and shrubs. While explaining how to prune verbally or in a written form can be helpful, most clients welcome the offer of a hands-on demonstration. Pruning is a skill that is learned over time, but even a 10 to 15 minute lesson can prevent a lot of pruning mistakes.

Many clients are eager to learn about the benefits of pruning. It can bring more sunlight and air movement into the canopy to reduce disease and insect problems and improve fruit production. Pruning can improve the strength of branches to withstand winds and heavy snows as well as support heavy fruit loads. Pruning also influences shape and height for practical purposes, such as windbreak, traffic flow, yard maintenance and harvesting fruit.

Improperly pruned trees will have a shorter lifespan and will have more problems with disease, insects and broken branches. Properly pruning trees can definitely add value to a property and reduce home and landowners' headaches!

## Extension Response

In the spring of 2019, the Logan County Extension office hosted the Spring Fever Garden Forums for local residents as part of a statewide program. The program ran for four weekly evening classes and participants could either participate online or at a local site. The program covered topics such as: vegetables, fruits, soils, trees, shrubs, lawns and gardens. The final night of the program, Extension Agent, Sheldon Gerhardt, supplemented the program by teaching a hands-on pruning and grafting demonstration at a backyard orchard. Participants learned how to graft and got to see and make proper pruning cuts in a hands-on experience.

Gerhardt provided information on proper pruning techniques to the public through his weekly news column and radio interview. He also gave hands-on pruning lessons by request. This was done through home visits with local residents by showing them how and when to make good pruning cuts on their own trees and shrubs.

## Impacts

All participants learned and increased their knowledge in pruning basics, such as the maximum amount to prune in a year, what is good structure, where to make a pruning cut, and when the best time of year to prune is. One hundred percent of participants responded that they plan to prune differently in the upcoming year and 92% reported that they plan to share their knowledge with friends and neighbors.

## Feedback

"May God reward you for taking time out of your busy schedule to show us how to prune trees."

"Your informational explanations as you demonstrated each cut gives us a lot of confidence to "go and do likewise.""

"Thank you for the instruction and trimming demo of my tree. I greatly appreciate you taking the time to do this for me."

## Primary Contact

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