

## PRUNING OF BLACK WALNUT - SUBSEQUENT DISCOLOURATION AND HOW TO MINIMISE IT

by

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Black walnut (*Juglans nigra* L.) is an important wood producing species in the North American continent. Its wood is useful for many products including veneer, gunstocks, novelties, furniture and other items. The primary characteristic of black walnut wood that distinguishes it from other North American hardwoods is its rich brown colour. Unfortunately, this colour is often marred by discolourations caused by many factors. One such factor is the loss of branches (whether through natural or artificial means) from the main stem of the tree. Pruning, in effect, causes a wound-host response that can manifest itself in discolouration of localised (or larger) areas with the stem. Proper forest management techniques can minimise discolourations associated with pruning. Suggested techniques include: 1) Pruning in the spring as opposed to the fall. Apparently less discolouration and subsequent degrade occurs to the

woody material. Possibly a faster closure of the pruned area results in less exposure to environmental factors which promote discolouration. 2) Pruning early in the life of the tree so that the discolouration that does occur can be contained within the central core of the tree. However, this should be done over a period of years rather than all at once, so that an adequate crown is maintained for optimal growth. Pruning should continue up to, and above, the height necessary for a long clear stem. 3) Branch collars that have developed around the existing branch should be left undamaged. If the collar is removed during pruning, the wounded area will be increased and a larger area of discolouration and possibly decay will be introduced. We believe that management procedures such as those outlined above will minimise the occurrence of discolouration associated with pruning of black walnut.