

# Pruning Dwarf Cherries

## Site

For best results, plant cherries in full sun, and the warmer the site, the better. Cherries perform best in fertile, well-drained soil. If the soil is heavy, build a raised bed at least 3 ft. wide of a sandy loam type soil. Plant dwarf cherries on Gisela 5 rootstock 9'-10' apart. Plant cherries on Krymsk 6 rootstock 10'-12' apart. Stake the tree at planting. The first 2-3 years after planting, be sure to supply adequate water and fertilizer to encourage vigorous initial growth.

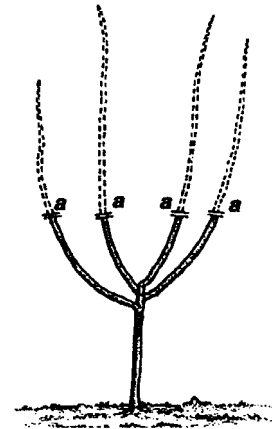
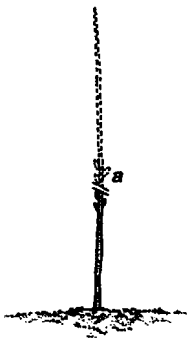
## Pruning and Training Dwarf Cherries (Spanish Bush System)

When pruning cherries, it is best to wait for dry weather (48 hours after cuts are made is ideal) to reduce disease.

### At Planting

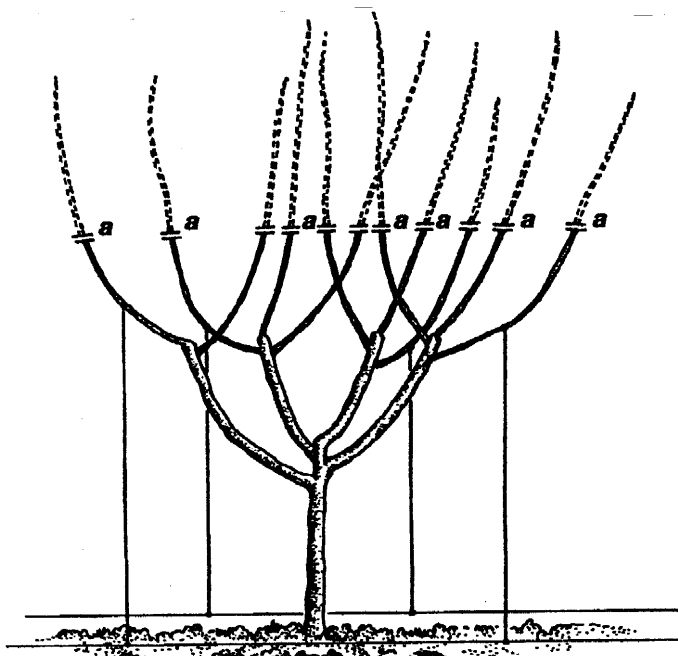
If the tree is an unbranched whip, at bud break, head it back to 20"-30" above the ground. Spread the developing branches to form wide crotch angles. Allow these primary branches to grow 20"-24" in length, then head them back all at the same level, which should be about 6" higher than the cut made at planting.

