

Tool Sharpening 101... August 7th, 2009...Bud Stout

Sharpening a metal tool can be accomplished several ways... oil stone, file, electric grinding wheel or carbide sharpening tool, see fig 3 thru 6. Sharpening a pocket knife, hunting knife or kitchen knife are simple and straight forward since access to the blade edge is not obstructed. Sharpening a Bonsai tool is a bit more complicated since the scissor action, double blades, obscures access. Of course, you can take your tools to a professional or take a deep breath, exercise a little patience, and tackle the task yourself.

First, let's briefly discuss the two types of pruners. Anvil and by-pass (see fig 1 and 2). The anvil type are not recommended for Bonsai. They can easily leave a jagged, unsightly cut inviting insects and disease. All Bonsai pruners are the by-pass type. Consequently, you have two edges to sharpen. This is not much of a problem if you are able to dis-assemble the tool. Unfortunately, many Bonsai pruners are permanently riveted. In which case, your only option is to open the pruners all the way out and hold them very steady while passing the sharpening tool over the edge.

SHARPENING... Here is the important rule when sharpening any pruners. Please see fig 2. The only edge you will sharpen is "A". You will want to preserve that edge angle as much as possible. Here is a suggestion... rock the sharpening tool on the cutting edge until you can feel the sharpening tool sitting flat on the "A" cutting surface. Once you have found that surface. Pass the sharpening tool over the surface numerous times until you have a sharp edge.

Never sharpen the "B" surface.

NOTE...always push the sharpening tool away from you. NEVER pull the pruners or sharpener toward you. REMEMBER. Patience. Do not be in a rush.

KNOWING WHEN THE EDGE IS SHARP... caution, remember you are handling a sharp tool. You can check your sharp edge by passing your thumb perpendicular over the blade. Never pass your thumb parallel over the blade. If you are unsure how execute this test, ask advice from someone that understands the technique.

fig 1, Anvil

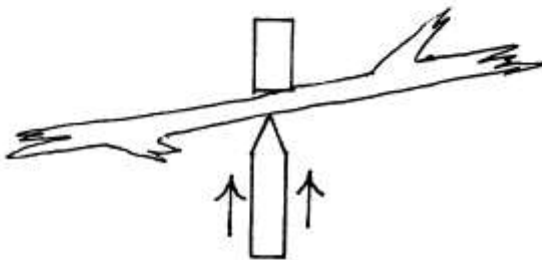
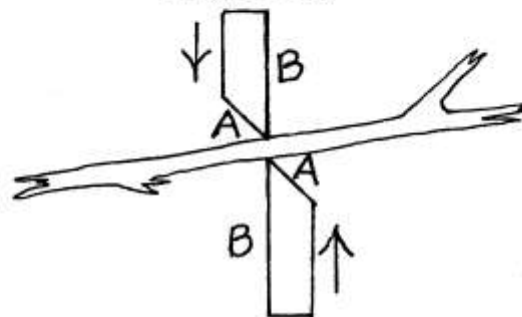


fig 2, By-pass



Oil Stone and Electric Wheel can be used when you are able to dis-assemble your tool also good for grinding out nicks.

File should be a fine tooth and can be used when dis-assembly is not possible and also can be used to grind out nicks.

Carbide Sharpening Tool can be used for a quick sharpening and keeping a good edge.

fig 3, oil stone

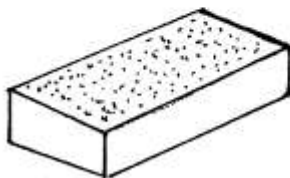


fig 4, file

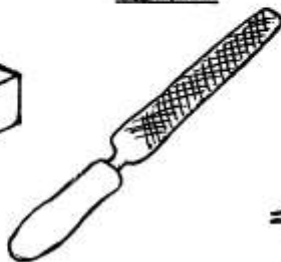


fig 5, electric wheel



fig 6, carbide tool

