WTT Mailbox

Says It's Safer to Notch Tree

I have just read with interest the article, "Tricks of the Tree Trade," in your Feb. 1966 issue. I certainly wish to take issue with the author, as he is teaching a method of falling a tree that is positively the most dangerous and foolhardy thing a tree cutter could do. Your author calls this a hinge cut and two diagrams and one photo indicate falling a tree with a back cut only. This would get you fired in my organization as a serious violation of safety rules.

It is practical to use a thick hinge to slow the fall of a tree or to make it hang on the stump, but every tree over six inches in diameter should be notched first.

A chain saw operator that attempts to fall a tree with a back cut is placing his person in serious jeopardy. The minute a cut like this is opened, there is the possibility the tree will split up and the butt will shoot back, sometimes at tremendous speed. I know of two fatal accidents in this area that happened in just this fashion.

I would like to suggest as a first-class safety rule: "Never fall a tree over six inches diameter without first cutting a notch."

I enjoy your magazine very much and am very happy to see that it includes articles of interest to the arborist.

James W. Taylor

Newburgh, N. Y.

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Author Bryan's (Tricks of the Tree Trade, WTT Feb. 1966) first day in any tree crew in this area would be his last day.

Casual reflection brings to mind three men killed in this area by barber chairing of trees or limbs cut by his hinge method. The list of property damage claims from this same cause is fantastic. Our crews can "gentle" a tree down on a properly made hinge incorporated in a felling cut, but our own safety standards absolutely rule out the method described by Bryan.

The unfortunate part of the article is that some person who is unaware of the danger of Bryan's method might try it since an expert recommended it.

Robert C. Gardner

Manager
Abalene Spray Service, Inc.
Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

We asked for author Bryan's comments to add to this exchange of ideas covering tree felling practices. He answered:

Concerning the "kickback" hazard mentioned in letters from alert tree men, we too have long been aware of this danger. But it is a hazard not only when the "hinge" is used but also with a "fall cut." A tree which is easily split, such as an old hollow Red Oak, which is leaning against the cut or which is tilted with a "pull," is liable to kick back at the butt. And a fall cut is no insurance against a kickback, though in many cases it may prevent it. But the most dangerous kickback is from a fall cut, because the tree will be falling faster, and the kick-back will be sharper.

We feel our article dealt ade-

quately with these matters. Reread it and note the paragraphs stressing the need for knowledge of trees and the qualities of their wood. Also note the types of trees you can "hinge."

We "hinge" a majority of trees, and have for years. Even when we have to "top out" first and lower a part of the trunk, we still "hinge" the remaining snag to lessen the impact of its fall, when this is a consideration. There is no other way to lay a tree down so exactly, and with such ease—with no flip-flop.

Granted, we do not have a man sawing with a power saw on the tree when we pull the tree over. And when we use the fall cut we put a rope in the treetop and pull it over if there is any danger whatsoever that it might split and kick back. We cut until we think the tree can be pulled over. Then we pull. Sometimes we have to go back and cut some more. But we "clear" before the tree starts to fall. Any other procedure is a prime violation of safety rules in our book. Of course we do not try to hinge every tree. Our article on this method was to emphasize the usefulness of the "hinge."

Re: Florida Endothall Release

I would like to call to your attention the article "New Herbicides Show Promise for Southern Naiad Control," which appears on page 23 of the January, 1966, issue of *Weeds Trees and Turf*. The article implies that endothall is toxic to fish, which is not true. In the experiment referred to, the amine salt of endothall, which is toxic to fish, was used. However, there are several other formulations of endothall which are effective for aquatic weed control and are not toxic to fish.

This clearly illustrates that it is necessary in aquatic weed research to be specific as to what formulation was used in the experiment.

Robert D. Blackburn

Research Botanist
Crops Research Division, ARS
U. S. Dept. of Agriculture
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.