

Pruning Safety and Tool Maintenance

June 20, 2018

David Coke



Pruning Safety

▶ Safety First

- ▶ Always keep your safety and the safety of those around you as your top priority
- ▶ Have some fun and watch some YouTube videos of people tearing stuff up and hurting themselves, and others, pruning and taking out trees.

▶ Ability

- ▶ Realistically assess your willingness and ability to complete the task safely and properly.
- ▶ Think real hard before you decide to use a ladder, climb into a tree or use a chain saw. We don't do any of these in our volunteer work as Citizen Foresters

Pruning Safety Basics

- ▶ The main thing is to keep your fingers out of the jaws of loppers,
- ▶ Twigs out of your eyes,
- ▶ Saw blades away from your body,
- ▶ Heavy limbs from falling on you,
- ▶ Falling out of a tree or off a ladder,
- ▶ Staying out of electrical wires,
- ▶ Falling over from heat exhaustion,
- ▶ Falling over from dehydration, and
- ▶ Other disasters like these!



Pruning Safety Equipment

▶ Safety Equipment

- ▶ Safety Goggles - falling saw dust chunks can easily get around just glasses. You should use a full wrap goggle like these when using a pole saw or otherwise be using a saw above your head, particularly when there is a wind.
- ▶ Otherwise, safety glasses are advisable anyway.
- ▶ Hard hat, when cutting branches overhead.
- ▶ Sturdy leather footwear.
- ▶ Protective clothing - scratches and sun.
- ▶ Sun Screen.
- ▶ Hearing protection if using powered saws.

Pole Saw Pruning Safety Tactics

- ▶ Pole saw pruning should only be done if well trained or experienced. We do very little pole saw pruning as Citizen Foresters and, even then, only after a good assessment of the skills of the participants and with good supervision.
- ▶ Have a designated person or two as observers looking at how the branch being removed is going to fall and that no one will be affected.
- ▶ Limit the size of branch being removed in any one cut as needed.
- ▶ Think about how the branch might spring back when the smaller, flexible branches first hit the ground. They could push the branch back into you.
- ▶ Cut off weight a bit at a time.
- ▶ Don't stand directly under a branch you are cutting.
- ▶ When using a pole saw, be careful of letting it drop uncontrollably with someone under it.
- ▶ Remember your pruning tools are sharp and powerful, particularly chain saws!

Types of Pruning Tools

▶ Pruners & Loppers

▶ Anvil

▶ Bypass

- ▶ Recommended brands: Corona, Felco, Bahco, Okatsune, A.R.S., Kunde, A.M. Leonard

▶ Saws

▶ Manual/Hand

- ▶ Recommended brands: Silky, Corona, A.R.S., Fanno, Bahco, A.M. Leonard, Stihl, Silky
- ▶ There are saws that cut when pulling them, cut when pushing, and cut both ways.
- ▶ There are different tooth sizes and tooth pitch.

▶ Power (gas/electric)

▶ Specialty

Tool Cleaning

- ▶ It is important to not spread bacteria, fungi, or viruses between trees.
- ▶ Tools should be disinfected between each tree pruned.
- ▶ Disinfectants are typically either chlorine bleach or a phenol based cleaner like Lysol. Follow the product's directions for proper dilution.
- ▶ Both are effective.
- ▶ However, chlorine is corrosive to stainless steel and should not be used on tools made of stainless steel. A phenol based cleaner will not cause problems with stainless.
- ▶ The tools should be thoroughly scrubbed paying particular attention to saw teeth and the joints in loppers - places tree residue can hide out in.
- ▶ The longer the chlorine or the phenol is in contact with the "bug", the more effective it will be in killing it. Take your time when cleaning.
- ▶ A quick rinse in a bucket of water is all that is needed between trees. The remaining chlorine or phenol will not harm the tree as long as it is not excessive.
- ▶ When cleaning your tools before beginning work and your final cleaning before putting your tools away, your tools should be well scrubbed, rinsed, and dried primarily to protect the tools from corrosion.

Physical Exertion and Heat

- ▶ Remember to pay attention to your level of physical exertion and stay within your limits.
- ▶ Periodically monitor your heart rate and ensure you are not exceeding your maximum target heart rate.
- ▶ Maximum Target Heart Rate = $220 - \text{your age}$.
- ▶ Stay hydrated. Drink water regularly.
- ▶ Take breaks about once per hour or two to allow for muscle recovery.
- ▶ If you've pushed too hard, don't be embarrassed to sit out a while, but stay engaged as you can while lowering your exertion. Also don't hesitate to ask for help if you've gone too far.

Getting Away With Stuff

- ▶ We all know we can get away with stuff and not get hurt, not hurt someone else, or cause harm to the organism we are working on.
- ▶ That said, when we don't get away with not doing something right, the harm can be significant.
- ▶ Please, please, please prepare yourself for the work you are about to undertake, think about what you are doing, take your time in performing the work, stay focused on safety, and follow the proper practice in sterilizing your tools.