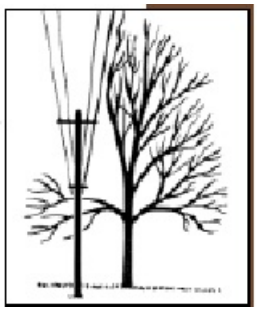
The Red, Blue & Green

The Annual Talk About Trees and Wires

You dread it. We dread it. The trees dread it. Everyone hates it but the companies we hire to do the work. Yes, it is time to talk about tree trimming again.

In the world of operating the systems that provide you with the services and technology you rely upon, there is no issue which is more likely to upset and anger our customers than our tree trimming activities. On the other hand, there is also no matter which is more likely to cause your services to be interrupted than the lack of sufficient tree trimming. This situation provides the quintessential definition of the often used phrase: *We are darned if we do and darned if we don't.* That is not an exact quote but it is quite close.



William J. Ray
wray@glasgow-ky.com
659.3507 (direct)

The only economically tractable solution is for us to trim trees in such a manner that they do not provide our electric power a path to ground.

We had a lengthy discussion on this topic last May. We also produced a video, and we continue to show that video regularly on Cable6, which attempts to explain this subject. Still, we get many, many questions, comments, and suggestions about where we should spend eternity from some of our customers when the tree trimming crews actually arrive in their yard. So, it seems like a good thing to review all of this again.

The Problem. It is simple really. Trees conduct electricity and they are connected to the ground. Electric power wants nothing more than to go to ground though any available path (normally we try to force it though lights or motors as it goes to ground such that we get value out of it, but it really only wants to get to ground). The electric wires running along poles are bare and isolated from paths to ground at each pole by insulators. So when a tree branch touches a wire, electricity gets to do what it wants . . . it flows through the tree to ground. When this happens, one of our fuses or circuit breakers trips to interrupt the faulty flow to ground and that is when your power goes off. That is when you call us.

The Solution. First, before you even think it, let's talk about everyone's favorite solution . . . putting it all underground. That is not a bad idea, if money and time were no big concerns. Borrowing the money to make a real impact on converting overhead lines to underground lines would likely require your electric bills to double (best guess estimate) and it would take many years to accomplish (it has taken the EPB 45 years to build what we have today so placing it all underground would not happen quickly). Even if the people of Glasgow were willing to accept a 100% increase in their power bills, we would still have to trim trees for dozens of years as this "undergrounding" was taking place.

Therefore, let's talk about reality. The only economically tractable solution is for us to trim trees in such a manner that they do not provide our electric power a path to ground. There is a right way and a wrong way to do this as well. For many years, we did it the wrong way. In an attempt to have a minimal impact on the trees and the owners of those trees, we used to randomly cut branches such that after the visit no branch was closer than 3-4 feet from a wire. This sort of "rounding over," "topping," or "shrubbery style" trimming resulted in nicer looking trees, but it also resulted in fewer healthy trees. Cutting a tree branch in the middle of its length, results in dozens of weak new branches being output by the tree at

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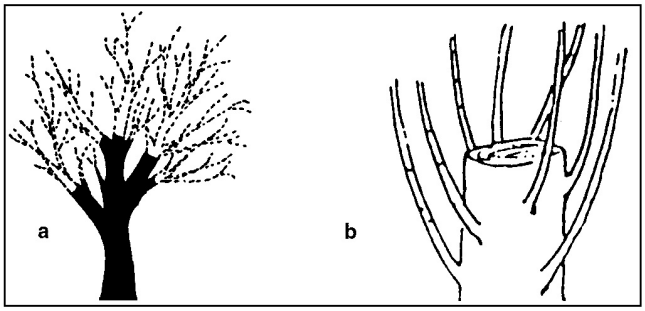
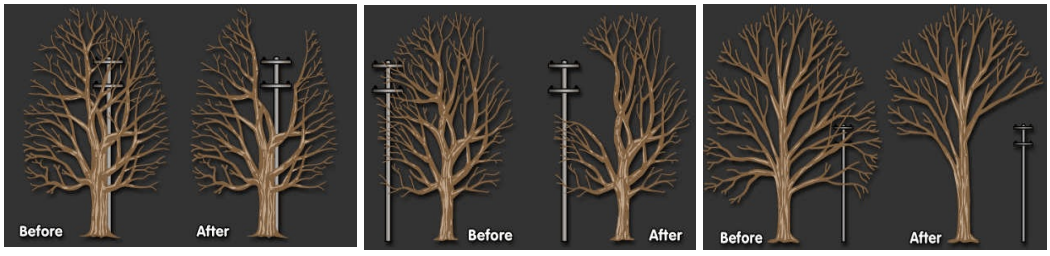
tthose cuts. Those multiple cuts cause weakness of the new branches and multiple avenues for disease and insects to enter the tree.



Now that we know better. Utility companies and professional arborists now agree. The best way to trim trees, for the tree's health, and for maintaining reliable electric networks, is to use a method called "directional" or "lateral" trimming. Directional trimming strives to train the tree to grow away from and around the wires. These trimming principles were developed by the U.S. Forest Service and are endorsed by the International Society of Arboriculture as well as tree care professionals across the country. This method is best described as trimming the limbs that are growing in the direction of neighboring electric wires all the way back to their "parent" limb. This method satisfies the clearance requirements for the EPB as well as the health needs of the tree. The figures below are very good representations of the results we expect from employing the new directional trimming method.

As you can see, this method leaves virtually no limb stumps which can issue new sprouts in the direction of our lines. We will gladly remove a tree that is growing in our high voltage wires (not just growing in the service wires from a pole to an individual home . . . there are far too many of those for us to deal with) and we will replace it, at our expense, with a small decorative tree that should never grow tall enough to give us trouble.



Just call us if you think you have such a tree and this replacement program is of interest to you. We will gladly discuss it with you before our contractor gets to your property.

Finally, you should know that the areas scheduled for trimming over the remainder of 2006 include areas inside the following major boundary streets/roads:

W. Main St.
Industrial Drive
Donnelley Drive
Cleveland Ave.
S. L. Rogers Wells Blvd.
Trojan Trail
Roseville Road
Bunche Ave.
S. Green St.
Also, includes Beverly Hills & S. Fork Area

In addition, later this year we may be trimming in all areas generally inside the following major boundary streets/roads:

Public Square
W. Main St.
N. L. Rogers Wells Blvd.
Happy Valley Rd.
N. Race St.
Glenview Drive
Scottie Drive
Columbia Ave.
New Salem Rd.
E. Main St.
Hwy 63
Roseville Road

Billy Ray
659-3507 direct dial phone
e-mail wray@glasgow-ky.com
And, I'm on SightSpeed at
http://billy-ray.sightspeed.com...

Feel free to use any of these means to contact me with any questions or comments!