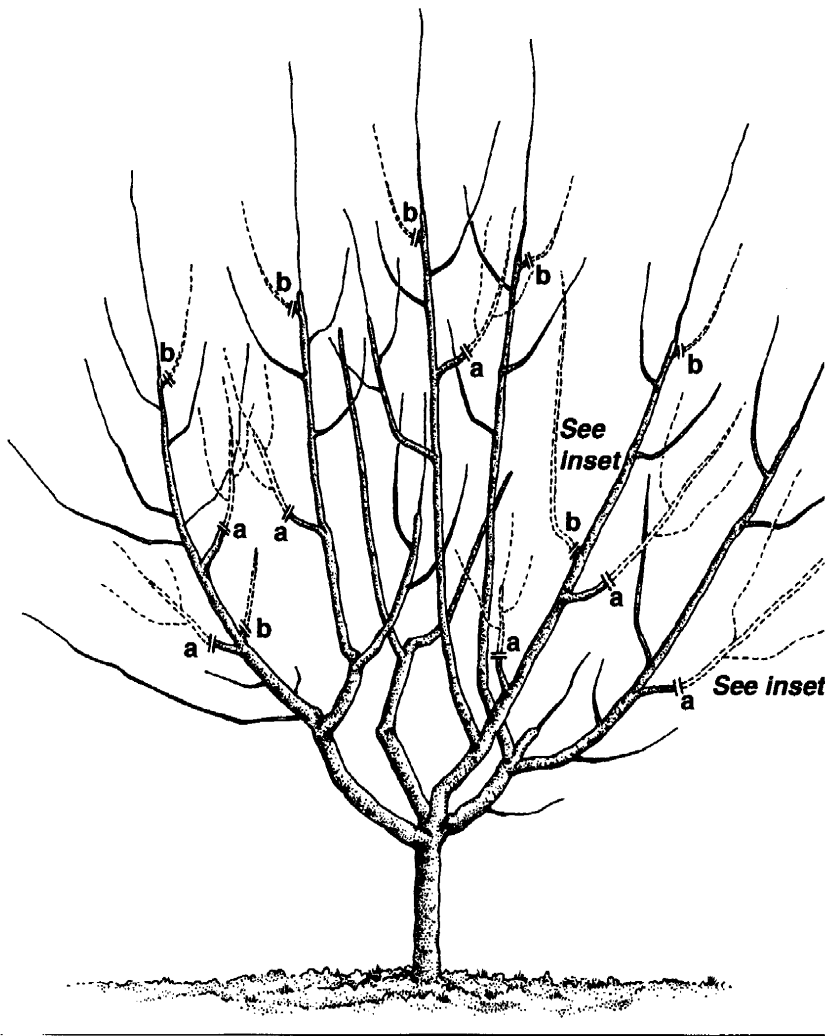
If the tree at planting time already has good branches (ideally, 3 or 4 evenly spaced branches around the tree) at bud break, head the branches back so there tips are all the same level, 10"-12" long.



### Second Spring

When the secondary branches have reached 20"-24" long, head them back to 10", making the cuts all at the same level. Ideally these cuts will be made at or near bloom time. When the tertiary branches reach 20"-24" in length later this spring, head them back to 10" above the previous cut, again making all the cuts at the same level. These third training cuts may only be necessary on more vigorous varieties. You may need to thin some branches out for good light penetration. Thin by removing vigorous, upright branches, leaving weaker, more horizontal branches to encourage fruiting.



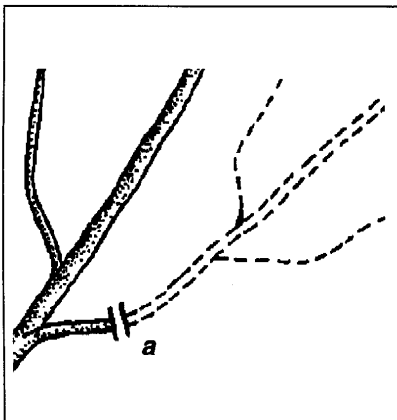


### As the Tree Matures

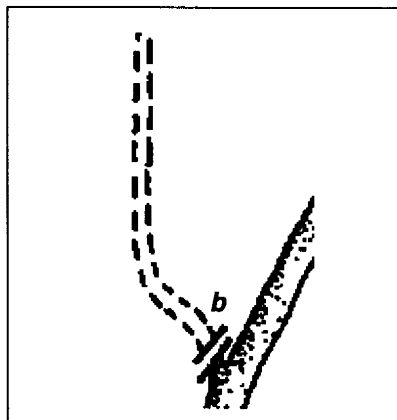
The secondary and tertiary branches become the scaffold branches in the tree. The fruit develops on weaker wood growing from these branches, and must be renewed on a regular basis.

Stub back about a quarter of the fruiting wood each year after the fruit is harvested. Thin vigorous upright branches to maintain light penetration. In the autumn, top the trees at 8'.

For more information on Cherry Pruning and Training Systems, visit [Oregon State University Extension Publications](http://www.oregonstate.edu/extension/publications) online.



*a.—Renew fruiting branches.*



*b.—Thin for light penetration.*