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In the orchard during winter

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February is characterized by warm spells reminiscent of spring, but also by cold snaps which, although rare, bring temperatures typical for the winter months. The monthly amplitude of temperature fluctuations is relatively large.

Fruit trees and shrubs have already received the required amount of cold /sum of sub-zero temperatures/ and therefore are passing from a phase of deep dormancy into a phase of forced dormancy. This means that their vital functions are intensifying. With every longer warm period during the month, their hardening may decrease and any subsequent sharp cold spells may potentially damage them. Hazel, cornelian cherry and apricot react

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the fastest to the February warmings, followed by peach, myrobalan plum and sweet cherry. The differences between individual cultivars are also significant. Therefore, monitor regularly the condition of the fruit trees in your garden. If you establish frost damage affecting only part of the fruit buds, the production pruning should be lighter than normal. Thus, more healthy buds will remain in the crown and the yield will not be affected. This is particularly important for peach and apricot. When 100% of the fruit buds are damaged, heavy shortening pruning of the fruiting wood is recommended, so that the crown can recover better during the vegetation period and the traces of frost damage can be completely eliminated.

During this month, pruning of trees continues in order to remove infected branches and twigs affected by powdery mildew on apple, peach and blackcurrant, by leaf curl on peach, and by blossom blight (early brown rot) on stone fruits – apricot, sweet cherry, sour cherry, plum. Uproot stunted and dried trees to reduce the population density of bark beetles. Collect and burn all pruned branches and twigs, the gathered mummified fruits and scraped egg rings, eggs and caterpillar nests, as well as the remaining fallen leaves.

In issue 1/2018 of the journal “Plant Protection” you can read more information.