TECHNICAL BULLETIN

DAVEY

Prepared by The Davey Institute

CABLING OF TREES

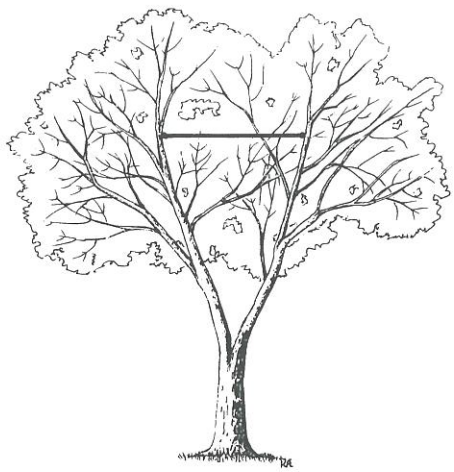

Figure 1.

Cabling is the installation of flexible steel strand cables in trees to reduce stress damage from high winds, the weight of ice or snow, and heavy foliage. Multi-stemmed trees or those with narrow V-shaped forks are especially susceptible to this type of damage (Figure 1). This procedure is used by arborists to improve your tree's chances to survive storms and minimize property damage when branches fail (Figure 2).

BENEFITS: The usefulness of a cable lies in its ability to transfer part of the weight of a weak branch or limb to a stronger one. In addition, a cable may provide mutual support to limbs that are joined by a narrow V-shaped fork. It is intended to prolong the life of the tree. Branches or trees that pose a potential threat to property or people are candidates for cabling.

EVALUATION: In determining whether cabling is warranted, the condition of the tree must first be assessed. The arborist and customer must then determine if cables will help to make the tree reasonably safe. If the root system is not structurally sound, or if the tree contains excessive decay, removal of the tree may be the better choice.

PROCEDURE: Before cables are installed, a tree should be pruned to remove hazardous branches, reduce foliage weight, and help improve the structure. This pruning will help reduce the weight of limbs to be cabled.

Figure 2. This damage was due to poor tree structure. Cabling would have minimized or avoided the damage.

After installation, cables should be inspected periodically for deterioration of materials and changes in the tree that may make adjustments necessary. In addition to pruning on a regular basis, the tree should be fertilized to help improve its health and vigor.

Our arborists adhere strictly to procedural and safety guidelines for cabling.

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