

# Betty's Bloomers Nursery

Issue 3

DECEMBER 15, 2004

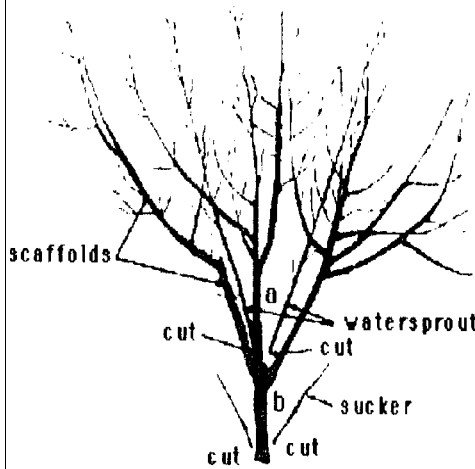
## Happy Holidays

.We hope you are having a “less stressful” holiday. Maybe we can help with those hard to buy for gardeners on your list. How about a fruit tree? We have a new shipment arriving this week. Or, live plants decorated for the holidays. We also have Gift Certificates for those do-it-yourselfers.

## Grower tips

Now is a good time to prune and reshape deciduous & fruit trees. Most shade trees do not need much pruning if given sufficient space & sunlight. You can “limb-up” a tree by trimming the bottom branches. This gives more headroom under the tree & allows more sunlight to reach the ground. You need to also remove damaged or dead branches now.

Peach, Apple, & Pear trees may need a little extra attention now. Pruning helps to control its shape by developing a strong well-balanced framework of scaffold branches. Prune to open up the center of the tree to allow sunlight to penetrate to all parts of the tree and to control the height for better fruit picking.. Remove water sprouts and suckers and damaged or diseased wood. (See illustration) For more information on fruit tree care go to Texas A&M horticulture or Louisiana State University agriculture websites.



Please, do not over-do the pruning of crepe myrtle trees (or crepe murder as it is sometimes called). These trees do not benefit from being pruned all the way back to the main trunks. Prune off old bloom spikes and weak branches inside the framework of the tree, leaving the larger branches to retain the natural shape of the tree.

## What's in Season?

Camellias and their smaller cousins the Susanquas are beginning to put on their winter show. They require a rich fertile soil with lots of organic material in the soil. Plant in a area preferably out of the hot afternoon summer sun.

Dwarf & Semi-dwarf azaleas are also blooming in their second season Enjoy blooms now & sporadically until they really bloom in the spring.

## To Do List:

Cut back frost-bitten perennials and annuals now. Check for mature, dried seed pods and sow directly back into the beds or save for warmer weather in the spring. Wait to prune some hardy perennials such as lantana & verbena until it sprouts in the spring to see the cold damage.

Spray dormant oil spray now through February on ornamentals and fruit trees. This gets an early start on insect and disease problems.

## Something Extra

Use the ashes out of your fireplace or trash piles in your garden or in planting beds. Wood ashes contain potassium which is good for root growth. Camellias and azaleas especially like a light sprinkling around the base of the roots.

Also, save egg shells from your holiday baking. Crushed eggshell keeps snails & slugs out of your planting beds or gardens, and as it decomposes it add calcium to the soil.

## Contact us

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