

Young Pistachio Tree Training Trial Field Tour

March 17, 2026

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Kings and Yolo County ongoing trials

Kings Site #1 (2016)- Lost Hills on PG1 rootstock (18' x 16')

Kings Site #2 (2017)- Lost Hills on PG1 rootstock (18' x 16')

Yolo Site (2018)- Golden Hills on UCB1 seedling rootstock (19' x 16')

Training system treatments

Conventional (wooden stakes)- Pistachio Production Manual 

- Trees tied tightly to wooden stakes
- After first scion growing season trees headed at 43"
- Three or four laterals were selected at the end of second dormant
- Lateral shoots were allowed to grow 15" and then tipped at 12-14"
- All laterals were dormant pruned to 12-14"
- Lateral shoots were tied and propped apart as needed

Modified central leader (5/16" x 8' metal stakes 

- Trees headed at 62" at end of first dormant season
- Dormant pruning only- no in season tipping
- No shoots were removed but all shoots that grew more than 18-24" were pruned
- In addition, the most central shoot was tipped and retrained to a central leader and left longer than all other shoots

Untrained (3/8" x 10' metal stakes) 

- No heading or pruning- only limbs that were too low were removed but this was done on all treatments

Cessation of pruning treatments

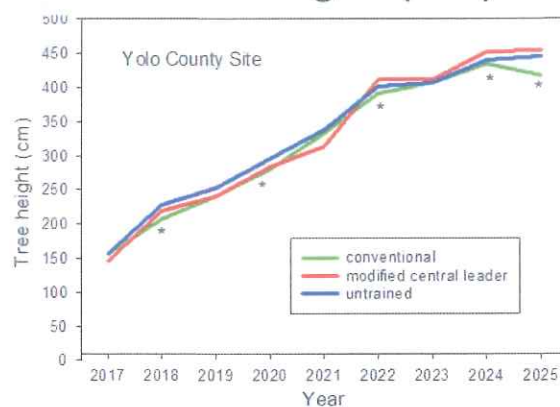
- Conventional- continually pruned 
- Conventionally pruned but stopped in January 2022 
- Conventionally pruned but stopped in January 2023 

Photos of trees taken March 15, 2026

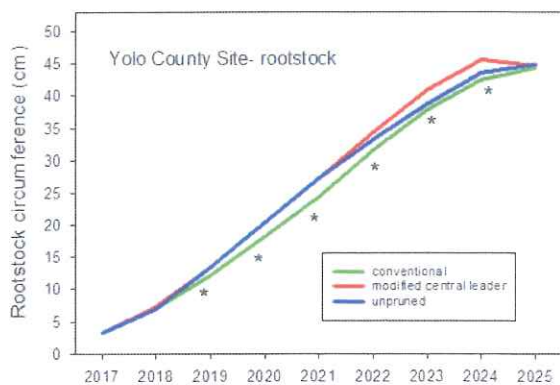


Tree growth characteristics through 2025

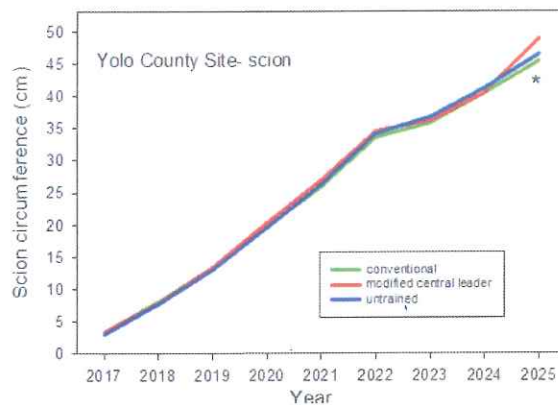
Tree height (cm)



