Have You a Shade Tree Needing Repairs?

Practical Instructions for the Amateur Tree Owner. How to Remove Decayed Limbs and Restore Wounds in Trunks.

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Removing Branches.

In tree repair work it often becomes necessary to remove certain branches. All small dead or decaying branches should be cut off, since it is through them that the decay may spread to the healthy limbs and trunk. In the case of very large limbs showing evidence of decay, their removal will depend on the extent of the decay and the degree to which the tree will be disfigured by the removal. If the decayed area is extensive and the loss of the limb will not be particularly noticed, it will be simpler to cut off the decayed portion or even the whole limb rather than attempt to restore it. When only a portion of the limb is removed, the cut should be made far enough away from the decayed area to be through sound healthy wood (Fig. 1). In removing an entire branch, large or small, it is important to make the cut close to the base or shoulder of the branch and that the plane of the scar be nearly parallel to the axis of the limb or trunk from which it developed.

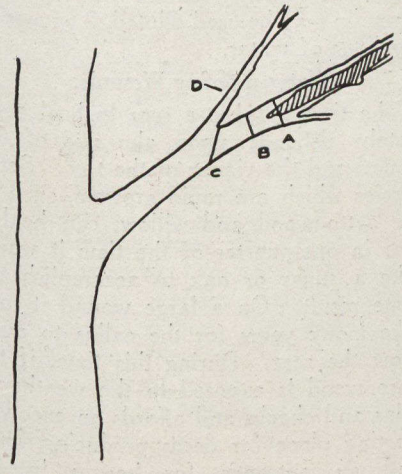

Fig. 1.—In removing a decayed portion of a limb to cut should if possible be made at some point as indicated at C immediately in front of a vigorous young branch D. If the cut is made at A it will not remove all the decay, and if made at B it will leave a projecting stub which will be slow to heal.

If the cut is not so made a projecting stub remains, which is not only unsightly but a source of danger to the tree. Stubs heal very slowly. Often they do not heal at all since they receive little or no food. The leaves which would ordinarily have manufactured the food for this portion, were removed with the portion cut off. Such stubs, therefore, dry out, die, and through them the decay producing fungi get a start. When the cut is made properly at the shoulder of the branch (Fig. 4), there is a better chance for the new growth to develop and cover the wound.

Fig. 3.—Showing injury by stripping bark due to attempting to remove limb with single cut.

When removing a branch care must be taken to avoid causing an unnecessary large wound by splitting. If one were to make a single cut as shown in Fig. 2, the weight of the limb might cause it to split near the end of the cut and serious injury would be caused by the stripping of the bark. There is no special difficulty in removing the small light branches where the weight can be supported with the hand, but in the case of the heavier limbs extra precaution must be taken. One of the best methods of removing a heavy limb is indicated in Fig. 4. Begin by making an under cut about half-way through at 'A' about 10 or 12 inches from the shoulder. Make the next cut close to the shoulder and saw half-way through as shown at "B." Remove the saw and make the third cut on top at "C" a little beyond the under cut "A." Continue this until the limb drops off. Then finish cut "B" and support the stub while doing so.

It might be stated here that the immediate return of vigour and apparent new lease on life that is shown by an old tree after having been repaired is due more often to the pruning it has received than from any other repairs.

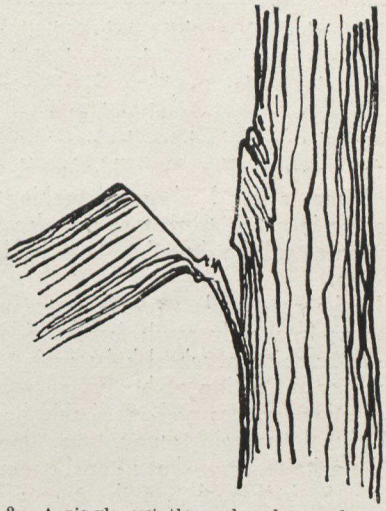

Fig. 2.—A single cut through a heavy branch may strip the bark. Avoid this by making cuts as shown in Fig. 4.

Treatment of Wounds.

All wounds, whether they are caused accidentally or the result of repair work, should receive treatment immediately after they occur. Promptness facilitates the healing and in many cases reduces the

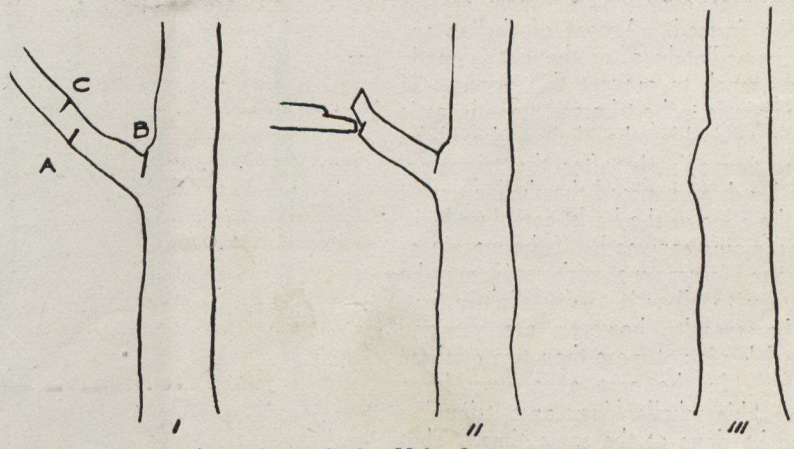

Fig. 4.—Method of removing a heavy limb. Make first cut half way through at (A) on the underside. Make second cut about half way through at (B). Make third cut at (C) until limb drops. First cut (B) and remove stub.