

On July 8, the SCHS hosted Joanna Glovinsky, the founder of Fruitststitute, a Los Angeles-based fruit tree care and education service, to present a webinar on the specialized care of fruit trees. Her program focused on the biological differences between commercially cultivated fruit tree species as compared to trees growing in residential and urban environments, and the implications this has for management.

Photo supplied by speaker.



Glovinsky provided a history of fruit growing culture – most specifically grafting practices – to lead into her lecture on modern commercial growing practices that dominate fruit tree growing today and how these impact home orchardists. Grafting is used to propagate plants grown for specific traits such as vigor, pest resistance, size, flavor, etc. Commercial growers must look at fruit trees as a commodity in terms of land value measured by yield and profitability. Therefore, the orcharding industry

establishes the standards for the management of growing fruit, which is misaligned with the needs of home gardeners growing fruit trees in a residential landscape. Therefore, home grown trees require different management techniques to be healthy and productive.

Keeping in mind that as gardeners we must establish the parameters for what we want from our fruit trees (crop yield, size, shade, etc.), there are good management practices that most trees have in common. The most important of these is properly siting the tree when it is planted. If there is not enough light, or space for root expansion is limited, or there is too much competition for resources from adjacent plantings, the tree will not thrive. Once the tree has been optimally sited, management practices will aid in keeping it vigorous and productive, beginning with maintaining soil health. Fruit trees require more nutrient-rich soil than ornamentals, as they are heavy feeders. In addition to a regular fertilizing schedule, applications of compost and organic mulch are good ways to ensure that the soil's nutrients will be consistently replenished. The latter will also help retain moisture in the soil as most species also require

regular irrigation for good fruit production. Annual or seasonal pruning must be done to maintain a manageable size and keep a balanced branch structure, remove dead wood, “lift” heavy branches, and open the canopy. And finally, because fruit is heavy, thinning the crop is mandatory to prevent branches from breaking, and because unchecked over-bearing (especially true for stone fruit) can result in decreased yields in subsequent years.

It is Glovinsky's mission to educate home growers in the practices of good fruit tree management as she has found there to be a great need for this, especially in urban environments. She established Fruitststitute as a service to teach people about the specialized care that all fruit trees need to grow great fruit, and how they can be successful in this endeavor. (Learn more at [www.fruitststitute.com](http://www.fruitststitute.com).)

✂ Sabine Steinmetz

To watch this program on YouTube, click the following link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83zLhoGCQJQ>

## COFFEE IN THE GARDEN RECAP – FRUIT TREE PRUNING

As a follow-up to Glovinsky's lecture, the SCHS also booked her for our first “live” event of 2021, as part of our Coffee In The Garden (CITG) series. Glovinsky, along with two of her Fruitststitute team members,



Mad and Capri, assisted attendees with hands-on orange tree pruning in Pasadena's Arlington Gardens on July 11.

Prior to working on the trees, Glovinsky spoke about how and when to prune citrus, tools needed (hand pruners, loppers, and a pruning saw) and gave a demo of good tool maintenance. She also reiterated that good cultural habits including proper watering, feeding and mulching, (as well as pruning) would result in healthier, productive fruit trees.

Attendees then broke into small groups and worked on select trees with guidance from the Fruitststitute team, who also



supplied all of the tools. Removing any dead wood, opening up the interior, thinning to improve form and lift branches, and aesthetics were all factors for the teams to consider as they decided on how, what and where to prune.



In addition to participating in a hands-on learning experience, afterwards the participants were able to enjoy light refreshments and admire the measurable improvements resulting from their work.

The SCHS board was pleased to offer this new type of CITG event, and look forward to scheduling more as soon as conditions permit. We hope you'll consider joining us next time.

✂ Photos & text by Sabine Steinmetz

Please visit the SCHS Instagram and Facebook pages for more photos from this event.

## SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE

Settle into August with light garden chores and a cool beverage.

- Continue deep watering trees and supplementally hand-watering containers and bedding plants.
- Keep on harvesting/enjoying your veggies and herbs!
- Prune back summer-dormant California native perennials.
- Start removing dead or dying plants now for pest control and to reduce fall clean-up tasks.
- Check your compost pile to see if it's getting dried out - turn, mist and shade it if necessary.
- Catch up on your garden reading and begin thinking about what to plant in autumn...

✂ Sabine Steinmetz

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