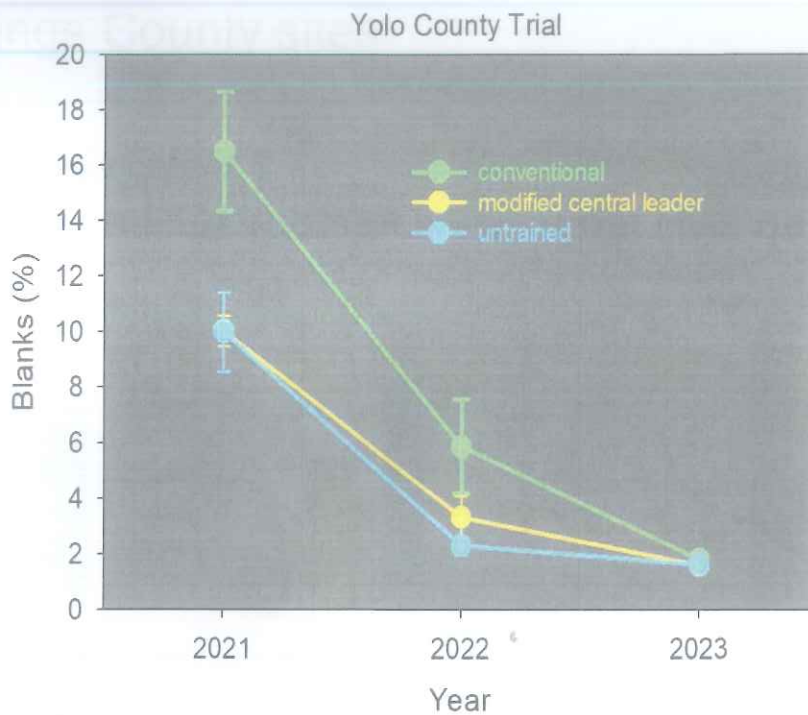
Rootstock growth (cm)



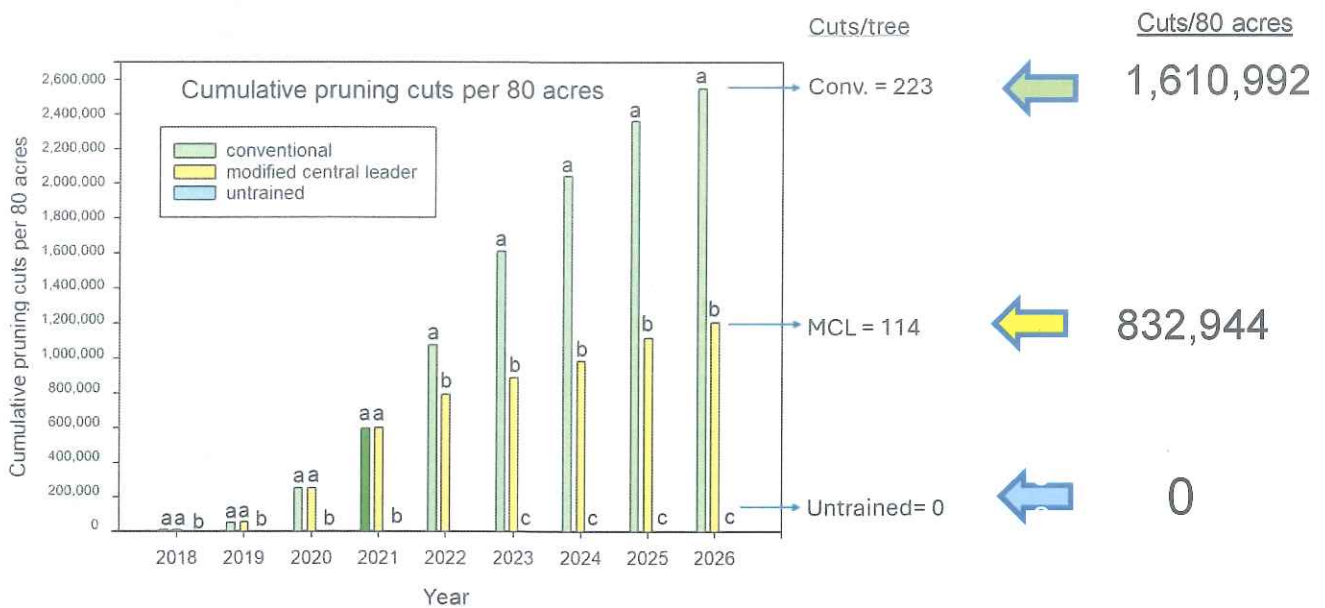
Scion growth (cm)



