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## Floating D type saddles

Posted by Cambium - 03/31/2008 10:16pm

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Hello to all,

I'm wondering if any of you have much experience with the floating D or slide type saddles. I'm in the process of considering a few that are out there such as Buckingham's Glide II, Petzl Sequoia, Komet Butterfly II, and most recently, Weaver's wide back "Cougar". I like the idea of being able to twist side to side without feeling that I'm being forced into a more vertical position. Any input will be greatly appreciated.

cambium

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## Re:Floating D type saddles

Posted by Tom Dunlap - 03/31/2008 11:41pm

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Floating D is a VERY popular harness style.

The BFII is the harness that the Glide and the new Weaver are based on. Until I got my Treeflex I couldn't imagine a more comfortable harness than my BFII.

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## Re:Floating D type saddles

Posted by Baker - 04/01/2008 07:43am

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[http://i254.photobucket.com/albums/hh93/f\\_klock/DSCF0088.jpg](http://i254.photobucket.com/albums/hh93/f_klock/DSCF0088.jpg)

I have no problems going off-axis in my Tengu! I'm clipped into the center delta too, not one of the side positioning rings.

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## Re:Floating D type saddles

Posted by emr - 04/01/2008 08:01am

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I got my Glide about 2 years ago and I thought it was the best saddle I ever used. It was comfy and super smooth to climb in. Now the comfy part is almost gone but it is still nice and smooth with the rope bridge. I also have a Tengu which doesn't have a floating bridge, but it is very comfy. Treeflex seems to be a great option too. My guess is that you want to go too wrong with any of the saddles you mentioned. Since the Weaver is so new, I have never heard anything about it.

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## Re:Floating D type saddles

Posted by cambium - 04/01/2008 08:51am

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Tom Dunlap wrote:

Floating D is a VERY popular harness style.

The BFII is the harness that the Glide and the new Weaver are based on. Until I got my Treeflex I couldn't imagine a more comfortable harness than my BFII.

The Treeflex is a very tempting product, but a bit more than I can justify spending. My understanding is that the BFII is a French made product and, until recently, didn't have a rope style bridge, but one made of webbing -- much as is the case with the Sequoia. The only drawback I can think of a web-type bridge is the difficulty of use with a pulley. On another forum, there are folks who think that the new Cougar is a copy of the Glide. But beyond some similarities, they do look like independent products.

cambium

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## Re: Floating D type saddles

Posted by cambium - 04/01/2008 08:56am

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Baker wrote:

[http://i254.photobucket.com/albums/hh93/f\\_klock/DSCF0088.jpg](http://i254.photobucket.com/albums/hh93/f_klock/DSCF0088.jpg)

I have no problems going off-axis in my Tengu! I'm clipped into the center delta too, not one of the side positioning rings.

I have no experience with the New Tribe line of harnesses. Is that kind of mobility typical for all their products?

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## Re: Floating D type saddles

Posted by cambium - 04/01/2008 09:05am

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emr wrote:

I got my Glide about 2 years ago and I thought it was the best saddle I ever used. It was comfy and super smooth to climb in. Now the comfy part is almost gone but it is still nice and smooth with the rope bridge.

Two years seems like a short time for padding to break down. You must do a lot of climbing. Or, it is planned obsolescence on Buckingham's part. That's probably an undeserved thought. I'm sure they wouldn't want you to buy a new saddle every two years. ;) It does make me wonder how often people replace their saddles.

cambium

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## Re: Floating D type saddles

Posted by Baker - 04/01/2008 09:25am

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I have no experience with the New Tribe line of harnesses. Is that kind of mobility typical for all their products?

I'm actually not the best one to answer that question, as this is the first NT saddle I have owned. I CAN tell you that compared to other types of fixed ring harnesses I own, the Tengu has the most mobility of them all.

This review from the NT website might shed some light on the subject:

[http://www.newtribe.com/catalog/product\\_reviews\\_info.php?products\\_id=180&reviews\\_id=11](http://www.newtribe.com/catalog/product_reviews_info.php?products_id=180&reviews_id=11)

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## Re: Floating D type saddles

Posted by oldtimer - 04/01/2008 09:38am

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Cambium are you into Rec Climbing or use it for daily work?

For work saddles there are a bunch to select from and depending on the amount of use and the care you take of the saddle (Storage, working conditions, etc) they will last a bit longer than two years I imagine. ( Tom D. knows better from his experience.)

