

# Wiring Tips

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I have learned many things about wiring along the way, but it wasn't until I got some one-on-one training that I learned some very important details. Here is a list of items to remember when you begin to wire your trees:

## Before You Start Wiring

- Decide on the style of your finished tree, which side will be the front & where do you want the branches to end up when the tree is completed
- Remove branches that will not be used in your final design (remember once they're cut off, you can't put them back so choose carefully)
- **Sometimes you will wire a branch, bend it into place and then decide it needs to be removed. This is not uncommon. Try it, you will like it.**
- It is much quicker and easier to wire a clean branch, so remember to clean any growth in the crotches, on the underside of branches, etc. before wiring.
- **When cleaning the side growth (small branches) should be alternating on each side of the branch to be wired.**
- **Wire size and type will change with the size of branches & the type of trees**
- **Copper holds more rigidly and one can use a smaller diameter and get more holding power than the same diameter aluminum wire.**
- **Copper wire is better for pines and conifers since it has to stay in place longer to set the branches properly. If you need copper on softer barked trees, be sure to wrap with raffia before wiring.**
- **Aluminum wire is used more on soft barked trees like Elms, Maples, Ficus, Evergreens and flowering types. A larger diameter wire is needed than with copper and this helps to cut in less into the thin bark.**
- **Aluminum is less expensive making it ideal for trees that grow quickly that will require more frequent wire changes.**

## Tips for Wire Application

- Start from the Base of the tree and work upwards & outwards towards tips (large to small)
- Wire should be applied at a 45° angle
- Wire should lay snugly (not too tightly) on the branch without gaps between the wire & branch
- Use care when placing wire to avoid causing damage or additional stress to the tree
- Wire should either be connected to a sturdy anchor point opposite of the location of the branch being wired or be anchored to an opposing branch (one wire for two branches) (1 ½- 2 turns are needed for a secure anchor)
- **The anchoring turns can be around the trunk when wiring a primary branch, around the primary branch when wiring the secondary branches and around the secondary branches when wiring the tertiary branches.**
- **There are situations when the trunk is very large and it takes a lot of wire to go around 2 times. Anchoring the wire to an adjacent branch first can be done**

- **If the wire diameter is large enough, sometimes creating a hook on the end and hooking it to an adjacent branch works well.**
- When applying large wire, use the diamond application technique (Up, over & away, down, under & back, repeat). **Ask an experienced practioner about this technique. It is especially good to know when using copper or aluminum in the larger diameters.**
- Wire direction is determined by where the branch needs to be moved (move branch up-wire underside (bottom) of branch/to go down-wire over top/move left or right by applying pressure from opposite side of the direction to move)
- Crotch and weak areas of branch like knots, or where a branch died, or where a branch was removed should be carefully supported when wiring to avoid splitting. **Before wiring, always check a crotch, junction or damaged area on a branch that is to be wired. Sometimes hidden cracks or weaknesses can be spotted. The weak spots can be supported with fingers as you wire, can be supported with temporary wire tied around the weak spot or by using raffia to tightly wrap a weak spot.**

#### Tips for Wire Monitoring & Removal

- Check wire regularly for placement. **Branches will get bumped, landed on by birds and jostled by rodents etc. Stuff happens.**
- **Check for broken branches which may show up as broken at the junction, damaged by the bending during wiring and sometimes branches will look off color or weak so spraying with water, Superthrive or dilute solutions of fertilizers like fish or MiracleGro can help heal a sickly branch that really needs to be saved.**
- Check for wire that is biting into the bark. **Wire is never applied with even pressure all the way around each turn of wire and branches do not grow evenly with time and location on the tree. Some areas expand more rapidly.**
- **Thin/soft barked trees, deciduous and evergreen, will show wire marks easily which are not desired on thin barked trees. They are unsightly, artistically not good, very un-natural and do not heal, for the most part.**
- **Pines and Junipers can remain wired with the same wire for 1-2 years. Deeper wire marks can add to the character and thickness of the branches. Bark will eventually fill in the cut areas unless the wire cut is too deep.**
- **Remove wire prior to it biting into the branch is the best way to prevent scars especially with soft barked trees. Pines and junipers some biting in is OK. Ask an experienced member.**
- **Always cut wire to remove / Do not unwind. As you get better with wiring, salvaging wire by unwinding can be done. Small diameter aluminum  $\leq 2\text{mm}$  is easy. Copper is too just stiff at any diameter because it work hardens as it is applied. You will definitely risk damage to the branches when attempting to unwind copper or  $>2\text{mm}$  aluminum.**

**Wiring takes practice, lots of practice. Practicing on branches of any size taken from your trees, and plant trimmings from your yard, or cheap nursery stock is very helpful and will save you time and money in the long run. As with any technique, there are nuances and variations that one will learn with time and practice.**

**Add links to articles/web sites for wiring info.**