Percent blank nuts by treatment on first mechanical harvest 2021, 2022, and 2023



Cumulative number of pruning cuts per 80 acres for 2018-2026



Cumulative yield by year and treatment for Kings County sites

Kings Site #1 Lost Hills on PG1 rootstock

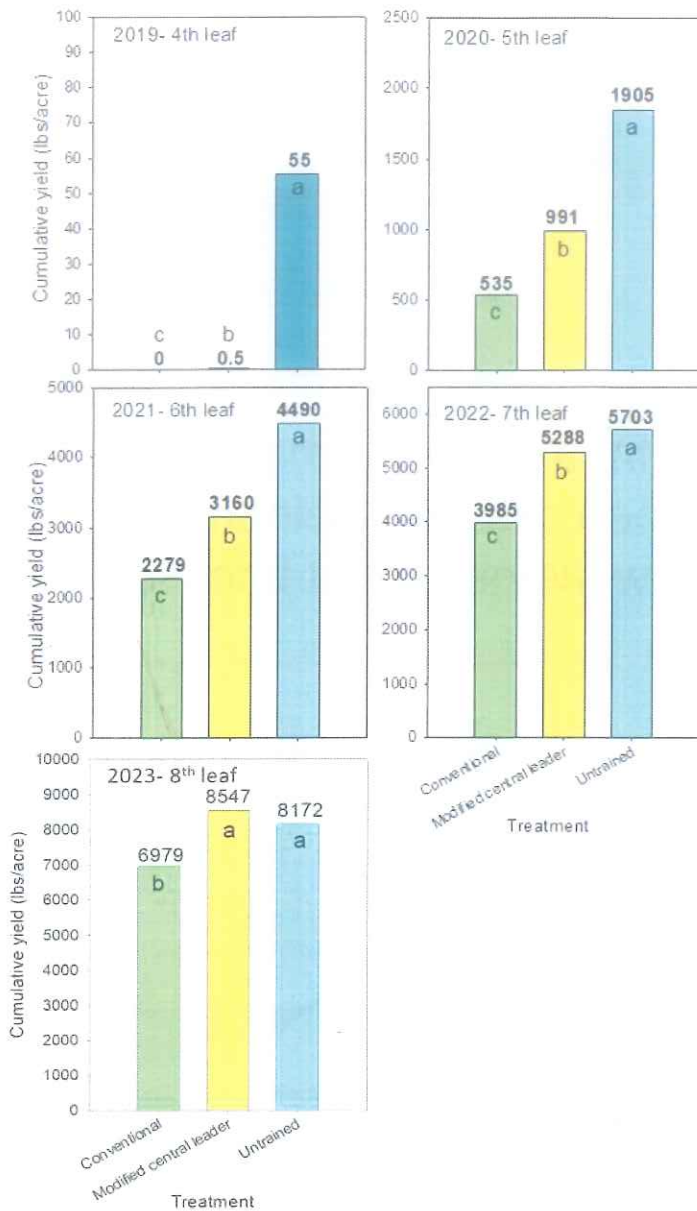


Fig. 9. Cumulative yield by year and treatment for Kings Site #1.

