

Create a Wildlife Snag: An alternative to tree removal

A tree chosen to be snagged is intentionally reduced in size to a point where it is unlikely to fall over or break under a wind load. We cut the tree in a manner that imitates a tree broken in a storm and we expect decay. Care is taken to insure no damage is done to the plantings beneath the tree. These techniques were pioneered by Tim Brown, who is a master of artificially created or enhanced snags. The intent is to disguise the fact that the tree has been artificially cut.

Living branches are left on the tree to keep some energy flowing into the trunk to slow the deterioration of the remaining tree and to lessen the visual impact of the change. We won't let the tree grow back in an unwieldy manner. Instead, as we manage our snag, we will keep pruning off some of the expected new growth.

Cavities are cut into the tree to attract birds. A "bat slit" can also be cut to attract bats. Normally, it would take several years for the tree to be developed in this manner by fungi and woodpeckers. As a tree begins to decay, the early decomposers attract woodpeckers, who in turn begin the cavities which will eventually accommodate some of the local cavity-nesting birds. Bats often shelter under the bark as it begins to slough off.



Door to a birdhouse created in a snag.

Wildlife Snag created from the dying tree in front of the Seattle Audubon office (8050 35th Ave NE, Seattle).



Contact us to see if your tree is suitable for "snagging" instead of removal. We can also provide snag specifications for your tree company.

"Valuable Knowledge of Trees"