

THINGS YOU SHOULD DO WITH YOUR NEW AXE OR SAW

- Use proper PPE:
 - Chainsaw chaps for crosscut.
 - Foot and shin protection for chop. Gloves are also an excellent idea.
- Pay attention as you walk around with equipment. It is SHARP.
- Prior to use, inspect equipment to be sure it is safe to use.
 - Axe head is tight on the handle and does not wiggle. If necessary, re-wedge.
 - Crosscut handles are tight and aligned with the blade.
- Chop or saw only on green (i.e. unseasoned), debarked wood. The greener the better. Store your practice wood submerged in a pond or horse-trough full of water.
- Acceptable species for chop or saw are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ sweetgum (<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>, 850 lb_f)○ yellow-poplar (<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>, 540 lb_f)○ southern yellow pine (<i>Pinus</i> spp., 690 lb_f)

 - The number listed is the Janka hardness, with higher numbers being harder woods. The harder the wood, the more difficult it is to saw or chop.
- It is fine to chop or saw on white pine (*Pinus strobus*, 380 lb_f) if you can get it. However, our equipment was not designed for white pine. It won't hurt the equipment; it just won't be as quick as a saw or axe designed for white pine.
- Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*, 430 lb_f), soft elms (*Ulmus americana*, 830 lb_f or *U. rubra*, 860 lb_f), and some other softer hardwoods can be used, although these are better left to practice equipment, not your best saw and axe.
- Wipe equipment down with a clean rag and WD-40 after each use. For crosscut saws, a brush is handy to remove wood chips. This is important to remove moisture to prevent corrosion, and to remove sticky resin if you use the equipment on pine.
- For longer term storage, use gun oil or another oil, not WD-40, which is a penetrant that could cause pitting.
- Store equipment somewhere dry, ideally with low humidity, ideally near room temperature. Check stored equipment periodically to prevent corrosion.
- If you observe any damage to cutting teeth or rakers of the saw or to the edge or handle of the axe, get it repaired by someone who knows what they are doing before you use it again.
- Try to have a good set of equipment for Conclave. Minimize use of that equipment however you can. Every cut or chop has potential to dull or damage your equipment.
 - M-tooth saws are cheaper, more rugged and make for great practice saws.
- Try to find someone who can demonstrate basic maintenance for the equipment.
 - Edging axes, deburring crosscuts.

THINGS YOU SHOULD NOT DO WITH YOUR NEW AXE OR SAW

- Do not forget your PPE.
- Never practice chop alone.
- Do not compete if you are injured, inebriated, or otherwise not physically fit enough to ensure your safety and the safety of spectators.
- Do not chop or saw on DRY or SEASONED wood of any kind. It will dull the equipment.
- Do not chop or saw on oak (*Quercus* spp., 1000+ lb_f), hickory (*Carya* spp., 1500+ lb_f), winged elm (*Ulmus alata*, 1540 lb_f) or any hardwood not listed as acceptable. These can be used for practice, but only with a crappy axe from a local hardware store. If you don't rehang these axes with a shorter handle, you'll probably hit yourself in the groin with the end of the handle. Ouch.
- Do not chop or saw through bark ever. It has occluded dirt and will dull your equipment. Remove it with a draw knife or cheap axe.
- Avoid knots. This isn't easy with sweetgum or southern yellow pine. If you see a knot, don't saw or chop it in practice. Knots are one of the most common ways to chip an axe bit.
- Try to avoid chopping the butt of a tree. This is the hardest wood on the tree.
- Do not hit your metal stand with the axe or saw. This is a very quick way to make a \$700 axe a \$0 axe. Set up your block to chop in the middle as best you can, giving you as much leeway as possible if you miss on a swing. Or use wood to hold the log up, so this isn't even an issue. You can use pieces you've already chopped in half, for example.
- Your best racing axe is not a hammer. Do not use it to drive spikes in your stand, nails, etc. You can get a much cheaper axe or hammer at any local hardware store for this.
- Do not drop the equipment on the ground. Don't stomp on it, no matter how good (or bad!) your cut or chop was.
- Do not touch the metal of the saw or axe with your bare hand. The moisture, salt, etc. on your skin can leave black marks and cause corrosion. Wipe it down with a rag and WD-40 if you do. This one is not intuitive at all, but true.
- Don't lose your equipment. It is expensive and difficult to replace!