

Arnoldia Reviews

A Photo Guide to the Patterns of Discoloration and Decay in Living Northern Hardwood Trees, by Alex L. Shigo and Edwin vH. Larson.

Judging by its title this ought to be a formidable treatise — but it isn't. For the forester for whom it is probably primarily intended, it is a straightforward explanation of what causes defects and discoloration in the wood of commercial forest trees. For the homeowner, the landscape gardener, the town tree warden, it gives an indication of the amount of internal damage caused to a tree by a particular kind of injury. Put another way, it suggests what kind of injury is best treated by removing the tree and what injuries are unlikely to weaken a tree unduly. It provides a visual explanation of the reasons why arborists place such great emphasis on clean flush cuts — why branch stubs should not be left on the tree to decay. Injuries by squirrels (yes!), sapsuckers, and porcupines are shown.

Fifty-nine reproductions of color photographs show what the inside and outside of the tree looks like with the various injuries. Dr. Shigo's basic tool is the chain saw, which allows longitudinal sections of a tree trunk to be made easily. This is, if you will, the results of tree autopsy. It certainly demonstrates the value of the method.

Highly recommended for homeowners interested in the well-being of their trees.

G.P.DEW.

U.S.D.A. Research Paper NE-127. Northeast Forest Experiment Station: Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. 1969. Available on request.