



## A FRUITFUL GARDEN SERIES “Pruning and Harvest”

### Production Notes

**Summary:** Callers call in with their gardening questions to speak to a gardening expert. Questions and answers can be related to our spiritual lives.

**Characters:** Emcee  
Shaneil Sperry, Gardening Expert on a call-in radio show  
Caller #1 “Mary” - new gardener  
Caller #2 “Laura” - heavy accent, some language difficulties

**Setting:** Chair and phone for Caller #1 and Caller #2. The gardening expert, Shaneil Sperry sits at a desk with her phone. Decorate with plants.

**Timing:** 5 minutes

### SCRIPT

**Emcee:** Good evening listeners. Welcome to WGod’s airing of tonight’s “GET PLANTED” broadcast with our very own master gardener and horticultural growth expert, Shaneil Sperry! Tonight’s broadcast is coming to you live from our studios at Peachtree Plaza, located smack-dab in the middle of Plano, Texas. We’ll be taking your calls and your gardening questions and quandaries. Our show is sponsored by Ferti-Gro--become the envy of your neighborhood by using the product you need for a healthy lawn and garden! Ferti-Gro comes in convenient liquid or granules.

**Emcee:** We have our first caller, and we’ve all come to know Mary, the tomato lady. We’ve been following her weekly updates. What’s your question for Shaneil, Mary?

**Mary:** Hi, Shaneil.

**Shaneil:** You nothing if not consistent, Mary! How does your garden grow?

**Mary:** Shaneil, it’s thanks to you that my garden has made it this far. And guess what? My plants seem to be thriving. They’re leafy and bushy, and they have spread out everywhere.

**Shaneil:** Mary, it sounds like you have some untamed tomato plants. Tomato plants are prone to making too much leafy growth. When that happens, their nutrients are spread thin. We want those tomato plants of yours to produce lots of fruit--not lots of leaves. And that means we need to prune them and train them.

**Mary:** That sounds suspiciously like more time in the hot sun for me!

**Shaneil:** I told you that gardening was a commitment. Plants that spread themselves out like that may produce fruit, but it will be small and immature.

**Mary:** Why is that?

**Shaneil:** Because the nutrients that were supposed to go to the production of the tomato have instead gone to produce leaves. It's green and showy; It looks like it is thriving, but looks can be deceiving.

**Mary:** What can I do? Since you can't see my plants, how can you know what needs to be done?

**Shaneil:** Here's what I do know, Mary, Mary quite contrary. You have suckers.

**Mary:** Suckers?? Excuse me?

**Shaniel:** Those suckers are sucking the tomato-producing life out of your plant. You need to address this issue immediately. There are side shoots, or "suckers" growing between the main stem and the various branches. These suckers can appear great and leafy, but you need to pinch them off! That is a form of pruning.

**Mary:** Pinch them off? That sounds like it would hurt my tender plants.

**Shaniel:** Suckers are a continual problem, and you need to pinch off those sucker every time you see them. They are robbing you of your plentiful harvest.

**Mary:** Okay, I will be diligent with those suckers.

**Shaniel:** And there is another danger to those plants sprawling over the garden. I know you had stakes, but did you continue to encourage upward growth by tying them further to the stakes as the plant grew taller? By doing that you can keep the tomatoes off the ground. The tomatoes will ripen faster and be less prone to disease and insects if they are off the ground. Just this little extra care, pruning and training, will make a huge difference in the outcome! And have you seen tomato blossoms on your plants?

**Mary:** My plants have hundreds of blossoms, and little tomatoes are already showing up on some of them.

**Shaniel:** That's a good sign. But it is imperative that you prune and train the plants at this stage or else you will get fruit, but it won't come to maturity.

**Mary:** So I will go get rid of these suckers, and I'm good to go?

**Shaniel:** Well, you will have to keep a watchful eye on your plants. Suckers develop regularly, and don't forget, they will suck the nutrients that need to get to those developing tomatoes.

**Mary:** Okay, I understand. I'll stay on those suckers.

**Shaniel:** It won't be long until you begin to harvest those tomatoes, Mary. Go to our Facebook page, and share a photo of your plentiful harvest when it comes in! I'm proud of you Mary for your perseverance and patience. Your dedication to gardening is admirable, and maybe next year you can add peppers and beans and okra and

**Mary:** Uh...I'm gonna be good with tomatoes, Shaniel. Thanks for all your help.

**Emcee:** Shaniel, I have another caller on line two. I think you might know who it is...

**Laura:** Hola, Shaniel. It's me, Laura. I'm learning so much by watching your radio show each week. But I'm a little confused. I didn't know that we could grow suckers. If I plant a little dum-dum, how long until it grows into a Tootsie Pop tree?

**Shaniel:** Oh, Laura. Make sure you unwrap the dum-dum before you plant the sucker stick side up. I have found that the blue raspberry DumDums germinate more quickly and grow better in Texas than either cherry or green apple. Be sure not to over water, or they will get too syrupy and stick to everything. Good luck, Laura.

**Emcee:** Well, that wraps up a very interesting show today. If we've learned anything, we've learned plants need pruning and training to produce a harvest. Suckers suck the life-giving nutrients away from the blossoms and fruit. Pinching off suckers may seem painful, but it is the way to a more fruitful harvest. And a plant can't be allowed to grow its own way--it needs training in addition to pruning! Yes, a fruitful garden takes work and care, and the Gardener must provide pruning and direction to the growing plant. The plant doesn't know what is best--the Gardener must be in control--then fruitfulness is assured! Thank you for tuning in tonight to Shaneil Sperry's "GET PLANTED."