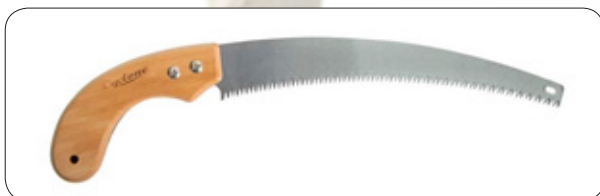


Long-handled pruner (telescopic pruner): These are secateurs fixed on long adjustable handles that enable pruning small branches high up the tree without having to climb.



Telescopic pruner

Pruning saw: Used to prune small branches of 2.5–5 cm diameter.



Pruning saw

Power tree pruner

A power pruner is a powered telescopic pruner using a modified version of a chain saw. It is less powerful than a chain saw, with the cutting diameter of power pruners being smaller as the chain guide is shorter. The power tree pruner, however, can be used to prune high branches without having to climb up the tree. It is used to conveniently prune branches up to about 10 cm.



Power tree pruner

Chainsaw (power saw): Power-operated saw that can be used to prune large branches of any diameter.



Power saw

Pruning process

- Identify the branches to be pruned.
- Use the appropriate pruning equipment depending on branch sizes
- Sharp and clean cuts should be made. Cracking or splitting of branches should be avoided. Therefore, for large branches, the use of machetes (pangas) is not recommended
- Slanting cuts should be made to avoid water accumulation
- Application of white paint is recommended to protect the wounds

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PRUNING CASHEW TREES FOR BETTER YIELDS



Introduction

Pruning is done to remove unwanted plant parts. It is best done immediately after harvesting the last nuts and before flowering. During this time, the tree is dormant

Types of pruning

1. Maintenance pruning

This is the regular pruning of cashew trees in the orchard. It is best done before the cashew flowering season.

Reasons for pruning:

- Management of crop canopy to maintain desired size
- Removal of dead branches
- Removal of interlocking branches that prevent light penetration. This enhances yields and helps in the management of diseases
- Removal of branches that have been attacked by pests and diseases
- Removal of branches that are lying too low from the ground level
- Rejuvenation of old trees



Well pruned cashew



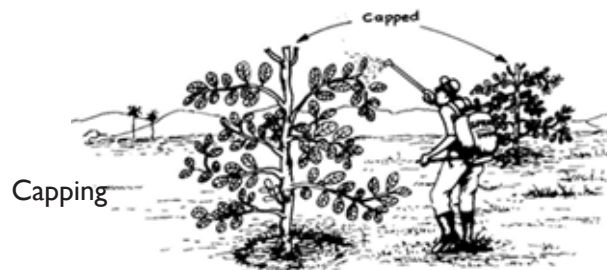
Unpruned cashew tree

2. Formative pruning

Formative pruning is the process of shaping a tree when it is still young. Every variety has a different natural growth habit, but unpruned trees will generally produce huge canopies with interlocking branches. Such trees will have low yields and are also prone to diseases such as powdery mildew. Unpruned trees will also grow too tall thereby making operations such as spraying and harvesting difficult.

Capping

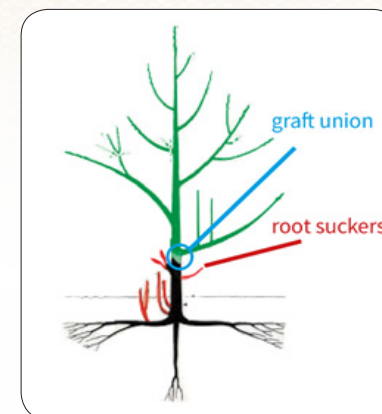
Capping is a type of formative pruning done by cutting off the vertical shoots of the plants at a height of 1.0-1.5 m. This work should be done within the first 5 years after the establishment of the cashew trees. Capping is important in shaping the tree to achieve the desired umbrella-shaped canopy. The length of lateral branches maintained depends on the plant spacing adopted, considerations for intercropping and the kind of farm operations.



De-suckering

De-suckering is the removal of branches growing from the rootstock of grafted plants. Suckers are shoots that emerge below the graft union and such branches should be removed. Suckers compete with scions for nutrients and water and can cause retarded growth or even death of the scion. De-suckering should be done continually in the early stages of growth. After one year, the scion branches are dominant and the production of suckers

tends to be suppressed. However, monitoring of the trees for suckers is recommended up to about 3 years when production of suckers is rare.



Suckers growing on grafted tree crop

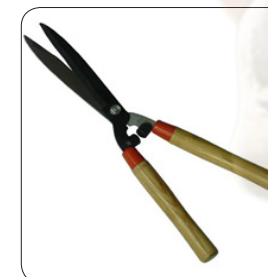
Pruning Tools

Secateurs: Used to prune small twigs and terminal shoots that are 1-1.5 cm in diameter



Secateurs

Pruning shears: Used to prune branches up to about 3 cm in diameter.



Pruning shears