



Guidelines for Blazing Trails

General Rules of Thumb

- Follow the landowner's choice of paint or tag for blazes as well as the assigned color and shape
- Blaze in one direction and then in the other direction on the return trip.
- Use two people while blazing; one checks the line of sight (visibility to on-coming hikers) before the other places the blaze
- Blaze when leaves are on the tree (May through mid-October)
- Return in mid-summer to early fall to
 - Trim back vegetation
 - Check and replace damaged blazes
 - For tags – make sure the blaze is not flush with the tree and pull out nails slightly
 - For paint blazes – scrape and trim to size; refresh as necessary

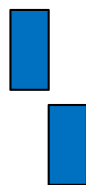
Placing Blazes

- On large, healthy trees close to the edge of the trail; avoid trees with fungus, dead limbs, woodpecker holes, cavities, or thinning at the top of the tree
- At eye level or approximately 6' above the ground or trail level; higher on trails used in winter.
- Within sight of the next blaze,
 - Not so close that you see multiple blazes at one time
 - Closer together on trails with less distinct treadway
 - Further apart on well-defined, straight woods roads
- So that nothing blocks the view (cut branches, small trees or leaves)
- Prefer right hand side of trail, but which tree has the best visibility to the hikers is more important
- Not on both sides of the same tree unless there is no choice
- On co-aligned trails (two or more trails using the same trail corridor), place the same color on the top and both blazes on the same tree
- At turns greater than 45°,
 - Just before or at the turn, double blaze with the upper blaze in the direction of the turn
 - Place a confirmation blaze almost immediately after a turn
- At beginning and end of trail: A trail begins in the direction from which you approach it and ends where you finishing at a trailhead or another trail. Both ends are marked with a triple blaze in the shape of a triangle.
 - At the beginning, there is one blaze on the top and two on the bottom. Think "A" (Approach).
 - At the end, there are two blazes on top and one on the bottom. Think "V" for Victory as you finally made it!

Straight



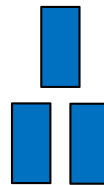
Left turn



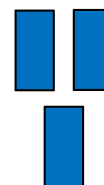
Right turn



Start of trail



End of trail



Paint Blazing

- Assemble equipment needed in a bucket
 - Paint in small container (see recommended color chart at www.nynjtc.org/volunteerresources)
 - Spray paint (gray and brown)
 - Paint brush 1-1 ½ inch
 - Stencil of size of blaze you are using
 - Scraper
 - Plastic bag for wet paint brush
 - Rag
 - Map
 - Small container of water
 - Loppers
 - Clippers
 - Small saw
- Paint the blazes
 - Spray out any blazes on trees you are not using
 - Scrape rough bark to have a relatively smooth surface (don't scrape smooth bark trees)
 - Trace outline of blaze using stencil
 - Paint blaze

Tag Blazing (metal or plastic)

- Assemble equipment needed in a bucket
 - Tags
 - Claw hammer
 - 2" galvanized nails
 - Map
 - Loppers
 - Clippers
 - Small saw
- Attach tag blazes
 - Use 2" galvanized roofing nails. Aluminum nails bend, especially in dense wood or in cold weather.
 - Insert nail into blaze before attaching to tree
 - Place fingers between tag and tree
 - Hammer the nails in half way (about 1") to allow for tree growth; Otherwise the tree will absorb the blaze as the tree continues to grow