PRUNING VS. TREE THINNING OF CLOSE-PLANTED HARTLEYS

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Four years of selective annual pruning vs. "whiskbrooming" of temporary (alternate diagonal) trees for eventual removal has resulted in no significant difference in yield in a 1968 planting of Hartleys spaced 25'x25' in Yolo County. The yields in this 3-acre replicated trial from 1977 through 1980 were 2.0, 2.7, 2.9 and 2.3 tons per acre, respectively. Within the "whiskbroomed" plots, however, the yield of the permanent trees was significantly greater than the temporary trees in 1980. This yield difference can be accounted for by the increasing differential in canopy size between permanent and temporary trees over the past four years. Pruning of the permanent trees is limited to interior thinning type cuts to open up the center and provide more space between branches. In contrast, temporary trees are being severely cut back in height and spread to reduce their shade and encroachment on the enlarging permanent trees. The trees in the selective pruning treatment are being pruned by a combination of thinning and heading cuts in order to maintain an open center and remove crowded limbs, control height and provide for fruiting wood renewal.