Tree Training

Tree Training and Management of Close-Planted Orchards

K. Ryugo and D. Ramos

In both Serr and Chico, pruned trees were noticeably larger and more vigorous than those unpruned; the yields of the former were markedly less than those of the latter. Except for branches growing into the row aisles, pruning as a treatment will cease as most trees are approaching desirable maximum heights of nearly 15 feet in their 3rd leaf. Reduction of light intensity with cloth cover did not inhibit flower initiation but resulted in shrivelled shoot terminals. Removal of unexpanded leaves of Chico from 7 nodes did not prevent buds at these nodes from initiating pistillate flowers in October. Comparable buds on intact shoots were just beginning to differentiate floral parts at this time, according to Dr. Lin.

Walnut Pruning

L. C. Hendricks and D. E. Ramos

In 1976, we reported on an experiment which was begun in Hughson in June of 1975. These were Ashley walnuts planted at 15' x 15' and were six years of age in 1975. In July, 1976, one year after the initiation of the experiment, the evaluation made by Hendricks, Ramos and the cooperators indicated that the unpruned trees stopped growing too abruptly and vigor must be maintained by winter pruning.

The growth rates of trees pruned during the summer, plus winter, compared very equally with trees pruned in the winter only. Either pruning system kept the trees within bounds, but at the same time provided adequate growth to regenerate fruiting wood. It was, therefore, deemed not worth the effort to summer prune these young Ashley trees at this close spacing. Under the conditions in this orchard, excessive growth is not a problem and winter pruning must be continued to maintain vigor. This experiment has been terminated.

A new experiment has begun in Merced on second leaf Serrs. These trees are showing extreme vigor and it appears that summer pruning will be beneficial. In this experiment, mild summer pruning (tips removed) is compared to more severe summer pruning (1/3 of growth removed). The winter pruning in this orchard will be a minimum or near minimum pruning system.