Kings Site #2 Lost Hills on PG1 rootstock

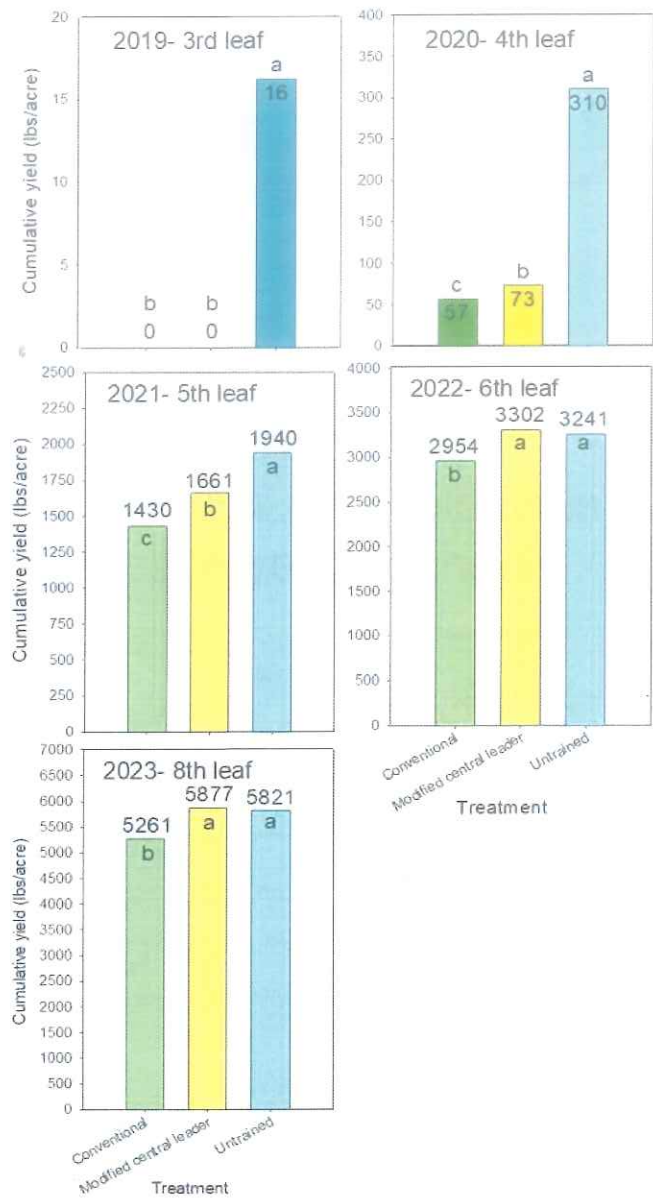
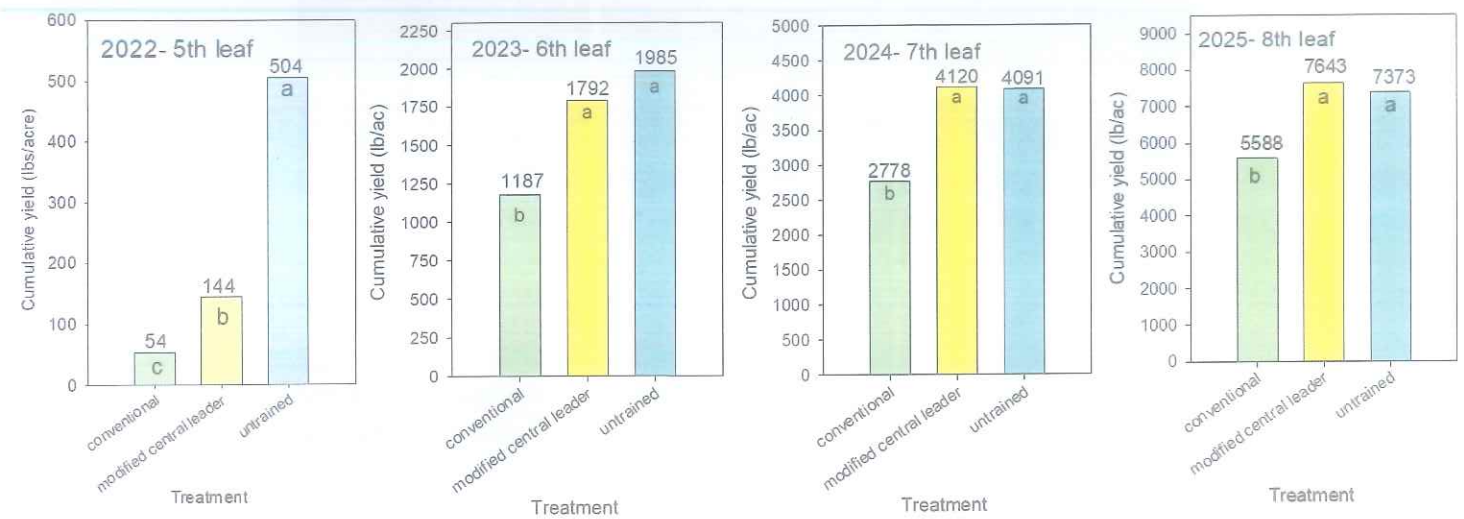


