

Make your mower a marshmallow

Protect your trees from front-end mowers. Reducing mower-inflicted damage to trees, especially young specimens, is a continuing concern for grounds superintendents and horticulturists. While much research has been devoted to observing how a tree heals after wounding and applying preventative measures to the tree itself, an old tire and a couple of tools can turn your trunk-chopping mower into a marshmallow — almost.

Remove the side walls from an old, non-radial car or truck tire. Lay the inside of the tread against the steel guard of your mower that protects the cutting blades and drill 1/4-inch holes through the rubber and guards. But before drilling, be sure to position the holes above or below the cutting plane of the blades. Otherwise the bolt heads may hit the blades and ruin their edge.



Don't forget to place strips on the sides of your cutting guard too, as it doesn't always take a head-on collision to place a good gouge on the tree trunk.

Insert a bolt with the rounded head on the inside of the steel guard and attach the appropriate washers and screws. After tightening down the nut, cut off any excess bolt that protrudes beyond the nut and shave the end smooth.

To cover the nut, use epoxy glue - it can be purchased in ribbon-like form. After kneading the ribbon, you'll end up with a ball of putty-like material. Apply generously, and after hardening it will provide a durable shield between the bolt and tree trunks.

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A quick coat of paint to match your mower, and your staff is ready to tackle those tight areas around trees with relative impunity.



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