For Rec Climbing; I am sure that the New Tribe saddles are great in most respects because that is what they were designed for Rec Climbing/Hanging around and Chilling out. I have purchased 3 saddles from them and all of them are still in use. The last One a Tengu saddle is in almost New Condition but it is the least used one because I got it for my guests and student climbers kind of thing. My regular saddle is a little over 2 years old and it looks like new still. I do not climb as much as say Moss who climbs almost daily but the New Tribe saddle will last a long time with good care.

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## Re: Floating D type saddles

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Posted by moss - 04/01/2008 01:36pm

oldtimer wrote:... do not climb as much as say Moss who climbs almost daily but the New Tribe saddle will last a long time with good care.

I wish I climbed daily, more like 2-3 times a week. I have a day job (to support my tree habit).

NT saddles are durable. I'm rough on mine, all that squeezing through nasty tight spaces in conifers etc. They hold up.

Pro arbs can wear gear out pretty fast so I'm not surprised at EMR's saddle padding dying at 2 years. Old-school leather harnesses last much longer but they weigh more and are even more uncomfortable if you're not standing on the tree.

Floating D's are going to allow you to hold horizontal and partially inverted positions more easily than an NT harness but as Baker and others have said you can get into those positions with an NT. The NT will tend to bring you back towards a sitting position. I regard that as a safety feature for less experienced climbers. You can get off vertical very quickly on a sliding D, a virtue for a seasoned work climber.

I've stopped climbing on my BII because the leg straps are too painful for me for extended hours in a tree. It has a good home.

-moss

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## Re:Floating D type saddles

Posted by cambium - 04/01/2008 07:13pm

oldtimer wrote:

Cambium are you into Rec Climbing or use it for daily work?

Hey Oldtimer, to answer your question about whether I'm into rec climbing or climbing for work, I'm primarily a rec climber who also has frequent occasions to apply the work of an arborist to the trees on this bit of acreage I have. While the saddle will certainly see blocks of time with daily use, it will most often be used for recreational climbing. In that respect, I'm a hands on climber who may hang around suspended for short periods, but I'm more often in contact with the tree and supporting some of my weight with arms and/or legs.

The NT saddles sound well made. Thanks for the input.

cambium

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## Re:Floating D type saddles

Posted by cambium - 04/01/2008 07:19pm

moss wrote:

I wish I climbed daily, more like 2-3 times a week. I have a day job (to support my tree habit).

You're not alone, Moss. I'm sure most wish they could climb daily. Supporting a habit is a great incentive to keep the day job. :-)

Thanks for the info concerning the Butterfly II. Just looking at the way the NT saddles cradle the back of the leg does suggest they would be far more comfortable on that part of the body. I wonder if they (NT) have considered making a rope bridge saddle. Over the course of the day, I found out that Weaver's 'Cougar' isn't in production yet and may not be available until summer. You have to give their marketing department credit for getting a jump on the task of promoting their new offering. :-) I wonder if Weaver will keep the price so reasonable once they have a product to sell.

cambium

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## Re: Floating D type saddles

Posted by emr - 04/01/2008 08:52pm

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Cambium, I climb daily and the padding that I have issues with is in the legs, not the back. That padding is holding up just fine. We get new saddles at work on a 5 year rotation, or sooner if a problem arises. My Glide should last 5 years easy, especially now that I climb with the Tengu also. I think the Tengu is built to last, but it is not as smooth and mobil as the saddles with the bridge. Just like everything in tree climbing there are trade offs. With the NT you get comfort and a great price, with others you get better movement but with less comfort and a higher price.... just my opinion from the saddles that I have climbed in as well as the saddles my co-workers have climbed in. There are 4 other climbers that climb on a regular basis at work and we all have different saddles, if that gives you some insight as to how personal of a decision it is.

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## Re: Floating D type saddles

Posted by moss - 04/01/2008 08:56pm

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cambium wrote:

...Thanks for the info concerning the Butterfly II. Just looking at the way the NT saddles cradle the back of the leg does suggest they would be far more comfortable on that part of the body. I wonder if they (NT) have considered making a rope bridge saddle.

The design of the NT harness doesn't lend itself to a floating anchor bridge. It would have to be a total redesign. The NT as is doesn't need an anchor bridge, there is enough movement in the legstrap/belt loop system to let you change positions and do what you need to do in a tree. The floating anchor bridge system evolved to allow for reaching out on the end of limb walks to prune outer branches. It's a specialized evolution of harness design for the specific needs of daily work climbers.

Generally speaking arborist work climbers spend more time standing directly on the tree because of the nature of their work. They have to be in close proximity to limbs they are cutting. The harnesses they use are not designed for long hang times. Work climbers get in and out of the tree as quickly as possible, time is money. When you're rec climbing try spending more than 5-10 minutes standing on a branch. Your legs will start shaking. It's very tiring to put your weight on one leg or the other or both for any length of time in a tree. When you put your weight on the rope and harness you can rest your legs, it's the key to being able to stay in the tree continuously for 3 or more hours. This is common for rec climbers, I barely consider it a climb if I don't go over 3 hours. Pro climbers have the skills to move very quickly in the tree, resetting TIPs etc. This kind of movement in the tree takes years of daily climbing to achieve. For rec climbers it's going to take longer to acquire new tie-ins and work your way around the tree. You have to be able to sit and rest while you work on your next move.

Rec climbing is a really different way of being in a tree than work climbing and I think the gear and technique is going to be a little different. For instance I don't personally know one work climber who uses a sleeve or pipe style cambium saver and I've climbed with a good number. It's either no cambium protection, ring-ring type saver or ropeguide (ART) style false crotch. These approaches fit the arborist climbing style. They can be used for rec climbing but they are designed/evolved for the specific needs of work climbers. It's not a great idea for a rec climber to blindly model their gear and technique after work climbers, unless there is a specific reason based on climbing experience to do so.

The Bill harness is an example of an excellent work harness. It's not a great rec harness, unless you're an arborist making a weekend rec climb :-). I've done a fair amount of trimming work in NT harnesses, they are very functional for doing tree work when you need to do it.

This is not an ad for NT harnesses, many rec climbers use non-NT harnesses. I wrote this excessively long rambling post because I think if you're a beginner rec climber it's really important not to base your gear and technique decisions on the latest work climbing gear and style. Start simple and learn how to be in a tree. Spend many hours climbing, rope and harness. You don't need the latest and most expensive to learn the most important skills of climbing. I often climb in an NT Basic harness. It's a great harness, doesn't need all the bells and whistles, plus it's light, folds up small and doesn't cost much. Then when you decide you want more features you'll be able to make an informed decision on which direction to go. Your NT Basic will always be there for a quick woods climb or it will make a great second harness to bring a friend up.

-moss

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## Re: Floating D type saddles

Posted by cambium - 04/02/2008 10:04am

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The sum of the parts is truly greater than the whole, especially when it comes to the knowledge surrounding something as esoteric as tree climbing. I need only recall recent conversations with friends and family to be reminded that climbing trees with ropes in either a recreational or work related capacity is an activity with which most people are unfamiliar. While local arborist supply shops are well versed on tools of the trade, the idea of recreational tree climbing isn't something they have had to contend with very often.

I must admit that I have been climbing trees with ladders and luck for years until recently thinking that the tools of rock climbing (readily available and affordable through places like REI) might make some of my trunk hugging efforts less dangerous and less physically demanding. That lead me to internet searches through which I discovered a whole world of gear specific to the climbing of trees. I'm sure there are parts of the country where the mention of tree climbing conjures images of adults donning gear, setting ropes, and ascending into the canopy with the art of technique. Most parts though, still see it as an activity reserved for children and those with soft bones. :- ) As I continue to read from the small body of books available on the subject, I am ever so thankful for the knowledge and input of others who have found their way into trees. I look forward to sharing and learning more from you through this forum. In the meantime, if anyone needs constructive input concerning the making of fine furniture, I'd be happy to help. :- )

cambium

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## Re: Floating D type saddles

Posted by oldtimer - 04/02/2008 11:51am

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I've done a fair amount of trimming work in NT harnesses, they are very functional for doing tree work when you need to do it. Moss said.

Me Too!:laugh: as a matter of fact yesterday p.m. I completed the removal of a large branch that I have cleared out of limbs a week ago and I wanted to try some of the lowering techniques I have seen posted at Treebuzz and Treeworld. It was a great work out right at my backyard. I am always very careful, very methodical, dole check every move and TIP before engaging the chain saw. In other words making sure the job is done correctly, safely and I stay in one piece. My New Tribe Work Saddle does the job well. Very comfortable and secure :lol:

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