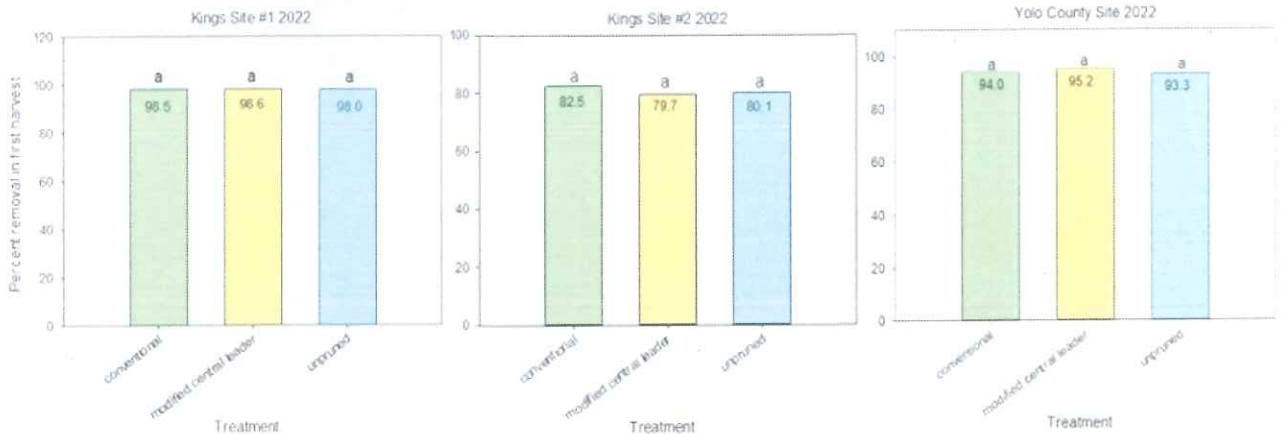
Fig. 10. Cumulative yield by year and treatment for Kings Site #2.

