



IN the last article we had a very brief look at canopy tie-offs when using an SRT system to access the canopy and, just to recap, one of the main advantages of using this system is that the load at the anchor point is equal to the weight of the climber (and equipment); unlike using the basal tie-off where it is effectively doubled.

One disadvantage though is the need to isolate the anchor point; and once isolated we need to secure the line around our branch. We could use a running bowline for the purpose but I'm not a fan of having rope against rope where there are points of friction (although obviously the rope isn't moving) and we could really do with a system whereby we could retrieve it. There are various ways of making the system retrievable either from the ground, or from the anchor point.

SETTING UP THE CANOPY TIE-OFF

In order to install a canopy tie-off, the length of your line must be at least twice the height of the proposed anchor; with the line thrown over the anchor point, the next step is to create an Alpine Butterfly with an arborist ring included into it. This can be easily achieved by threading the ring on to the eye-splice end of the line, then wrapping the line three times around your hand... then position the arborist ring on to the middle of those three wraps and tie as usual. At this point you can feed the tail end of the line through the arb ring and pull the Alpine Butterfly and the associated arb ring up to the anchor point. I'd also strongly suggest putting a stopper knot of some description between the Alpine Butterfly and the eye splice.

(Pictured above left.)

One of the advantages of doing this is that retrieving the system is made much easier; if the anchor point was tied using a Running Bowline, the additional friction makes removal harder. I've seen people use a micro-pulley to achieve something similar (*main image left*) but it's not a method I would recommend... not least because the loading on the pulley is all over the place

Let's get climbing

DC VICKERS, ARBORICULTURE PROGRAMME MANAGER AT BERKSHIRE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, CONTINUES THEIR SERIES ON CLIMBING.

and it hasn't been tested for this usage.

RETRIEVING THE SYSTEM

There are two ways of retrieving this system – either from the ground or from the anchor point itself. First off, the ground-based retrieval; actually, this is a bit of a cheat as all you need to do is tie a thin line (throw-line is perfect) to the eye splice before you send the Alpine Butterfly up to the anchor point. Once you finish climbing in the canopy and descend back down again, you can pull on the thin line and the rope anchor will return to you on the ground. It's simple, effective but it's also a nuisance as the thin line often gets in the way as you ascend to the anchor point and, for that reason alone, I never use it!

However, the system that I do use is equally simple, effective and works a treat... although you will need to be at the anchor point to do it. Back when we installed the anchor, the Alpine Butterfly was sent up, leaving the eye splice dangling down... which is exactly what we want when descending back down the line. Whilst hanging under the anchor point, attach a karabiner to the eye splice and connect this to your harness (you may need to use a short sling, see photo). As you descend down the line, your weight will pull the Alpine Butterfly down and here's where the low friction from the arborist ring pays dividends.

(Pictured above right.)

Remember: it is imperative that your anchor point is no more than half the length of your line, so if you have changed your anchor point before descending, you must make

DISCLAIMER

The usual disclaimer applies, you would be well advised to seek out training and advice from an experienced person before trying out any of the methods discussed in these articles. Try out any new method by starting low to the ground initially and then moving higher. The magazine, Berkshire College of Agriculture, or I, cannot accept any liability for any injuries howsoever caused by trying out methods shown in these articles.

sure this is the case, otherwise you risk descending off the end of your line! You can do this quite simply by installing the anchor point setup as described, then sending a loop of line down to the ground... with you still holding the tail end, the loop must be touching the ground. If this is the case, then this method of retrieving the line as you descend will work.

Over the course of several articles, we've looked at getting into the canopy, starting with the basic Prusik and then moving on to the Hitchclimber, then latterly using some simple SRT techniques. Now, we'll take a leap forward over the next few articles as we look into some of the issues surrounding rigging timber using various methods, with a particular look at system loads.