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PRUNING PEARS IN THE ROGUE RIVER VALLEY

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With the current labor shortage it is possible that many pear growers will have difficulty in completing the pruning of all trees of all varieties. To provide information to help such growers plan their pruning for the remainder of the winter, some of the results of research at the Medford Experiment Station are here summarized.

Pruning has been found to increase the size of the fruit of both Bartlett and Anjou. This is illustrated by results with Bartlett in a deep, well-irrigated adobe soil, presented in table 1.

Table 1. Effects of pruning Bartlett on size of fruit and yield.

Type of pruning in 1935 and in 1936	Yield per tree (in field lugs) 1935	1936	Peak size of packed fruit in 1936
No pruning	11.5	21.2	165's
Light thinning-out	9.9	12.5	135's
Heavy heading-back	6.9	8.3	120's and 110's

The pruning of Bartlett increased the average size of the fruit at the cost of a reduction in yield. It should be borne in mind that these trees had been heavily pruned prior to 1935. Such large comparative increases in yield, with no pruning, cannot be expected where the trees have been lightly pruned for several years.

With Anjou, heavy heading back has consistently increased the size of the fruit, as compared with moderate thinning out. However, the size of the fruit and the yield per tree with moderate pruning were satisfactory where adequate soil moisture was maintained by irrigation. Although with Bartlett pruning has reduced the total yield per tree, with Anjou some pruning has been found necessary to maintain normal yield. In fact, on adobe soil the omission of pruning of Anjou resulted in abnormally low yield the following season, as shown in table 2.

Table 2. The effect of pruning on the yield of Anjou on shallow clay adobe soil

Type of pruning in winter of 1934-35	Yield per tree in 1935 (in field lugs)
No pruning	3.4
Moderate thinning-out	8.2
Heavy thinning-out	9.3

In this case the failure to prune Anjou resulted in about a 60 percent loss in yield the first season, as compared with a moderate pruning. On a somewhat lighter, deep clay loam soil, the omission of pruning of Anjou did not result in as much of a reduction in yield as occurred on adobe soil, as shown in table 3.

Table 3. Effect of pruning on the yield of Anjou on a deep clay loam soil well supplied with available soil moisture

Type of pruning in winter of 1934-35	Yield per tree in 1935 (in field lugs)
No pruning	23.9
Moderate thinning-out	28.0
Heavy thinning-out	26.1

SUMMARY

Pruning of Bartlett, as compared with no pruning, reduced the total yield per tree, but greatly increased the size of the fruit. Pruning of Anjou, as compared with no pruning, increased the size of the fruit and also increased the yield per tree, with a greater increase in yield on adobe than on a lighter soil.