

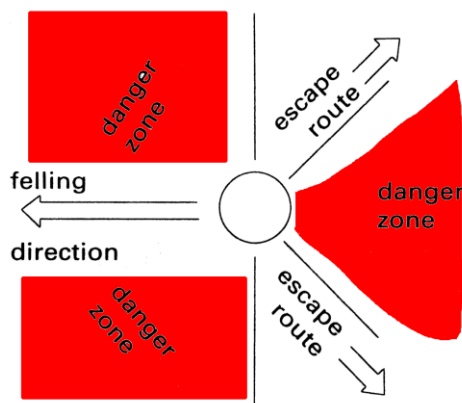
FELLING

Study the tree and its surroundings closely to determine which way to fell it. Assess the distribution of the weight on the crown and the space available to drop it into. Plan to avoid obstacles - particularly overhead cables, fences, old stumps and other trees.

Note also the wind, strength and direction. If the tree crown is swaying heavily don't fell.

Before starting to cut, make sure that the escape route is clear, check there is no-one in the danger zones. If two people are involved, decide who will keep hold of the saw.

If a path crosses the area, warning notices should be put up and hazard tape used to cordon areas off. Responsible members of the group should be employed to warn passers-by.



Clear the area around the base of the tree before starting to fell.

When the tree starts to fall, step back down the escape route, watching the tree.

If it falls towards you, don't run, but stay reasonably close to the trunk and step sideways to evade it.

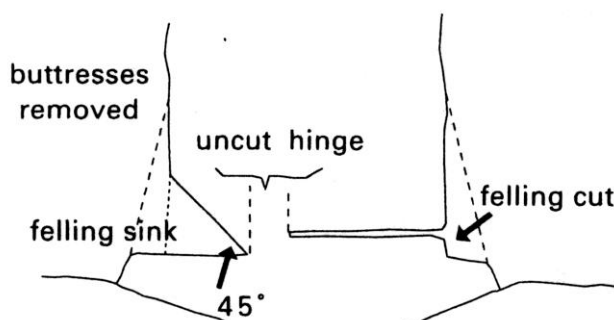
Watch out for kickback and splitting timber.

On slopes, fell uphill if possible.

After felling, tidy up and leave a low, neat stump.

FELLING LARGE TREES

Cut away any buttress at the base of the tree.



FELLING LARGE TREES (contd.)

It is often easiest to cut the felling sink (bird's beak) by sawing the horizontal cut, then axing away the wood. It is easier this way to make the two cuts meet exactly and make the sides of the hinge parallel.

The felling cut should be parallel to and a few centimetres above the back of the sink. The height difference makes a step which reduces the likelihood of the butt bouncing back.

The felling sink (bird's beak) should be 20-30% of the tree's diameter. Try to get this right — you will find it helps.

Give an adequate hinge of 3cm minimum to control the speed and direction of fall. A hinge that is thicker at one end will cause the tree to twist towards that end as it falls.

FELLING SMALL TREES

Trees up to 8cm (3¼ inches) diameter can be cut straight through.

Trees up to 15cm (6 inches) diameter should be undercut on the front about a third of the way through, before the felling cut is made from the back.

PROBLEMS

Trees heavily weighted in one direction -

Do not try to remove one or more limbs to balance the tree, this is for professionals. You can usually assume the tree will fall the way it is leaning, no matter what precautions you take.

A tree weighted away from the intended direction of fall must be pulled back with force sufficient to overcome its entire weight. Volunteers pulling on a rope will not be able to do it and it is dangerous. Don't do it.

Dead trees -

Dead trees are liable to give way unexpectedly or to shed limbs; therefore they are best left standing and handled by a qualified expert. Check for dead biomass on healthy trees. If the tree isn't heavily rotten, watch for signs of rot such as pulpy or black sawdust, or liquid. Carry on, but leave a larger hinge and work slowly.

Hung-up trees -

If a tree gets hung-up, deal with it immediately. Never leave a site with a hung up tree. To untangle a small tree pull the butt away from the stump. If it is still attached, cut it clear or use a felling lever. It is often easier to do this with two people but agree beforehand exactly how you will do it.

To shift medium sized trees, get one or two stout poles. Lever up the butt and slide it a few cms. Repeat this until the tree falls clear.

Never try cutting sections off the trunk.

SNEDDING

Snedding of small branches is best done with a billhook or loppers. Use a bowsaw for thicker branches.

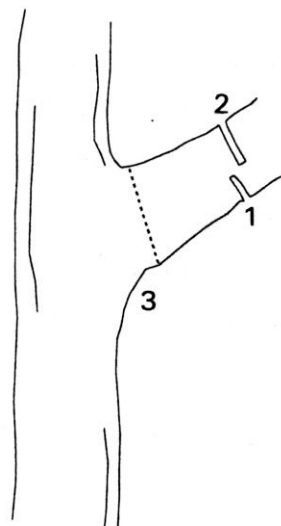
Cut from the butt of the tree towards the tip.

When using a billhook, for safety, stand to one side of the tree whilst cutting branches off the other. This leaves the tree trunk between the billhook and the person snedding. Observe all billhook safety rules.

Sned as close to the trunk as possible to produce clean logs which are easier to transport and handle.

Look for branches taking some of the weight of the tree. The tree may move as the branch breaks. Roll a tree to take the weight off the branch before snedding it.

PRUNING



1. undercut first

2. then cut down from the top

3. finally trim the stump off flush to the branch collar

PRUNING (contd.)

Never leave a stub when pruning as it will die back and allow rot into the heart of the tree.

Small branches - 5cm (2 inches) can be cut straight through. Cut with one hand, taking the weight of the branch with the other.

Larger branches - cut in three stages to prevent the branches splitting or the bark tearing.

The undercut should be about one-third of the way through, extended to cut the bark around half of the branches diameter.

This information is believed to be correct but does not obviate the need for further enquiries as appropriate.

This is not a comprehensive statement of all safety procedures to ensure the health and safety of all users.

The information and advice shown above may assist you in gaining National Vocational Qualifications in Environmental Conservation with BTCV.

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