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February Orchard Checklist

The February jobs for your fruit trees, by climate band. Months are typical for each band: let your local frost dates and your trees have the final say.

Cold zones 3–5

- ☐ Prune cherries in late winter, after hard cold
  Late winter, after the coldest weather · Cherries · Zone 5 only
- ☐ Clean and disinfect pruners when cutting diseased wood
  Whenever you prune out diseased wood
- ☐ Prune in late winter, before bloom
  Late winter, after the hardest cold, until a week before bloom · Apples, pears · Zone 5 only
- ☐ Train young trees to a central leader
  Dormant pruning time, first three to five years · Apples, pears · Young trees · Zone 5 only
- ☐ Remove fire blight cankers while dormant
  Dormant season · Apples, pears
- ☐ Cut off root suckers and water sprouts
  Dormant season · Apples · Zone 5 only
- ☐ Prune out black knot galls in late winter
  Late winter, on a day below freezing · Cherries, plums · Zones 4, 5

Middle zones 6–7

- ☐ Prune cherries in late winter, after hard cold
  Late winter, after the coldest weather · Cherries
- ☐ Choose three to eight leaders for a bush
  Late winter after the first season, before growth starts · Figs · Young trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Prune figs lightly before growth begins
  Late winter, after the coldest weather, before growth begins · Figs · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Check bare-root trees the day they arrive
  When bare-root trees arrive in early spring · New trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Plant bare-root trees before growth begins
  As soon as the soil can be worked, before buds open · New trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Put a white trunk guard on
  At planting · New trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Water new trees on a schedule
  From planting through the first growing season · New trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Clean and disinfect pruners when cutting diseased wood
  Whenever you prune out diseased wood
- ☐ Dormant oil window, if persimmon scale is a problem †
  Shortly before bud swell · Persimmons · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Prune in late winter, before bloom
  Late winter, after the hardest cold, until a week before bloom · Apples, pears
- ☐ Head back the new tree at planting
  At planting · Apples, pears · New trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Train young trees to a central leader
  Dormant pruning time, first three to five years · Apples, pears · Young trees
- ☐ Remove fire blight cankers while dormant
  Dormant season · Apples, pears
- ☐ Cut off root suckers and water sprouts
  Dormant season · Apples
- ☐ Prune stone fruit in late winter, near bloom
  Late winter, after the coldest weather, up to bloom · Stone fruit · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Cut back new stone fruit trees at planting
  At planting · Stone fruit · New trees · Zone 7 only
- ☐ Prune out black knot galls in late winter
  Late winter, on a day below freezing · Cherries, plums

Warm zones 8–10

- ☐ Feed young citrus lightly and often
  February to October · Citrus · Young trees · Zones 9, 10
- ☐ Prune citrus lightly in spring
  Spring, February to April · Citrus · Zones 9, 10
- ☐ Plant figs in spring, deeper than before
  Spring, after the danger of hard freezes · Figs · New trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Feed figs lightly, or not at all
  When buds swell · Figs · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Water deeply during dry spells
  Growing season, in dry weeks · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Feed weak trees a month before bloom
  About a month before bloom · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Remove first-year stakes the next spring
  The spring after planting · Young trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Remove first-year stakes, except on dwarf apples
  The spring after planting · Apples · Young trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Spread young branches just after bud break
  Just after bud break in spring · Apples · Young trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Dormant oil window, if mites or scale were a problem †
  Bud swell to green tip · Apples, pears · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Apple scab window, green tip to petal fall †
  Green tip to petal fall, ahead of rain · Apples · Bearing trees · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Dormant oil window, if San Jose scale is a problem †
  Delayed dormant, from bud swell to green tip · Apricots · Zone 8 only
- ☐ Feed established trees at bud break
  February to early March, plus May if fruit is set · Apples, pears, peaches, nectarines, plums · Bearing trees · Zones 9, 10
- ☐ Thin peaches and nectarines before pits harden
  Florida: late February to early March · Peaches, nectarines · Bearing trees · Zones 9, 10

† Timing only. Follow your state or provincial extension's home-orchard spray guide and the product label.

Sources: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach; Oregon State University Extension Service; University of Minnesota and 14 more (full list at the web address on the left)

Data as of 15 Nov 2026