

# Pruning Blueberries

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# Objectives

- Maintain a physiologically young plant
- Renew canes
- Stabilize year-to-year yield fluctuations
- Improve fruit size
- Reduce pest infestations
- Create unfavorable conditions for pathogens

What can happen if you never prune . . .

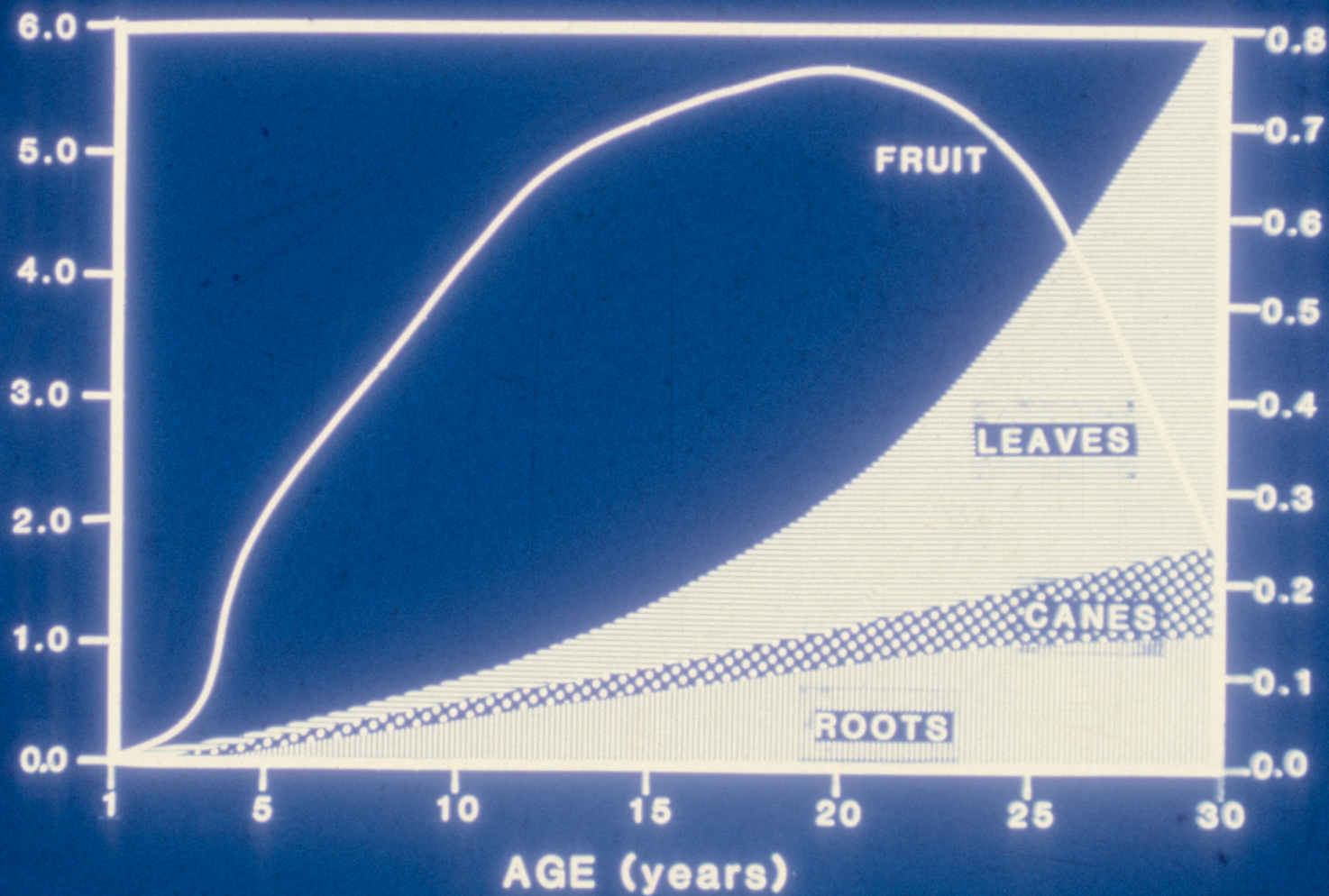






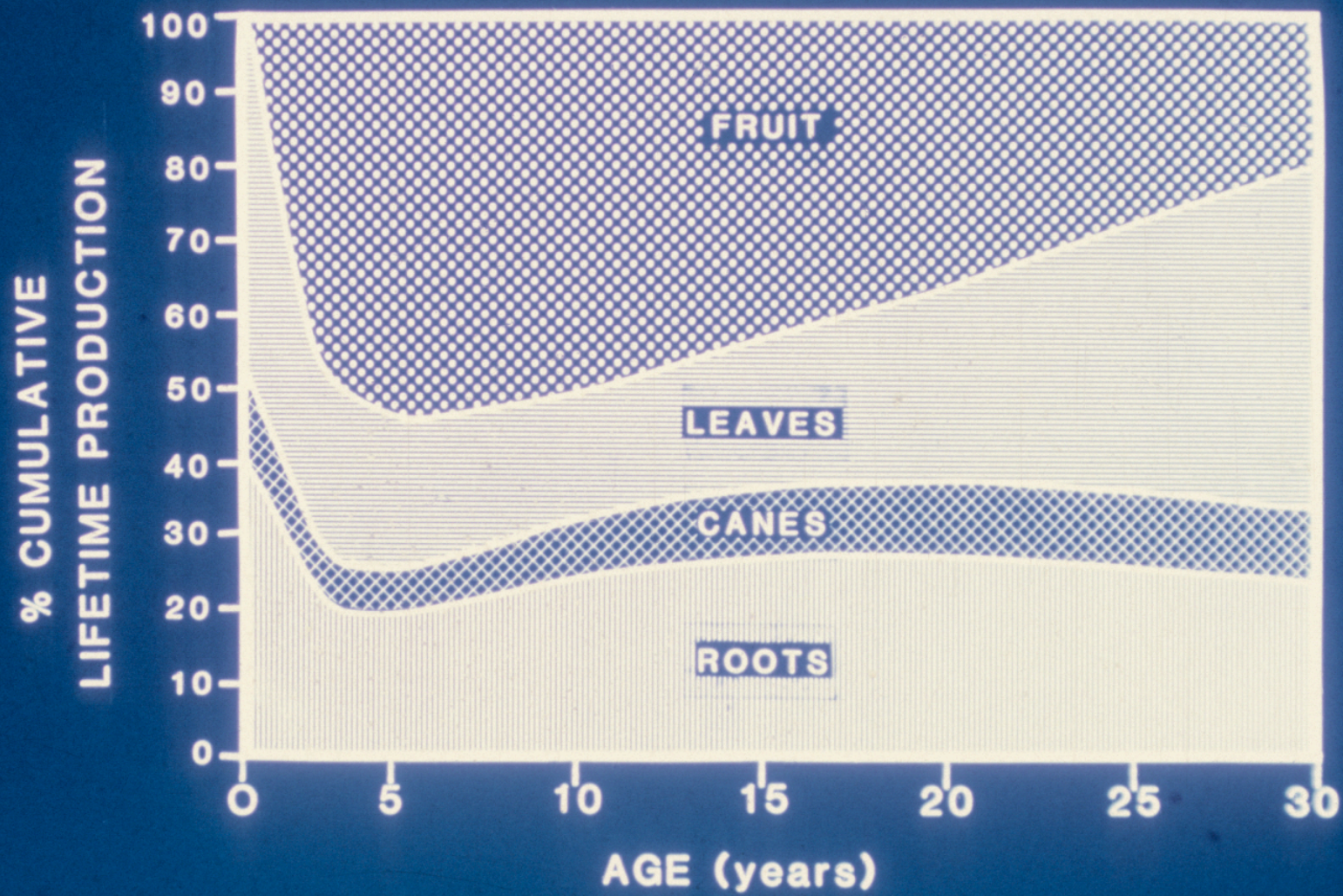


SEASONAL BIOMASS PRODUCTION (kg)  
(VEGETATIVE TISSUES)



SEASONAL BIOMASS PRODUCTION (kg)  
(FRUIT)







# Unpruned 'Jersey'

% full sun



Saturation is 30% full sun

# The aging process . . .

- Inefficient conversion of light into fruit
  - More leaves per fruit
  - More wood per fruit
- Less light penetration into the canopy
- Few new canes



## Three fields with different pruning histories

Pruning history	None	Regular	Irregular
Yield (g)	7.31	7.75	7.16
Canes/bush	55.3	35.8	48.5
% small canes	13	29	37

At least 20% of wood can be removed  
without affecting yield

% large canes removed	% medium canes removed	Yield (g/plant)	Berry weight (g)
0	0	1308	0.83
20	0	1483	0.87
40	0	1308	0.95
0	20	1575	0.92
0	40	968	0.91
20	20	1436	0.92



Before pruning





Before pruning





After pruning



# How to prune . . .

- Use by-pass or electric pruners and cut as close to the ground as possible.
- High pruning cuts will not stimulate bud break from the crown. Buds from the sides of canes are weaker.





# Ideal bush

- One or two canes of each age class, up to 8 years old







# When to prune?

- Late winter is best
  - Can assess winter injury
  - Carbohydrate balance is better



Regular, annual or biennial pruning  
is required . . .





In old plantings, take out about 20% of the largest canes each year





