

# Selecting a THROW LINE

By David Rattigan

Using a throw line is a specialized skill, best employed under the right circumstances. Sometimes, you're better off going up on a ladder. Other times, throwing up a line and following it up the tree is the best way to get the job done.

"It depends on where you are," stresses Kathy Holzer, 2004 International Climbing Champion and a climbing arborist for 12 years. "I worked for five years for somebody who didn't even have a throw line on the truck. In a lot of situations, frankly, that's faster. You don't need to throw and re-throw, you just go up the old school way.

"If you've got a 100-foot elm that breaks into three main stems at 50 feet, it can be hard to get into it old school," she explains. "You need a throw line to get anywhere."

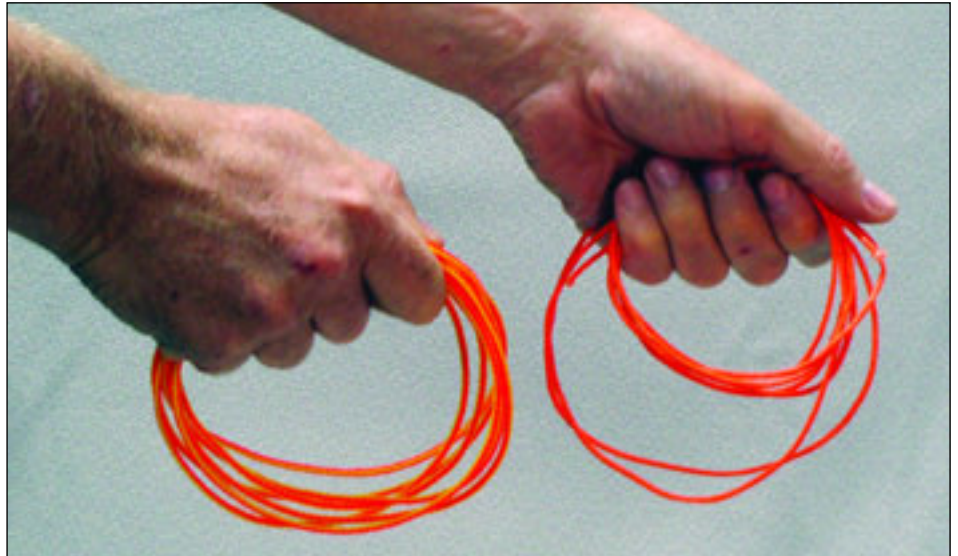
For the climber, the choices are fairly limited. Many rope manufacturers, including four contacted for this article, don't even make a throw line because the segment is so highly specialized (a.k.a. small).

For more than 10 years, the leader in this highly specialized market segment has been Zing-It, a rope made of a slippery material that allows it to glide out of the spool and keeps it from snagging on branches.

"Zing-It was the first and is the best," according to Jamie Goddard, with SherrillTree, who notes that its construction and materials have made it popular not just in the tree care industry but for multiple purposes, including as a kite/wakeboard/water ski line.

Manufactured by Ferndale, Wash.-based Samson Rope, Zing-It is yellow and comes in two sizes, 1.75 mm (average strength 400 pounds) and 2.2 mm (average strength 580 pounds).

"The features necessary for a throw line are light weight, durability, strength and what we call a co-efficient of friction (slipperiness)," Samson Sales Manager Randy Nulle confirms. "Those are the four main features. You can add cost on top of that. Our throw line is definitely not the least



Throw lines may be the lightest and skinniest lines in your arsenal, but they need to be among the toughest to put up with all the abrasion they suffer. Shown here are All Gear's Target (at left, orange and yellow) and Fling-It (orange) throw lines.

expensive on the market, but it's the most popular because it's the best value.

"Somebody can pay less for a throw line, but if they have to replace it more often then it's not as good a value."

Its synthetic fiber and slick coating provide a cord that is strong and slick to slide over branches without snagging, but can also be knotted easily.

"The throw line probably takes more abuse than any other arborist line, just by

virtue of fact that you are raking it over the branch," Nulle says. "That's the line that you use initially to get everything else into the tree, and there's no protection up there on the first throw line. Once you get to the climbing line, maybe you already have a friction saver up there, but it's not there for the first throw line. The throw line needs to take a lot of abuse, and hold up over a long period of time."

Two challengers to Zing-It's sales lead are the four-year-old Fling-It by All Gear, Inc., and a year-old throw rope called DynaGlide, made by New England Ropes.

When not competing, Holzer, owner of TCIA-member Out on a Limb Tree Care Company in Seattle, Wash., has used Zing-It on the job for many years. She has been using Fling-It recently.

The two ropes are very similar, in Holzer's opinion, and both are of high quality.

"Fling-It has a little bit of a different weave, so it's flat or square as opposed to round, so it may tangle even less than Zing-It does," she says. "They're pretty analogous. One of my guys is using Zing-It."

Fling-It was introduced at TCI EXPO in 2002, and has been picking up fans ever since, says Tom Daly, president of the Northbrook, Ill.-based All Gear, Inc.,



Introduced in July 2006, New England Ropes' DynaGlide has a 16-strand weave that gives it a smooth finish designed to more easily slide over branches.