Cumulative yield by year and treatment for Yolo County site

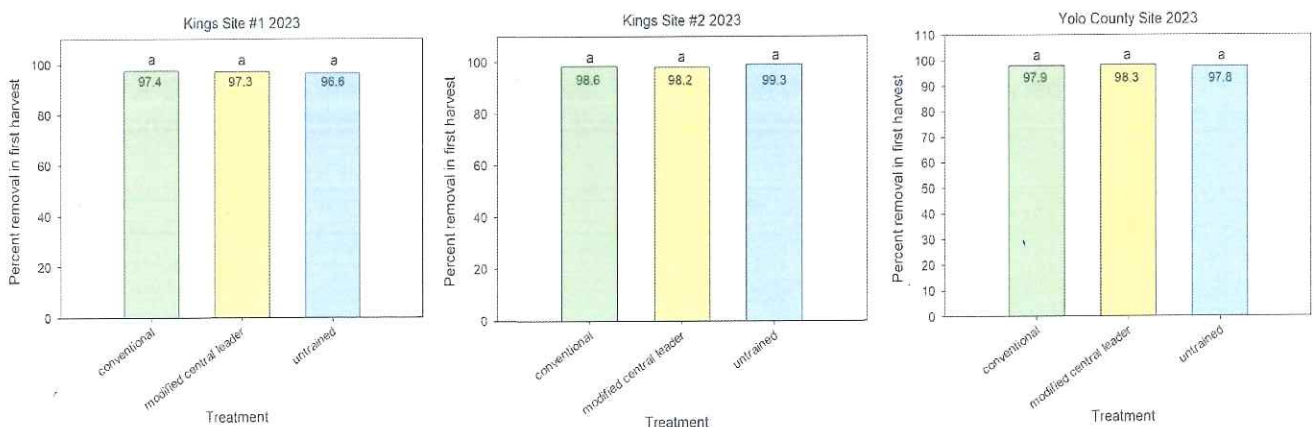


No difference in percent crop removal from first mechanical harvest each year at Kings and Yolo sites (second hand harvest was done each year to check)

