

## Hardwood available

WEST CHESTER — Good quality hardwood is being sold at Chester County's Springton Manor Farm for \$30.00 a cord.

The trees are down and easily accessible to wood cutters, since they have been pulled out and placed along the roadway. Pur-

chasers are allowed one week per cord to cut and haul the wood home. The wood is primarily cherry, ash, and poplar.

Anyone interested in purchasing wood must call the Chester County Parks and Recreation Department at 431-6415 for further information.

## Training guides apple tree growth

NEWARK, Del. — Young apple trees are trained, not pruned. "There's a big difference between pruning and training a tree," says University of Delaware extension county agent Derby Walker. "In pruning, you remove the excess and damaged wood. When you train a tree, you're developing its shape and strength."

A year-old apple tree is very simple to prune, Walker says. Try to select five twigs which will become the permanent branches. One upright twig will be the leader. Usually this is about two feet long and should be kept 6 to 10 inches longer than the other four bran-

ches, which will become permanent fruit bearing limbs.

These limbs should be spaced around the tree so that none of them overlaps another. When branches overlap, the shade created will affect fruit quality on the lower limb and may eventually kill it, Walker says.

The lowest branch on the tree should be about 30 inches above the ground for easy mowing and access. Usually the other limbs are about 6 inches further up and spaced evenly around the trunk.

The angle at which limbs meet the trunk should be between 60 and 90 degrees. A branch with a narrower crotch may break under a heavy load of fruit. When this happens, as much as 25 percent of the production may be lost.

To increase narrow angles, use a wire, stick or weight to temporarily hold down the limb until the tree has stiffened. This usually takes about a year, after which the spreader can be removed.

Prune a two-year-old apple tree so as to save an additional four limbs around the leader about two

feet above the first set. This will give a total of 7 or 8 permanent branches—enough to produce ample fruit if the tree is properly maintained. Again, make sure no branches directly overlap those underneath. And save a central leader which will be cut back about two feet above the second set of limbs. This gives about a 6-foot tree.

As the tree grows, keep in mind a maximum height for it to reach. This could be anywhere from 9 or 10 feet up to 12 or 14, depending on the variety, because some are more vigorous than others. "Once the height is reached, cut off everything that grows higher," Walker says. "After all, you don't want to spend a lot of time climbing up and down ladders in order to pick fruit."

Keeping the tree close to the ground will make it easier to provide the kind of care necessary to produce high quality fruit.

"If you fail to train the tree when it's young," he concludes, "you'll spend the rest of your life pruning it, and have fruit that may be 20 to 30 feet off the ground."

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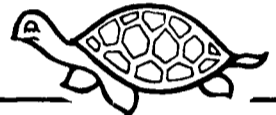
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