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This article received from Dr. George Blake
of the University of Minnesota
Taken from Minnesota Superintendents Hole Note

HOW TO BUTCHER A TREE

Before you begin to butcher a tree you need the following equipment: A pair of tree climbing spikes. The spikes on these are about 3" long and really help you climb. If you have not used them much, you can really impress your customers how dangerous tree butchering is with blood coming down your legs from gaffing yourself with the spikes. Spikes are also ideal for scarring a tree. This shows your customer how high you had to climb up into the tree.

Next, you need a machete so you can cut off the suckers. These are the little branches that grow off the main branches of the tree. The machete works well in cutting these off and also does a good job of scarring the tree so the customer can see how many suckers you have cut off. It also works well in cutting up your leg while you are climbing; again to show the customer how dangerous the job is.

The next thing you need is a combination pruner and pole saw at least 25 feet long. This makes it easy to use. The pruner on one side works well in pruning while the saw on the other side is scarring the tree at the same time and vice versa when you are using the saw. If the combination pruner and pole saw is 25 feet long or longer you may break a few second-story windows and if you're lucky, the owners may pay you to repair them.

Now a word about the real art of butchering. Always make a cut from the top only. This will cause the branch to rip off back on the bottom of the branch and down the tree as it falls. You can paint this wound with a water base paint. The tree will look good, but it will not prevent disease or stop insects in any way. If you are lucky the tree will die and you'll get a removal job.

Never cut a branch next to the main trunk. Always leave a 6" to 12" stump. This will make less brush to haul away and the owner will eventually get tired of looking at them and maybe call you back to cut them off. More money.

One final word. Never rope a branch; just let them fall. Be sure to let the owner know you repair fences and replace damaged sod. For a price, of course.

Now a few words about your own personal safety. Never hire anyone to help you when you are butchering. In this way you will not have to share the profits. If you play your cards right the homeowner may feel sorry for you and offer his help.

Never use a rope and saddle when butchering as it will hamper your movements in the tree. Also, you

could accidentally cut it if you are using a chain saw in the tree.

Always use a ladder that is too short for the tree as this will keep you in shape shimmying up and down the tree.

A word about chain saws. Always use the chain saw with one hand only as this will show the homeowner how brave you are. Also, always cut towards yourself with the saw. Again this will prove to the homeowner how dangerous the job is when you cut yourself. Never call out the power company to drop power lines if these are in the way of the branches you are going to cut off. Just cut the branches off and if they break the power line, they break it.

If you follow these instructions you will have no trouble at all butchering a tree, but it is wise to keep your health, accident and life insurance policies up to date. Just remember to hire a competent tree trimmer to trim your own tree.

I just want to say I am in no way responsible for personal injury or property damage when my instructions are followed.

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