



# Repair Split Bark on Trees

Info provided by

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Oftentimes a tree will develop a split in the bark fairly close to the ground from mechanical injury from being hit by a lawnmower or from numerous “lashings” from a nylon-cord weed trimmer.

In some cases, a vertical separation of the bark and wood or ‘frost cracks’ are common on the south and southwest sides of the trunk. Frost cracks are caused by extreme and rapid fluctuations in temperatures or by early fall or late spring freezes (freezing/thawing cycles). Trees that are growing in exposed windy locations or in poorly drained soils are more likely to develop frost cracks, especially if the trees are not watered well in late fall and winter during prolonged dry spells.

A third reason why splits occur in the tree trunk is caused by the “heartwood” of the tree growing faster than the external bark can keep up with. This external expansion and the result is a small split or two depending on the proximity of the trunk to the ground.

***Regardless of what caused the crack to form, water gets inside the crack in the winter months... freezes and expands... and large areas of the bark “pop off” as a result. Prompt attention is very much warranted!***

Steps to Follow to Repair:

- (1) Peel off all the bark surrounding the vertical crack that is loose and barely attached to the tree. If you can, peel off the bark by hand as it is dead anyway. Once you get rid of the dead, loose bark, you’ll see the difference in the “live bark” that is firmly attached to the tree trunk.
- (2) Smooth or bevel the rough edges of the bark with a knife or a wood rasp (file) so that the wound is smooth along the edges. This prevents pockets to catch water and will leave less of a noticeable scar in the future. For faster healing, shape the edge of the wound as nearly as possible to an elongated ellipse. If you cannot achieve this exactly, try to make a point at the top and the bottom of the wound, even if you have to enlarge the wound.
- (3) Allow the wound to “air-dry” for a day or two, then spray the wound area with a combination of ferti-lome Systemic Fungicide and ferti-lome Tree & Shrub Drench for insect and disease prevention. Allow to dry for an additional day or two.
- (4) Now seal the wound with ferti-lome Pruning Paint as a healing aid. Seal the entire wounded area letting the pruning paint overlap an inch or two onto the good bark surrounding the wound.
- (5) Next, wrap the entire wounded area with Professional Tree Wrap. Start at the bottom of the wounded area and staple the wrapping to the bark and overlap the tree wrap as many times as necessary to completely seal the wound, going 3 or 4 inches above the top of the wound. Staple the end of the wrapping to the trunk and cut off the unused portion. If you have some gray duct tape or black electrical tape, seal the tree wrap 2 inches around the top of the tree trunk into the wound. Leave the tree wrap on one full growing season (1 year) before removing.
- (6) Light feedings of ferti-lome Tree & Shrub Food in the spring, summer and fall will encourage new growth and aid in faster “scar tissue” to be formed because of the right nutrients being present.