2022



2023

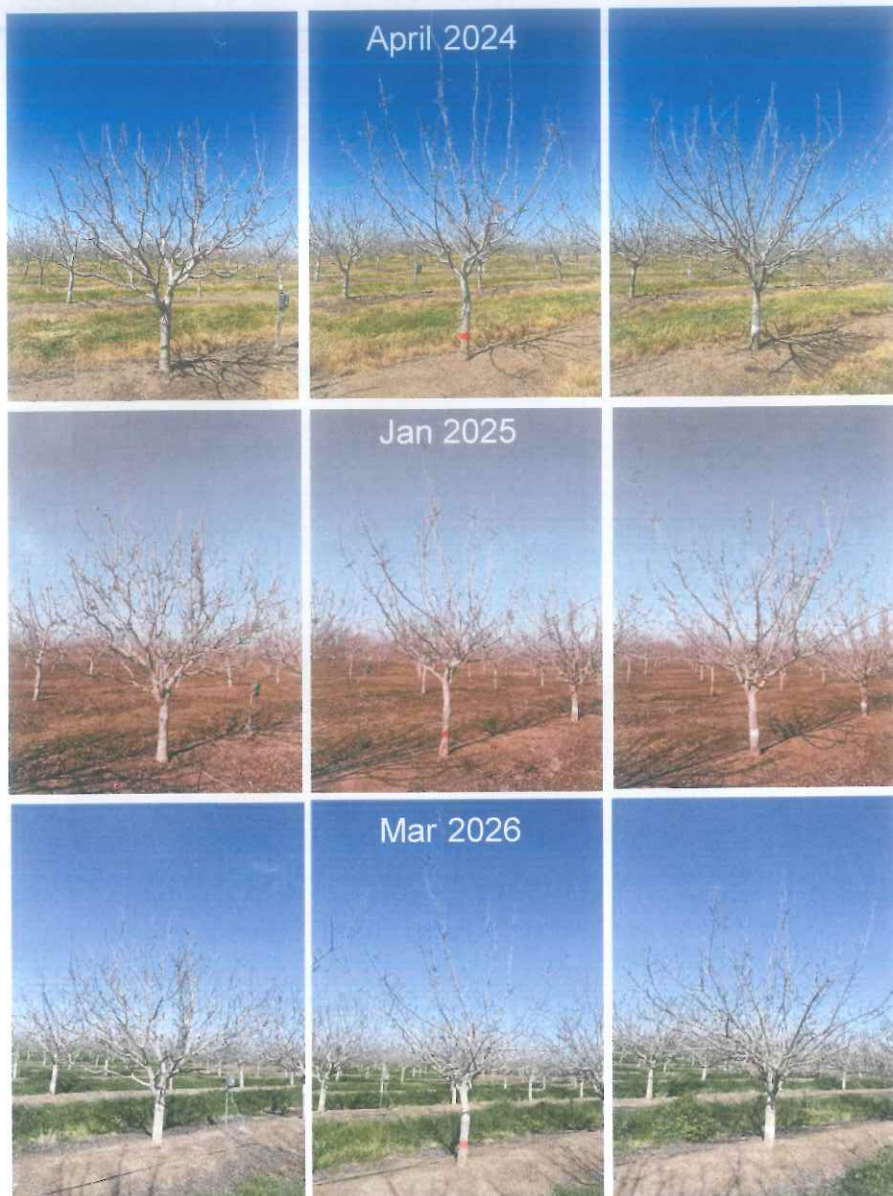


Cessation of pruning trial at Yolo site

Pruned continuously

Ceased Jan. 2023
(after 5th leaf)

Ceased Jan. 2022
(after 4th leaf)



Pruned continuously
Cumulative yield to 2024 = 2778 lbs/ac

Pruning stopped 2023
3485 lbs/ac

Pruning stopped 2022
3957 lbs/ac

Cessation of pruning trial- Golden Hills tree were conventionally trained until the 6th leaf (on left). The middle trees were pruned conventionally until the 5th leaf and then pruning stopped. The trees on the right were pruned conventionally until the 4th leaf and then pruning stopped.

Percent savings of pruning cuts for different cessation of pruning dates

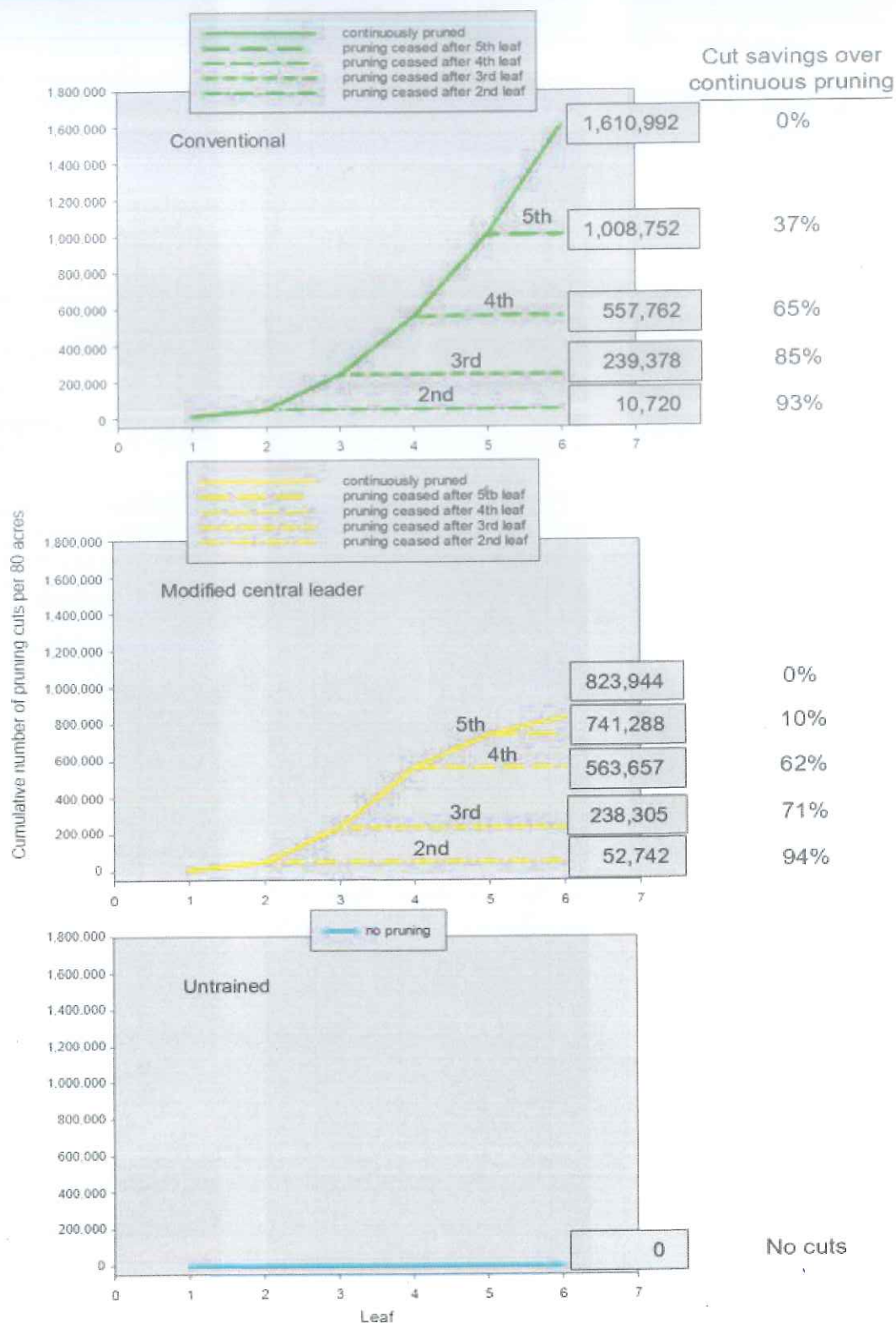


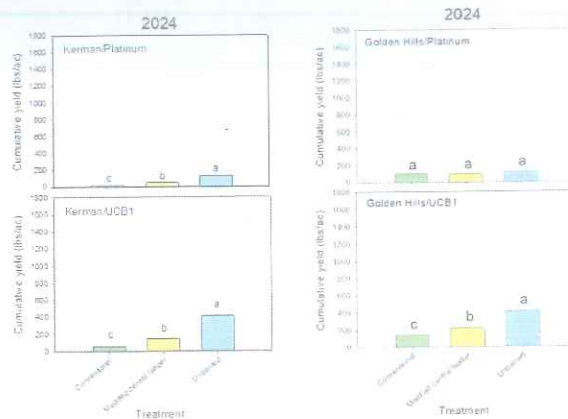
Fig. 17. Number of pruning cuts (and percent savings) for different cessation of pruning regimes on conventional and modified central leader training systems.

One photo each year for untrained tree to
show variability in development with time

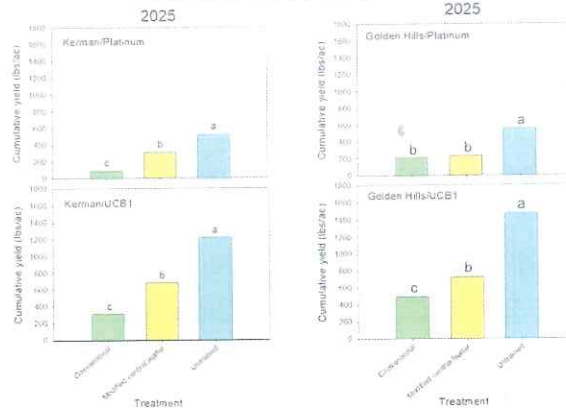


Similar younger trial at Westside Field Station with Kerman and Golden Hills on Platinum and UCB1 seedling

Westside cumulative yield 2024



Westside cumulative yield 2025



Preliminary conclusions

Both modified central leader and untrained treatments are showing benefits

Better rootstock growth

Lower pruning costs

Earlier yield potential

Less blanks in early years

Stronger tree structure

Cessation of pruning trials suggest there may be other alternatives, particularly with the modified central leader system (these trials are ongoing at Westside Field Station in Fresno County)