

THE LOG JAM



Published by the Woodlot Association of Alberta (WAA)

December, 2010

Got Jul

Prettige Kerstfeest

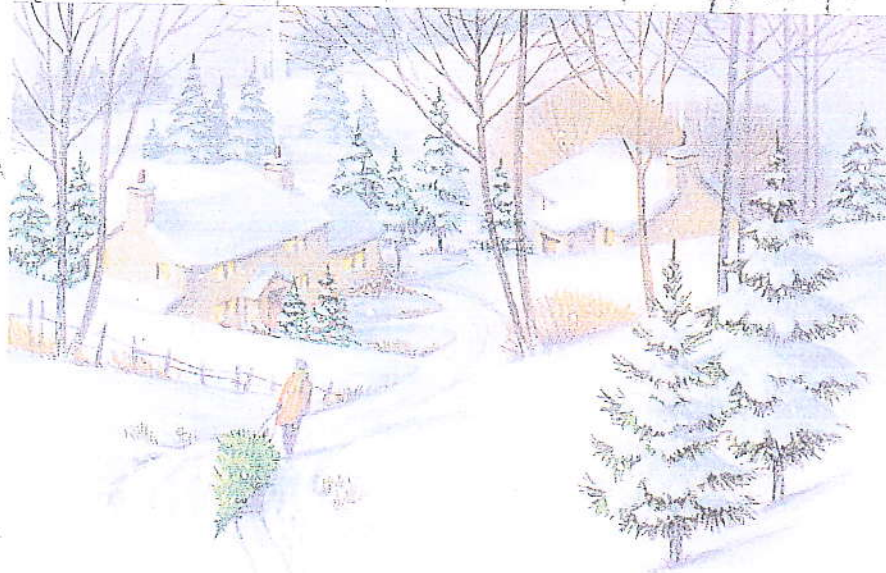
Merry Christmas

Joyeux Noel

Sheng Dan Kua'i Le

Frohe Weihnacht

Wesolych Swiat



Linksmos Kaledo

Vrolijk Kersteest

Buon Natale

Veseloho Vam Rizdva

Glaedelig Jul

Hyvaa Joulua

Nollaig Chrìdheil

Meri Kurisumasu

Editorial

To start with I would like to wish everyone a MERRY CHRISTMAS and may the NEW YEAR be good to all of you.

Winter is here the season that most Canadians would prefer to avoid, as this is quite evident when one sees the flight of the snow - birds. But for those of us who stay, we must become positive and find things that we enjoy about winter.

Speaking for myself I find the month of November the low point with respect to the winter months, why - well to start with, the clock gets turned back so suddenly it gets dark by four pm. , then there are the early snow falls mixed with freezing rain and we must learn again what winter driving is all about, that it is past time for those winter tires, and -10 seems really cold.

But now we are past all that, are use to the cold, short day lite hours, and the skill of winter driving is back. So things are looking up, Well just think after the 21st, the days start to get longer, and some time in the next month or two we will I am sure we will get a chinook and not from the Hudson Bay.

For us the woodlot owners this is the time when one can really experience the silence of our forests. As this is the season when all the forest creatures move softly, therefor all you may hear is the crunch of the snow as you glide along on your skis or snow - shoes. When you stop and sit to rest or contemplate life, suddenly our friendly grey-jay (whisky jack) will come to join you as it perches on a near by branch, in anticipation of getting a crust just in case you have one. You may well wonder how did it find you so soon and how many other little creatures are watching you pass by in this silent frozen land.

Hope that you enjoy the rest of the winter in your woodlot, as there are only three months left till the forest will again wake-up and the sound of rebirth begins, the silence is then gone as the forest comes alive with all it's wildlife making voice to each other

Jurgen

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AGM Summary

This year's two-day WAA Annual General Meeting in Whitecourt was an educational experience as well as a time of conducting the Association's business and of course a get-together of woodlot folks.

Day One: Business Session

Approximately 20 members attended the Business session.

Our newly-elected and second year term Directors for 2010 are situated throughout central and northern Alberta:

Jurgen Moll – Whitecourt

Dennis Quintilio – Glenevis

Peter Mills – Beaverlodge

Lisa Ladd – Peace River

Warren Stewart – Valleyview

Pieter van der Schoot (Past President) – Drayton Valley

Louise Horstman – Morinville/ Rochester (woodlot)

They face the challenge that the Association dealt with in the past, although not for the last several years, namely, a diminishing bank account. One possible solution which the new Board will be considering is holding a casino.

President's Report

Pieter van der Schoot reported that the 2009 seedling program brought in new members, who will hopefully become involved in the Association. He also reported that the WAA has attended meetings with Enbridge with regard to their "Tree for a Tree" program, whereby the company aims to replace every mature tree removed during their pipeline construction with a planted tree seedling. The WAA will be participating in their pilot project in 2010 in which approx. 30-50,000 seedlings will be planted on private land. Details have yet to be worked out. Enbridge will likely expand this program greatly the following year if all goes well.

Editorial Committee Report

AGM participants voted to keep our newsletter name "The Logjam" and thanked Jurgen Moll for putting it out. Lisa Ladd volunteered to set up a digital version for our website.

CFWO (Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners) Report

Peter Mills, our representative on the CFWO, reported that the CFWO is working on the carbon credit issue in a joint exercise with the U.S. They are dealing with questions such as how private forest carbon credits should be defined, assessed and certified, how to account for differences in carbon intake by various tree species and climatic regions, and how many years the trees must be retained.

WEP (Woodlot Extension Program) Report

A report from the Woodlot Extension Program (WEP), which the WAA helped to start in the 1990's, explained that WEP will become a society under the Alberta Societies Act as of this coming March. Its name has been changed to AWES (Agro-forestry and Woodlot Extension Society). The WAA will be one of over ten AWES partners and Byron Grundberg will be our representative to AWES.

Mountain Pine Beetle Update

Brent Doornenbal, Area Forester with ASRD in Whitecourt, gave the business session a change of pace with his presentation on the past and present range of the mountain pine beetle.

Resolutions

Several resolutions were passed:

That future annual general meetings be held between the end of October and mid-November;

That at next year's AGM a bylaw change be brought forward lowering the quorum for AGMs from the current requirement of 15 members in good standing to 12;

That the Board consider establishing an Outstanding Member award; and

That the Board approve the WAA's eligibility to apply for a casino.

Banquet Presentation

At the evening banquet Dr. David Schindler talked about the problem of toxic blue green algal growth in lakes, including many in Alberta. He showed how the scientific evidence linking this growth with high phosphate loading from human and animal sources was gradually amassed, in spite of claims by various interested parties that other factors were to blame.

Day Two, Field Tours

Day two was mostly tours, it started in the meeting room where Forester, Richard Krygier of the CFS giving a very informative talk on willow plantations which are grown on sewage sludge and then harvested and used as bio-fuel. This talk was followed with a guided tour of an experimental site that the Town of Whitecourt and CFS have at their sewage plant with some 12 different willow species on trial everyone found it very interesting.

We then bused to the Forest Interpretive centre and were given a tour of this site by John Dahl this site promotes forestry and is very well done. After which lunch was served at the centre, following the lunch John Dahl who is a past mayor of Whitecourt for some 11 years and has lived there all his life gave a talk on the town and area with its past and current forestry history This was followed by Forest Entomologist Herb Cerezke giving a very informative talk on forest insects.

We then bused to the Miller/Western new sawmill which is one of the fully automated sawmills in Alberta it was really quite impressive to observe this mill in operation by only some dozen workers mostly watching on video screens.

Our thanks to the Town of Whitecourt and to Woodlands County for providing lunch on Oct. 1 and 2.

WINTER READING FROM THE SHELVES OF THE WOODLOT
EXTENSION LIBRARY, NORTHERN FORESTRY CENTRE

Winter is a time for settling in. It's a time to reflect, a time to work on hobbies, and a time to hone one's identification skills. Whether you want to feed the birds, learn a new skill, or just keep warm, the Woodlot Extension Library located at the Northern Forestry Centre in Edmonton has a book for you.

Below is a selection of titles for the woodworker, the Christmas tree grower, the naturalist, or the hobbyist. For additional titles visit the online library catalogue at www.nrcan.gc.ca/libraries under Canadian Forest Service, Edmonton subheading.

- Christmas Trees: Growing and Selling Trees, Wreaths, and Greens – Lewis Hill**
- Managing Wild Balsam Fir for Christmas Trees: a Beginner's Manual – Charles Christie**
- How to Spot an Owl – Patricia and Clay Sutton**
- How to Spot a Fox – J. David Henry**
- Tracking and the Art of Seeing: How to Read Animal Tracks and Sign – Paul Rezendes**
- Feeding Wild Birds in Winter – Clive Dobson**
- Bird Feeding: Tips for Beginners and Veterans – Scott R. Craven and Robert L. Ruff**
- Shelves, Houses and Feeders for Birds and Mammals – G. Barquest, S. Craven and R. Ellarson**
- Woodworking for Wildlife: Homes for Birds and Mammals – Carol L. Henderson**
- An Eclectic Guide to Trees East of the Rockies – Glen Blouin**
- Woodworker's Guide to Wood – Rick Peters**
- Making Rustic Furniture – Daniel Mack**
- The Harrowsmith Country Life Guide to Wood Heat – Dirk Thomas**
- The Complete Book of Everlastings: Growing, Drying, and Designing with Dried Flowers – Mark and Terry Silber**
- The Handbook of Knots – Des Pawson**
- Alberta's North: a History, 1890-1950 – Donald G. Wetherell and Irene R.A. Kmet**

You can request these or other items through your local library if you're unable to visit the Northern Forestry Centre in person.
Happy Holidays and May Your Winter Reading Be Enjoyable and Fruitful

ANIMAL AND BIRD DAMAGES TO TREES

Herb Cerezke

Most landowners are familiar with several of the tree damages caused by various animals such as aspen trees felled by beaver, browse injury by snowshoe hare and ungulates, or trees girdled by porcupine. These kinds of injury are relatively common while other animal damages occur less frequently, may be site specific, cyclic in nature, or only affect scattered individual trees. The intent of this article is to briefly describe the various damages that one may encounter in woodlots, farm shelterbelts or forested areas. Such damages can result from the feeding, trampling or scraping by various mammal and bird species as a result of chewing, scratching, pecking, rubbing, shredding of bark and cambium tissues, seed feeding, and browsing of twigs and buds. All of these actions cause injury, either by affecting the growth and health of trees or by killing them.

Ground-dwelling rodents such as deer mice and voles readily feed on conifer seeds dispersed following a fire or from normal seed fall. Some vole species, during feeding studies, showed a distinct preference for lodgepole pine seed over white spruce and subalpine fir seeds. Abundance of these animals may be cyclic, reaching high peaks every 3-4 years and their numbers may also vary in different habitats. Thus seed losses can be expected to vary widely. Juvenile seedling and young plant predation and girdling of young regeneration may also result from their feeding and chewing activity, especially when other food sources becomes scarce during winter and spring periods. Most damages by mice and voles occur below the snow line.

Ungulates such as deer, elk and moose, besides trampling on seedlings and young trees, may cause considerable browse damage on the shoots of coniferous and deciduous trees. Browsing damage is most common in late summer, fall and winter. Deer feeding may also uproot seedlings entirely. While on their winter range, elk often chew the bark of aspen stems. In addition, male ungulates use small sapling size trees to rub their antlers, thereby scraping and shredding the bark. This behaviour mostly occurs prior to the rutting season and can result in tree killing.

Few bird species contribute significant injury to trees. Ruffed grouse may feed primarily on the buds of aspen, willow and birch, as well as on a number of shrub species as a prime food source during winter. The yellow-bellied sapsucker, a small migratory woodpecker, damages tree stems during spring and summer by drilling an orderly series of peck holes in the bark of deciduous and some coniferous species. The birds may later return repeatedly to the same trees to feed on the sap and insects that collect in the pits. Birch and willows are the most commonly selected deciduous trees while Scotch pine is often a highly selected species. Tree tops are sometimes killed when the peck holes are dense and encircle the stem. Another bird, Clark's nutcracker, collects, feeds and caches the seeds of limber and whitebark pines. However, in this case the seed collecting is mutually beneficial to both species; the seeds provide a rich food source for the birds while their seed dispersal behaviour contributes significantly to pine seedling reproduction.

Mountain pine beetle: green to red surveys

Mountain pine beetle (MPB) detection and population monitoring involves a number of different techniques that occur throughout the year. Scientifically based surveys help track the MPB over six million hectares of Alberta's pine forests.

R-value surveys measure overwinter survival; aerial surveys are used to locate red MPB-killed trees; green to red surveys monitor population expansion, and pheromone baited trees survey long distance flights. While this article will focus on green to red surveys, each of these surveys together are essential for resources managers in the fight against the current MPB epidemic in Alberta.

Even though MPBs are the size of a grain of rice, the scars they leave on the landscape are detectable for years. Swaths of red and grey hued pine trees will point you in the direction of the local infestation. The part that is difficult to detect on a large scale, however, are the number of newly attacked trees in the area.

These newly attacked trees are difficult to detect because they do not usually fade from their natural green color right away. A healthy MPB-attacked pine tree can stay green for up to one year. This means ground truthing must follow up the aerial survey information to make sure the data set is reliable.

Following the confirmation of MPB in the red or fading trees, a selection of sites is visited to measure the green to red ratio (G:R). This survey is performed by tallying green trees (currently containing beetles) and red trees (previous year attack – source trees) at a specific location to determine a ratio. The higher the ratio, the more a population is expanding in a particular area. If the G:R is unusually high, where the number of new attacks is biologically impossible considering the number of reds, the survey can indicate the presence of an in-flight from another location.

The 2010 surveys do not indicate the presence of an in-flight from British Columbia. They also show decreased ratios of green-attack trees in the Southern Rockies. Central parts of the province are reflecting Sustainable Resource Development's (SRD) control efforts and some effects of last winter's cold weather, with less green-attack trees being surveyed in the Whitecourt and Slave Lake areas. It should be noted however that there is still an increase in beetle populations as there are more source trees for MPB to spread from. There is an increase in green-attack trees through the portions of the Smoky and the majority of the Peace Area.

Albertans have witnessed steep increases in MPB population since 2006 based on small initial populations. Even though there are less green-attack pine trees in some area of Alberta, the level of the current epidemic is still unprecedented in west-central Alberta. SRD remains vigilant and will continue its aggressive work to minimize the spread of MPB populations in the province.

For the 2010 green to red survey map please visit: www.mpb.alberta.ca

By: Brett Spady

Snowshoe hare, beaver, as well as mice and voles, feed on cambium of young trees near ground level and commonly scar or girdle trees. Underground dwellers such as pocket gophers feed on roots. The type of damage inflicted by each species may be diagnostic, partly on the basis of tooth marks, clipping patterns, and presence of droppings. During peak snowshoe hare abundance, which usually occurs every 9-11 years, single or patches of young pine, spruce or aspen trees are vulnerable from girdling activity and trees are often killed. Lower branches and buds may also be pruned off, especially those within reach directly above the snow line.

Patches of bark removed by porcupine occurs commonly on pine, spruce, tamarack and willows, especially during winter months. Scattered single trees or sometimes small groups of trees are selected for feeding. Porcupines eat the inner bark and cambium, often climbing high up the tree to select the thinner, smoother bark. The upper portion of a tree crown, and sometimes the entire tree are killed as a result of tree girdling. Somewhat more rare is the bark stripping on young pine trees by squirrels. More commonly, squirrels and porcupine chew the infected bark and cambium from the margins of stem rust cankers (e.g., such as western gall rust and other stem rust diseases) that infect pine hosts. Sugar-based exudates containing the spores of these rust cankers may be the attraction for these animals. The mechanics of cone collecting on lodgepole and jack pines by squirrels occasionally results in dead branch tips or "flagging" as a result of bark damage at the site of cone attachment. Their collecting of cones from white and black spruces may also result in extensive clipping of bud and branch tips from the cone-bearing portion of the tree crown.

Most black bear-caused tree damage occurs on conifer species, especially lodgepole pine, white spruce and Douglas-fir. Trees of any age are vulnerable, however, most damage occurs in stands 15 to 30 years old. Damage in the form of bark stripping, mostly on the lower 1-2 meters of tree stem, results from bark removal with claws and teeth. The bears tend to select the most vigorous trees and generally start this activity in early spring about the time of conifer bud break. At this time, there can be a shortage of food and the bears supplement their diet by scraping the sapwood with their incisors to glean the newly formed vascular tissues which may contain up to 5% free floating sugars. Adult bears may also scratch claw marks into the bark of trees as a territorial marker.

Tour demonstrates diversity in northern agro-forestry

Lisa Ladd

Woodlot owners from northern and central Alberta learned about hardy cherries, silvopasturing and birch syrup, to name a few, during a tour of the Peace Country, August 7, 2010.

The tour, organized by the Woodlot Association of Alberta (WAA) and the Alberta Forest Extension Network (AFEX), was attended by about 25 people.

The day was spent at three private operations – birch syrup at the Ladd farm near Peace River, cherries at the Stewart farm and ornamental trees at the Pepler Farm tree nursery, both near Berwyn. There were also three experimental tree growing stops, all collaborative efforts between industry, government, research agencies and non-profit organizations.

One practical lesson throughout the day was the benefits of plastic mulch for young tree establishment. This was demonstrated at the Murdoch Lake silvopasturing site, at the North Peace Agricultural Research Association shelterbelt nursery (in collaboration with the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration) and at the Pepler nursery.

“We use the mulch, for weed control and for pest control,” said Darrell Pepler, who with Gayle, his wife, has transformed their former elk ranch into a tree nursery with varieties of conifer, hardwood and shrub species.

The Murdoch Lake agroforestry demonstration site was launched in 2004 on land managed by Ducks Unlimited. The partner based project combines alley-cropping of hardwoods, cattle and hay cropping to demonstrate that silvo-pasturing results in greater productivity overall.

“It is to show landowners that trees and cattle can be successfully adapted, while providing environmental benefits,” said Florance Niemi, tree improvement researcher with Daishowa-Marubeni International, Peace River Pulp Division.

At the Bar 2A Ranch, just north of Peace River, tour participants learned about the Weberville Community Forest Association, a grass roots, landowner based community woodlot organization.

The WAA organizes woodlot tours in a different part of Alberta, annually.

The Porcupine

By Dennis Baresco

(excerpt of an article reprinted from *Nature Alberta* with permission)

When thinking of rodents, one thinks of mice, rats and the like; but Porcupines (*Erethizon dorsatum*), like their similar-sized or slightly larger Beaver cousins, are indeed rodents. Unlike Beavers, Porcupines have a considerably laid back and unhurried lifestyle.

People are often surprised to learn that Porcupines climb trees. Perhaps that's because, with such a heavy (up to 12 kg), giant football-shaped body, it appears they could barely stand upright, much less climb. But each toe (four front, five rear) has a strong, curved claw for gripping a tree trunk, and they are amazingly adept climbers. They are also able to wander far out onto branches that seem too small by far to support them. (Having said that, falling out of trees is one of the main natural causes of death!)

The reason they are in trees in the first place is . . . food. They munch away on the leaves, buds and (in winter) the cambium layer and inner bark of many different trees. Woody shrubs (like Chokecherry and Saskatoon), forbs, berries, seeds, antlers, bones and roots are also on their diet. They especially like items rich in sodium – hence their fondness for things like wooden axe and shovel handles, to the chagrin of campers and cabin dwellers.

People may also be surprised to learn that Porcupines are excellent swimmers: the hollow quills help them to keep buoyant. Yet another surprise is their voice. For what appears to be a quiet animal, they can emit a startling collection of squeaks, shrieks, snorts, whines, grunts, groans, moans and hums!

Porcupines love to sit quietly – for hours – in a tree, especially in winter as they sunbathe. In fact, since they do not hibernate, they are often best observed in winter. They don't especially hurry on the ground either, after all, with 30,000 barbed quills as protection, a shuffling, waddling, almost comical gait on short legs is all that is required.

Porcupines are one of only a dozen mammals that are potentially found throughout all of Alberta. As long as there are trees or shrubs to eat, Porcupines will be there – even in the arid grasslands. Solitary, nomadic creatures, they seldom tolerate others of their species.

Porcupines breed in October-November, with just one, fairly heavy (at 500 gm) baby – called a “porcupette” – born in the spring (twins are very rare). Porcupines are the only North American rodent to give birth to precocial and advanced young: that is, porcupettes are born with eyes open, covered with long black hair, short, soft quills and are able to climb in less than a week. The quills harden within 30 minutes and are essentially “ready for action.”

Quills – an exceptional defense mechanism – are actually modified hairs, each tipped with microscopic barbs, or hooks. It is the barbs which cause all the pain not only in

pulling them out, but because once embedded, they continue to work their way into the flesh and muscle, and can pass through the entire body. No, Porcupines do NOT throw their quills. Contact must be made – though for such a slow, dim-witted animal, they are almost lightning-quick in turning to face away from an enemy, raising their spines, and thrashing their quill-laden tail. New quills grow to replace those lost. For most of the lesser-skilled predators, seeing the defensive posture is enough to scar them away. Most dogs, unfortunately, seem unable to get the hint.

