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Effect of pruning intensity on the blueberry productivity and fruit quality

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Pruning is crucial to balance productivity and fruit quality in blueberry, and also stimulates growth of new canes. It has different goals depending on intensity applied. In Latvia pruning techniques adapted to local conditions and suitable in blueberries blueberry production previously has not been studied. The aim of this study were to compare the effects of pruning intensity: **slight** — 25 % of canes removed, **moderate** —50–75 % of canes and **removed all canes** (100 %) on ten years old blueberry cultivars 'Bluecrop', 'Duke', 'Patriot', 'Chippewa', 'Northland' and 'Northblue', to evaluate their effect on yield, one berry weight, new canes formation, phenological stage and also pruning post-effect on yield. The experiment was established in 2002 in southern Latvia and in 2012 blueberry bushes were pruned. The results of the study showed that the fruit harvest season of 100 % removed canes plants began five to seven days later than other variants even two years after pruning. There were an average strong correlation between the pruning intensity and yield, which indicates that the pruning intensity affects the blueberry harvest. The higher yields obtained from the bush at 25 % pruning intensity. Pruning stimulated the growth of new canes for all cultivars.

Keywords: *Vaccinium corymbosum*, growth, half-high bush blueberries, harvesting, moderate pruning, slight pruning, yield

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