
VT Rules (variations on hitch performance)

Posted by R.Boreal - 06/14/2007 10:38am

Valdotain Tresse still #1 by a long shot - (Knot performance with different rope products)

Yesterday I was psyched to climb and try various configurations.

So I climbed on a Chestnut Oak that has 1/2" Yale XTC set up for DdRT, running thru a steel ring Buckingham false at the top end. But that low friction from the rings is countered by at least two branches that contact the rope on its way down. My 10mm Bee Line eye-to-eye just would NOT grab that 1/2" line using a Schwabisch prusik. Of course I didn't mess about with it for too long because it's not worth my time. I ended up trying an 11mm tail into a loop and Hedden. After that I went up again using the same 11mm loop tied in a Klemheist on another tree. And then for my third climb, I bagged the experimental and used the Bee Line tied in a Valdotain Tresse.

The Hedden, and to a lesser extent the Klem, are not ruling configurations because if you have to adjust your position and descend a little with only one hand on the knot, once you break the hold, they often continue to slip until you ascend again, which re-locks them. Not good if you're doing a paying job, which I wasn't. But still, I did need to reach to my limit to cut off a few sprouts. Even minor tasks aloft are easier if you can depend on your hitch to release and grab with only one hand to work it. I'm spoiled by the VT. It does exactly as you expect, everytime, with no exceptions, using any old combination of rope brands or composition, so long as the rope size ratios stay pretty much the same.

The Schwab prusik worked flawlessly for me a few weeks back, using Ultratech for my eye-to-eye over the same Yale XTC Fire.

And last month during a paying job, the Schwabisch grabbed perfectly with 10mm Ultratech over 1/2" New England Ultravee. I'm cautious when adjusting it with one hand because because of the way can release "for good" with slack. But for the most part, when there's tension on it, it grips very well. As a matter of fact, if I use a Tenex eye-to-eye it locks a little too well, especially on a 12 strand like Arborplex. Then releasing with one hand gets too difficult.

So what's the point? Point is, no matter what my experience has taught me about a sure-fire setup, for me climbing will always be about trying new things. (After I prove them to be safe in a controlled way.) So I will never stop experimenting. But after all is said and done, the VT absolutely RULES. For the amount of time I have spent re-tying or wringing the windings on a Blake's when it doesn't want to grab, or not advance freely enough, and all the other BS involved in making various hitches "just right", I just don't have that nonsense with the VT.

Tie it the way it's illustrated in the Tree Climber's Companion - 4 loops, 3 braids, and a micro-pulley. It ALWAYS grabs perfectly. It releases predictably (with varying degrees of effort depending on your eye2eye/lifeline combination) and when you let it go, it stops DEAD. It NEVER, EVER slips.

I have read about the possibility of a VT inverting and failing. If anyone knows of this happening with the micro-pulley, I'd be interested to hear about it. Maybe without, but with the pulley I don't see how.

That's it - my .02

Hedden who?

Posted by Treeman - 06/14/2007 08:51pm

What is a Hedden?

It appears you are a 13mm rope guy. You do any 11mm rope work?

What is your experience with Bee line? Have you experienced any hemoraging of the line (bulge out). Has your Bee line developed any memory?

Posted by Leon - 06/15/2007 01:23am

Peter, I've found that Beeline works great when new but that as it gets older it becomes more grabby. I thought it was just me for a while, but my coworker has noticed the same thing. I use the 8mm Beeline, with double fisherman eyes.

I've been using the VT for a couple years now, but a few weeks ago I tried out the Icicle hitch and I haven't switched

back yet. Give it a shot!

13MM ropes, icicle/hedden hitches and other stuff

Posted by R.Boreal - 06/15/2007 01:41pm

First off, let me say that putting an add'l turn in the Schwab prusik solved me "it's not grabbing wah wah wah" prblm in the initial post. The Schwab prusik is an awesome frct htch and I only just started using it a few months ago. I have enough experience in general to know to put another winding in it - I have been using it and calling it a "rolling hitch" (Morrow Book of Knots) for almost a year in many other applications.

Re: 11mm rope - No, only tails. No 200' lines or any lifelines in 11mm. I have a couple tails in 11mm, strictly because as we all know, small over larger works better, so for a Blake's or anything else where you can opt for a split tail config, the 11mm is preferable to me.

A Hedden hitch is a Klemheist knot wound "upside down". Go to www.mytreelessons.com for details. Kudos to that person - that's a really cool site.

I can't comment on the Bee's wear characteristics - only had Bee Line for a month or so. One Eye 2 Eye tail that I did find objectionable, and returned because of poor wear, was the Technora. Technora does not have the smooth wound cover on the outside - the look is similar to Tenex, but Tenex works great. Ultratech also, because of the covering, and I think of all of them Ultratech is my favorite. But the Technora (www.arborist.com) I found to unravel in a disconcerting way. Although the shop owner told me that the unraveling (I brought it in to return and he looked at it) was not dangerous, I didn't like it. He did credit me for a different one.

I have never tried the icicle - I can't tie it from memory. Thanks for the sugg. I'll try it.

Also, the 8mm Bee you refer to as getting too grabby ... That's a bit small if you're climbing on 1/2" rope. Unless you are using 11mm lifelines, I would recommend the 10mm Bee.

Posted by Leon - 06/22/2007 03:05am

R. Boreal, I am using 11mm climbing lines, but I'll give that fatter BeeLine a try out sometime and see how it works. The last few days I've been climbing on Tenex again, the old standby.

It took me a few tries before I could wrap my mind around tying the Icicle. It's definitely not as easy to tie as the VT. It's a nice knot, though. It grabs reliably, but doesn't lock down too tightly, and releases smoothly for the descent.
