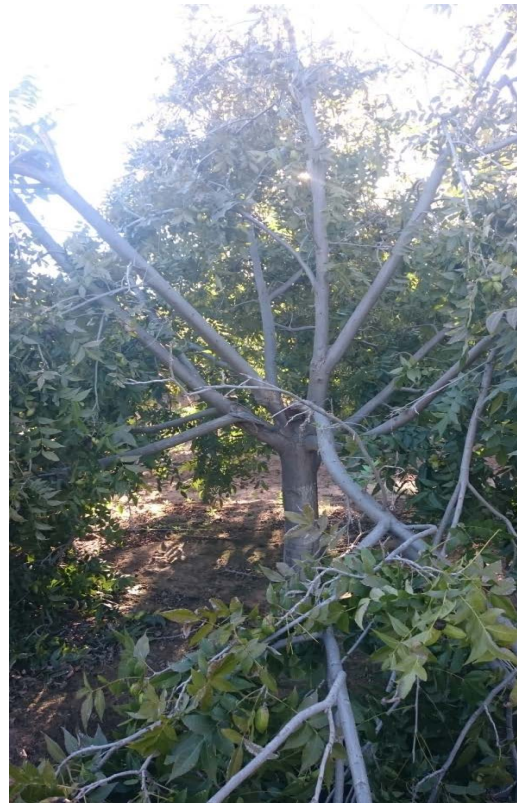


Training young pecan nut trees – Hardus du Toit

To limit breakages

- Pecan nut trees become very old and grow very big, it therefore needs a strong structure to support the weight of the tree and a large harvest



Preparing for mechanisation

- The scaffold limbs must be high enough from the ground to allow for free movement of orchard equipment



- If this is done while the trees are young, corrective pruning won't be required



Basic principles of pruning pecan nut trees

Pruning is done in:

Winter –

- for training young trees and for forming strong structures

Summer –

- for corrective pruning by removing broken branches and branches that develop too low on the trunk after pruning
- For summertip pruning where the growth point is removed to promote the formation of scaffold limbs
- The crotch angle of scaffold limbs with the trunk should be between 45° and 90°
- Scaffold limbs should be 1.5m to 1.7m from the ground
- The more aggressive the pruning the more vegetative the regrowth will be
- Pecan nut trees are apical dominant
- Trees want to be in balance between the above-ground and below-ground portions, therefore not more than a third of the wood should be removed
- Branches are cut back to:
 - Reduce the leverage effect at the point where the limb meets the trunk
 - Encourage the formation of more scaffold and other branches
- The development of scaffold limbs can be improved by manipulating buds:
 - Primary buds grow straight upward with a very narrow angle, ideal for the central leader
 - Secondary buds grow at a wider angle
 - The angle of tertiary buds are even wider

Scaffold limbs should be allowed to develop from secondary and tertiary buds

Winter pruning

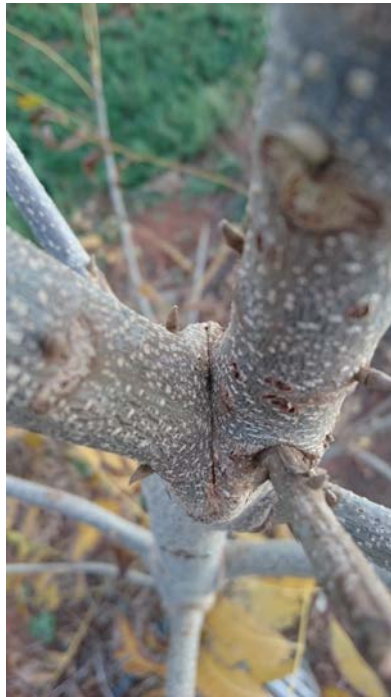


- Select the central leader, normally the strongest and straightest shoot
- In windy areas, select a bud in the direction of the wind during summer
- Cut away between a third and half of the previous seasons' growth
- Leave the top two primary buds just below the cut and remove the other primary buds on the shoot
- Remove all branches with angles of less than 45°

- Scaffold limbs must not be thicker than the central leader
- On all scaffold limbs cut away between a third and half of the previous seasons' growth
- All low branches should be removed
- In windy areas some of the low branches may be left to make the tree more stable. These branches must however be removed the following winter



What does a bad crotch look like?



Terminal bud



Buds

An example where the primary and secondary buds both developed



Crow's foot

- If the terminal bud is not removed a crow's foot will develop
- Three or more of the buds in the terminal bud grows and tries to dominate
- Goes hand in hand with bad crotches



Summer pruning

Summertip pruning

- ❖ Can be done any time after budding until end February as soon as the new shoot is between 300mm and 500mm long
- ❖ Squeeze the growth point between your fingers and pull it off
- ❖ This results in a thicker and stronger shoot and other buds start growing

Broken branches and branches that are too low can also be removed during summer



