BARKBLASTER TOOL & GIRDLING INFORMATION PACKET

Thank you for taking the time to read about the *BARKBLASTER* girdling tool and girdling in general. We hope the following information is useful and we have provided contact information if you would like to discuss any of the contents provided within this package in greater detail.

THE ADVANTAGES OF GIRDLING

The main advantages of girdling are:

- **Reduces competition:** after girdling has been completed, and the targeted trees have died, the desired crop species benefits from 1) increased sunlight, 2) increased nutrient base, and 3) more availability of existing water table.
- **Alternative to pesticide use:** although the cost of treating an area with pesticides is more cost effective than that of girdling, there are many situations when the use of chemical agents is environmentally a poor treatment choice. Many land types have sensitive ecosystems with streams, wetlands, vegetation, insects, birds, mammals or other factors that will be negatively impacted. Girdling practices do not harm the surrounding environment in any way.
- **Prevents suckering:** when a tree is girdled, the roots die very slowly. This process usually takes 1-3 years to complete depending on the trees health and tree species targeted. When a band of bark is cut from the stem, and the cambium and phloem have been severed completely, the tree cannot send energy produced in the leaves down to the roots. The root system is essentially 'starved' to death.
- **Reduces sun scalding:** sun scalding occurs when the desired crop trees are suddenly exposed to too much sunlight after a brushing treatment with chainsaws or brush saws. This usually stunts their growth for a few years before they eventually recover to the new amount of sunlight available. Certain species, like spruce, are more susceptible than others as well. With Girdling, the tree dies slowly, allowing a gradual increase of light.
- **Eliminates slash problems:** depending on the amount to cut, slash from brushing operations can cause damage to the smaller crop species when felled. It also poses a potential fire hazard within a year when the slash becomes dry. With girdling, the tree dies standing and remains that way for many years.

WHAT TYPE OF TREE SPECIES CAN BE GIRDLED?

All tree species can be girdled. Girdling is however mainly done on all types of deciduous tree species mainly because 1) they sucker after being felled using brushing techniques and 2) are usually considered a formidable competition species to the more desirable coniferous crop tree species.

Some trees like Cottonwood are more dificult to girdle due the thickness and unevenness of the bark. The older these trees get, the harder it is to girdle. Trees with a diameter of 8 inches or less are generally easy to girdle.

WHEN IS IT THE BEST TIME TO GIRDLE?

Best results usually occur if the girdling has been conducted just after the leaves have flushed (in the late spring) and before mid fall. As the summer progresses into the fall season, the tree will store energy in the root system to live through the winter months and prepare for flushing in the following spring. The sooner the bark is cut to prevent this energy storing process, the quicker the benefits will be realized.

WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO GIRDLE TREES?

The following will increase the effectiveness of girdling:

- **Girdle below the lowest live branch:** a smaller diameter tree can still survive if there is one branch left alive below the girdle. It also triggers a suckering response in many cases.
- **Girdle down to the sapwood, but do not cut into the sapwood:** it is important to sever the cambium and phloem layers completely. It is easy to tell if you have achieved this by looking at the stem of the tree. The stem must be completely smooth all the way around the tree. The tree will probably survive if there is any pulp-like layer still left on the stem. The pulp-like layer will turn brown soon after exposure to air and is easily visible to the naked eye within 24 hours.
- **Avoid Bridging:** bridging occurs when there is a strip of bark that still connects the top of the tree to the bottom of the tree. This usually occurs when the girdle width is less than 1.0 inches. Girdles that are 1.0 inches or bigger rarely have bridging problems.
- **Make sure the size of the girdle is 1.0 inches (2.5cm):** if the size of the girdle is less than 1.0" it is still possible for the tree to survive. Making sure the girdle is this wide will help to eliminate bridging problems.

WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO GIRDLE TREES? (Continued)

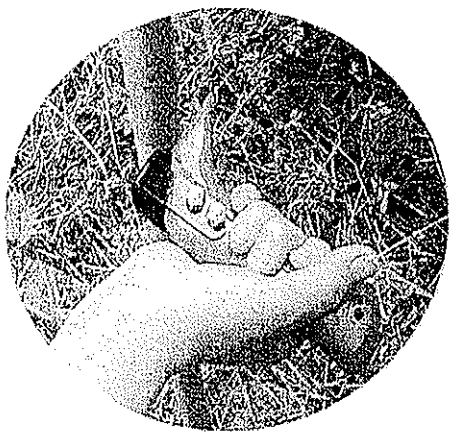
- **Avoid cutting into the sapwood:** many foresters have expressed their belief that cutting into the sapwood can trigger a suckering response. It also weakens the strength of the tree resulting in the tree breaking over at the girdle in a heavy wind. Tools with round blades will always dig into the sapwood making this problem unavoidable with those types of tools.
- **Avoid the snapping technique if possible:** snapping small diameter trees usually leads to some suckering. With the Barkblaster tool, it is now possible to girdle small diameter trees very quickly without suckering problems.

HOW DO I USE THE BARKBLASTER TOOL MOST EFFECTIVELY?

Take the following precautions:

- Always wear gloves when using the tool.
- The blade is sharp, so keep special attention on where your fingers are at all times.
- To prevent loss, loop a string through the hole at the base of the tool and secure it to your belt when not in use.

Place the tool in your hand with your palm up (see photo) and position the sharp edge of blade against tree. Cut around the tree counter-clockwise (opposite for left handed users) until a band of bark is completely removed. It is important to make sure you have gone completely around from start point to finish point.



Contact us at: