

Tool Sharpening Techniques

“A clean tool is an effective tool.”

Tool sharpening tips

1. The best time to clean your tools is when you finish using it. When sap is still fresh and before it corrodes the metal.
2. Clean tool thoroughly - use methylated spirits and a scourer to remove sap residue and surface rust. (Metho is good because it evaporates quickly and does leave residue).
3. Apply WD40 to joints to ensure moving parts are functioning correctly.
4. Use a file to sharpen blade edges and remove burrs (bumps). Round chainsaw files can be good for accessing the hinge, inside of tools. Sharpening stones are useful for straight blades.
 - Files - Long strokes in the one direction are recommended for sharpening blade edges. (files only work in one direction).
 - Stones – circular movements along the blade edge.
5. Once it has been filed down to bare metal, make sure you lubricate it (vegetable based oil is a good. WD40, petroleum or silicone based lubricants are also fine but ensure care is taken when pruning, it could cause cross contamination).
6. Store tools correctly. Handle tools by the handles, to avoid your skin oils to contact surface. Ensure they are in the closed position (blades closed).

Tool use - Rules of thumb

Loppers – do not cut anything thicker than handle

Secateurs – do not use the blade to scrape – use the underside of the bottom blade (the back of the blade).

Secateurs/Loppers – Don't cut at the tip, cut near the hinge (the jaw). Don't cut stems if you can't see your fingers. Make sure your fingers are visible to avoid cuts. Wear gloves.