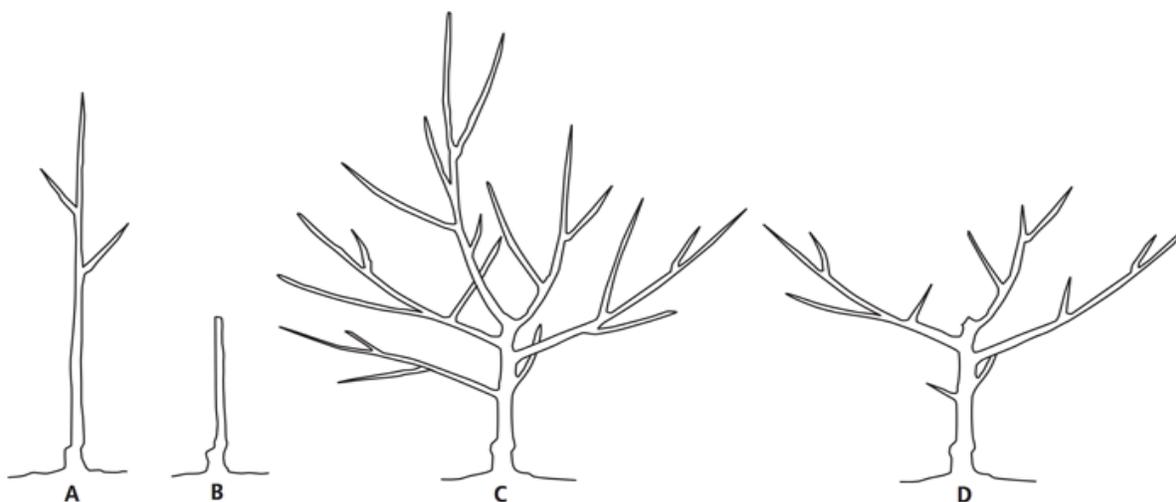


Plums

Plums make beautiful, small landscape trees, along with providing delicious fruit. The varieties we carry are *self-fertile*, and therefore may be planted alone in the home landscape. However, for maximum fruit production and quality, plant two different varieties of plums. Our plums are Japanese varieties (*Prunus salicina*), the most familiar fresh plums in the U.S and better adapted to Texas than the European varieties.

Plant your trees 10 to 15 feet apart. Consult our handout *Planting & Maintenance Guide for Fruits, Nuts, & Berries* for further instructions.

Prune plums according to the **open center** method:



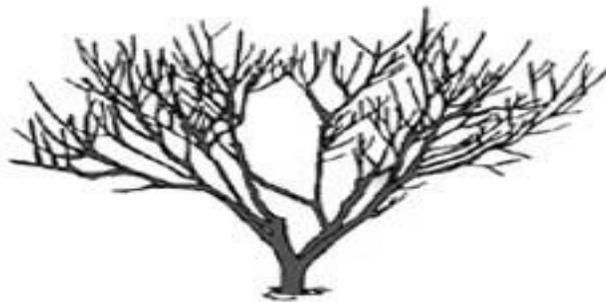
At Planting: Cut main stem (A) back to a height of 24” to 30” (B). If there are any branches that are suitable for scaffold branches (strong, evenly-spaced, lateral branches at wide angles to main stem), cut these back leaving 2 – 3 buds on each. If not, cut all branches back, leaving only the main stem. Allow tree to grow freely the first year.

First growing season (C): Select 3 or 4 shoots that will become the primary scaffold branches (main structure branches). Pinch back all other shoots to 4-6 inches. The short shoots will be removed later, but will act as shade for the trunk and main branches in the summer.

First dormant season after planting: Select three or four primary scaffold branches if this was not done in summer. Do not select ones that grow directly above one another. Select branches with a 45° branch angle, avoiding upright branches with a very narrow angle. Plums produce upright growth, so to promote tree spread, scaffolds should be bent outward while they are still flexible (D).

Subsequent winters: Heading or pinching the scaffold branches encourages secondary scaffold branches to grow from them. Allow two to three secondary branches to grow from the primaries. Remove other strong branches, branches growing down, those growing towards the center, or growing at narrow angles.¹

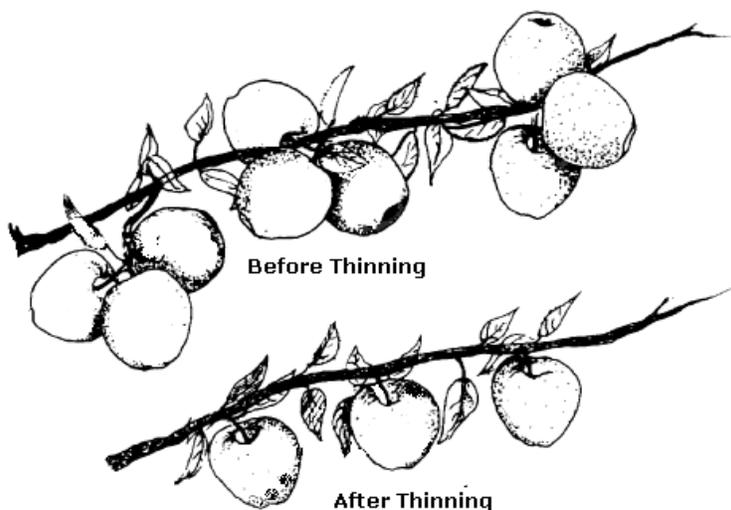
¹ University of California ANR, Publication 8057



The shape of the open center must be maintained throughout the life of the tree.

Consult a reputable, current book or university website for more complete pruning information.

It takes about 4 years for a plum tree to mature and produce a significant harvest. Thinning fruit so that they are 4" to 6" apart is essential for larger, more flavorful fruit, *and* the health of the tree. Start removing fruit when it is about the size of a jelly bean.



Fruits should be 4 to 6 inches apart, with only one fruit left per cluster as in the lower example.

Pests: The most troublesome pest of the Plum is the Plum Curculio. Refer to our handout “*Controlling Plum Curculio*” for information on managing this insect.

Plum Varieties for Central Texas (chilling hours)

Methley (250). Medium sized fruit with amber to reddish flesh and purplish skin. Self-fertile with fruit ripening in early June. Clingstone flesh, with good quality for fresh eating and jams. Recommended pollinator for all other varieties of plums.

Santa Rosa (300 - 400). Large fruit with red, firm, tender, extremely juicy, low acid flesh and purple-red skin. Self-fertile variety that ripens in June. Clingstone flesh with good quality for fresh eating and jams. Developed by Luther Burbank and introduced in 1906.