
Lubricants

Lubricant is probably a misnomer in crosscut saw terminology, but it persists. Saw teeth do not need to be lubricated as they cut. The friction of the saw tooth set against the kerf keeps the teeth reasonably clean. Resin deposits on the lower part of the teeth and in the saw gullets do produce drag. Lubricants soften these deposits and help remove them. The lubricant serves more as a solvent than as a lubricating agent.

Cutting in extremely wet environments or during a hard rain can cause wood fibers to swell. In these conditions, a lubricant can help reduce drag.



Traditionally, crosscut saw lubricants were petroleum based. Diesel fuel and kerosene were the most common lubricants and were effective. However, because of environmental concerns and the possible health hazards of petroleum-based solvents, we now recommend citrus or water-based solvents. Some tree resins can be removed with water.

Applying Lubricants

Squeeze bottles allow the sawyer or a helper to direct a stream of lubricant onto the saw's surfaces. On the push stroke, the sawyer keeps one hand on the saw handle and uses the other hand to apply the lubricant to one side of the saw blade. The sawyer lubricates the other side of the blade on the next push stroke.

Aerosol cans or spray bottles do not deliver enough lubricant to the saw blade to be successful. However, after the saw has been cleaned with a solvent at the end of the

day, a thin coating of light oil can be applied with an aerosol can or spray bottle.

Old photos show crosscut sawyers using a corked whiskey bottle or Japanese sake bottle to hold their lubricants. I still like this method because it is simple and efficient (figure 44).



Figure 44—A traditional oil bottle applies liberal amounts of saw lubricant. The hook held the bottle to the log, conveniently within reach.—*Now You're Logging*, by Bus Griffiths, with permission of Harbour Publishing, Madeira Park, BC, Canada

To make a corked bottle, select a round bottle, about a quart in size, with a screw cap. Bottles need to be thick, with a neck that is easy to grab. Lash a sharp hook (that will stick in the tree or log) to the bottle's neck and insert a slotted cork or rubber stopper into the bottle's mouth. Rubber is easier to work. Two bottles, one for each sawyer, are convenient when bucking large logs. The slotted cork is used to protect the hook point, an important safety consideration, when the bottle's cap is screwed on for transport.

Experiment with the length, number, and size of the slots in the cork or rubber stopper. I usually cut three grooves in the cork, depending on the width and depth of each groove. You shake the liquid out instead of pouring it.

Some sawyers use a plastic squeeze bottle with a slotted cork. They remove the solid cap at the jobsite and insert the cork. The liquid is applied by simultaneously shaking and squeezing the bottle. Make sure the cork is tight so it won't pop off under pressure.

Instead of a slotted cork, many old-timers stuffed pine needles or grass into the top of the bottle to control the flow.