

Pruning

Start by clipping off close the ones that point straight up or straight down, especially those coming out from the underside of branches.

End quote. Topic: Husbandry

subheading: Training the Young Peach
(older trees having their own rules).

Another hard frost unlikely this late,
and the new growth showing where buds are
and aren't, Greg Freeman walking me
through the basics of how to prune my first
stone-fruits to have made it through a winter.
To start an orchard here in the middle of nowhere.

If you want an open center, he said
like the wineglass commercial nursery booklets
recommend in order to maximize
exposure to sun and air to feed the leaves
instead of letting them grow to a central leader
the way they want to on their own — maybe
not such a bad idea in this country —
then next, all those coming up in the middle.
And now and anytime else they show up,
these dark-splotched switch-like shoots:
water-suckers, and they don't bear fruit.

Then the ones that go out at wide angles:
they have a weaker crotch and are more prone
than the narrower ones to break off from the weight
the peaches will put on as they mature.
Then, just above or below the leafbuds
where you want the new wood to grow (keeping
in mind that only new wood will bear)
head the branches back or in or up.
Don't forget there's something to be said
for a size and shape both pleasing to the eye and the fruit
within easy reach. And of course keep an eye out for snakes.