Even with a good sense of smell and hearing, they are highly susceptible to some “smarter” predators, especially the Fisher which, though much smaller, can dispatch a Porcupine with casual ease by flipping it over and attacking the unprotected stomach. Wolverines and Bobcats are two other skilled Porcupine predators. Still, for most other predators (such as Great Horned Owls and Canids), that tasty, substantial meal may well come at a high cost: a prolonged death by embedded quills.

As for the name? It comes from the French, *porc d'epine*: ‘spined pig’.

ARE YOU A NEW WAA MEMBER?

Welcome to those of you who purchased seedlings this year and have started a private forest! Whether you intend it to be a shelterbelt, tree nursery, recreational area, wildlife habitat, or whatever, we'd like to hear from you.

We have directors and members with expertise in various tree-related subjects, from pruning and harvesting, tree diseases, equipment, wildlife, dealing with buyers, etc.

Send in your questions to our newsletter editor and we'll start a Q & A column, in the Logjam, should you not like your name on the question clearly say so and it will not be shown.

Send your questions to: jurgen.moll@xplornet.com

Or mail to : Box 84, Whitecourt, AB, T7S-1N3

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Gienevis (780) 785 - 2732

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Louise Horstman, Director
Morinville (780) 939 - 5858

Warren Stewart, Director
Valleyview (780) 524 - 3178

Peter Mills, Director
Beaverlodge (780) 354 - 8228

The executive which is elected from within the board, this will take place at the next board meeting.

Pruning

Jurgen Moll

For those who plan on improving their woodlot by doing some pruning, this is the right season when the trees are dormant. For the trees will experience :

- less sap loss
- less stress on the tree
- lessen the chance of fungi or insect attack
- less tearing of the bark and scaring the tree

Those species that are most in need of pruning are the tolerant species such as our spruces and balsams, where as the intolerant species as the pines the deciduous trees the poplars and birches These are self pruners when growing in a closed canopy, where the foliage will die when it does not receive direct sunlight with many of the dead branches being shed. Whereas the tolerant species will continue to have live foliage with as little as 20% of sunlight, and even foliage dies they will retain the branches for many years. Therefore if you woodlot consist largely of intolerant trees your pruning is mostly done for you all you need do is remove the remaining dead branches. But should it consist largely of tolerant trees a considerable amount of work lies ahead .

Why should one prune trees, there are a number of reasons, these are:

- to remove deceased or damaged branches in order to reduce further advancement of decease
- to remove branches to reduce knots in the tree trunk
- to increase more sunlight reaching the forest floor thus warming the soil in the spring
- to improve the quality of the peeler/saw log by reducing knots

There are a number of tools available that are used in pruning, which are:

- the pole pruner c/w saw, lopper and a handle that is extendable
- the folding pruning saw
- the rope saw
- the hardwood stick
- the power saw
- the hand pruning shear

When pruning I find that it works best at around -10 when the trees are well frozen . The tool I use most is is the lowest tech, that being the hardwood stick, for at this temperature the branches will easily break off even to 3/4" in size. When branches are larger one must resort to the use of the pole saw. the tool I use very seldom is

the power saw, as with it one can easily scar the tree, also kick - back is a real danger. The one tool that should not be used is the axe, for with it one will cause many wounds on the tree trunk and leave many long stub of the branches, these will take many years to close thus giving fungi and insect a entree into the tree trunk.

There are a few rules of thumb with respect to pruning, which are:

- prune no more than 1/3 of the tree height
- make all cuts flush with the tree trunk
- large branches (2"+) cut the branch twice once 8" from the trunk then flush with the trunk, this is to avoid bark tearing down the trunk
- when pruning an ornamental deciduous in you yard, use a tree wax or paint to close the wound as these trees can not close the wound with pitch

Pruning usually goes hand in glove with thinning the forest stand, should you have a stand that has been thinned, and still immature there is an opportunity to select the best formed trees and prune up to some 16' which will give you a largely knot free log, making this log worth much more.

When pruning work safely, use a hard hat c/w a face sheild, and do'nt work higher than your chest when using a power saw.

Well happy pruning this winter, and if the snow gets to deep pruning works fine when on snowshoes.

Thinned and Pruned

Before



After

