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Espalier pruning

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be sprayed with pesticides. Check with area nurseries for specific products and spraying schedules.

Thornton recommends planting fruit trees early — “as soon as the snow clears” — and pruning them immediately to 36 inches.

“If they don’t do that, there’s too much top and not enough root and it ends up stunting out,” he said.

Espaliered trees take several years to train, and pruning begins at planting. Each subsequent year, added pruning builds the basic structure as branches are tied to supports, usually lattice or wire that can later be removed.

Mature plantings usually require only moderate pruning during the annual dormant season and a run-through in August to remove unwanted shoot growth.

Lori Hall Steele is a local freelance writer.

Nature experts’ favorite areas

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bringing larger birds (raptors such as hawks and eagles) in,” he added.

Karner also praised the beauty of the shoreline. “These are great places for inspiration. It’s the pine tree Caribbean, right here.”

For a particularly unique spring experience, explore Lost Leg Bog, suggested Karner. Lost Leg Bog is a couple of miles North of Glen Arbor on the right side of M-22, across from Thoreson Road. “It’s best before the mosquitoes hatch in the summer,” he said.

A peaceful, soft environment, the bog is home to a variety of insect-eating plants and cranber-

ries. “I love the budding out of the new needles of the tamarack. The cones are crimson red against the green of beautiful needles. With the cranberries, the bog is all red and green.”

Anywhere in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is an exciting place to visit in the spring, according to Rupert.

“There’s something to see everywhere you look, things to see throughout the day,” she said. “Animals are shedding their coats. A sandhill crane can be heard calling from back in the wetlands. Bald eagles have been flying from Shell Lake to Glen Lake in the late afternoon almost every day.”

“Everything’s got a lot more energy,” said Rupert.

Kristen Counts is a local freelance writer.

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