**Tools of the Trade**

**Bypass hand pruners-**

*Felco* brand is the most trusted in the industry. They come in all sizes, and for the left or right hand. Use them for cuts 5/8” diameter and smaller.

**Bypass Loppers-**

*Felco* brand also makes a good lopper. Use loppers for cuts 1-1/2” diameter and less. This gives the hands a rest.

**Saws-**

*Silky* brand is the best saw I’ve come across. They come with many different teeth sizes- the larger the teeth the bigger the cuts. The one downside of these saws is that the teeth are hardened steel, so you can’t sharpen them (the teeth end up sharpening the file instead of sharpening the blade). For the backyard fruit tree grower, the foldable saws are perfect.

**Long Reach Pruners-**

*ARS* brand makes these. If there is one tool I never head out into the orchard without, it’s my 4’ pruner. They also come in 6’ and extendable versions. Use this for cuts ¾” diameter and smaller.

**Other notable tools-**

*Dead wood saw*- nothing dulls your blade like cutting through dead wood. Use an old saw or buy a spare for cutting dead wood.

*File-* any file will do. When you buy new tools they come nice and sharp- so keep them that way. It’s good to sharpen them before each use.

*Disinfecting solution-* e.g. hydrogen peroxide, dilute bleach solution or any brand of cleaning solvent. Keep your tools clean to prevent the spread of disease throughout the orchard and to keep tools in good working order.

*Orchard Ladder-* With proper summer pruning, you should never need a ladder to reach your trees, but sometimes trees grow faster than we can keep up with. *Stokes* makes lightweight aluminum orchard ladders- with 3 legs for easy access into branches and stability on uneven ground. I find that the combination of an 8” ladder and long reach pruner is usually sufficient.

*Spreaders/rope/ribbon/weights-* for training disoriented trees.

**Sources-** Harmony Farm Supply (Sebastopol), Hida Tools (Berkeley), Central Valley Builders Supply (Healdsburg)

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