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Are You Being Bad Again?

On the way to share some ideas with tree care folks last month, I stopped to get some lunch. The restaurant had an open-style area for the employees in front of a pass-through window to the kitchen, so the staff was in full view. I noticed a lot of things while waiting for my order. The staff all had smiles on their faces. They were helping each other. There was a lot of laughter and teasing. It was impossible to tell who was “management” and who was “wait staff.” They were having fun. The atmosphere was light.

I had a really great opinion of whoever was leading this team until I noticed a piece of paper hanging up in front of the employees. It was some sort of computer print-out, and in big black letters that I could read as far away as my table, it said, “We’re being BAD again!” I felt my insides crush as I read that. “We’re being BAD again!” Those were some powerful words that had an effect on me as a customer. How must the team feel to see those words – not to mention that they were in full view of customers. The first thing that hit me was the opportunity to communicate a different style of message – one that captured what was great about this team – and it obviously was a great team. Something like, “Hey folks – we’re too great a team for these numbers! Let’s work together to make these numbers match the terrific performers we know we are!” Or “Hey! Who let the other restaurant’s employees in here? Let’s get these numbers back up together!”

I thought about some of the things I learned while growing up. For example, my mom once told me that if I couldn’t treat the family right, I surely wasn’t going to go out with friends. In other words, what you say and how you treat people is important — no exceptions.

One piece of advice I try to follow regarding anger: if you’re angry, state that the words or actions of the other person make you angry. Don’t yell and scream to get the response you’re looking for from the other person. My husband has always been a big fan of, “It’s not what you say but how you say it.” I have a quote on my computer that I keep in front of me, and I don’t know the attribution. It says, “As a man speaks, so he is…”

Too often, we default to the easy way out. We’re tired; sick of the same old problems; have patterns of behavior that just take too much effort to break; and so we fall back on what’s easy. We don’t think before we speak. We don’t ask ourselves if what we’re getting ready to say is going to get the action or reaction that we want. We don’t take the time or effort to rise above ourselves to become people who are effective in our communication. It takes work. Most of us will admit that during those times when we reacted by saying something that made us feel better usually caused more damage.

Oprah Winfrey once said, “Leadership is about empathy. It is about having the ability to relate and to connect with people for the purpose of inspiring and empowering their lives.”

I don’t think “We’re being BAD again!” is inspiring. It may produce fear or doubt about one’s job, but it doesn’t inspire. Having it up where customers could see it wasn’t such a smart idea either.

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We’re all so busy now – moving faster than we should, just trying to get to the next job, the next task, the next thing on our list – that thinking is being treated as a luxury instead of a necessary part of what we do every day. The payoff for thinking before we speak has long-term consequences – good or bad. It’s our choice which consequences we bring into our business every day with every interaction. Think about it.
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April

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The only compact track loader available from the factory with your choice of high strength steel or rubber tracks.

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April

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Mysteries around us.
In the real world, one requirement that never changes is finding ways to help your crews work more safely. That's why Altec tree care equipment is built rugged, reliable and designed with integral safety features. Our complete line of aerial devices and wood chippers is highlighted by our newest machine - the Altec LRV60-E70. It will help your crews work smarter and more efficiently. This unit combines 75 feet of working height and smooth maneuverability with the lowest cost of equipment ownership in the industry and unmatched financing options. For tree care units that help you work safer and smarter, call the company that builds them - Altec.
Chain saws and other two-cycle engine powered machinery have a reputation as being heavy polluters. We’ve all heard the stories. You could drive a car from Dallas, Texas, to Tallahassee, Fla., and send out a similar amount of pollution (in this case volatile organic compounds) as using your chain saw for one hour.

In 1991 the Environmental Protection Agency did a study on non-road equipment and discovered that these machines created almost as much pollution as all highway vehicles. Admittedly, this included a broad range of machines – from backhoes to tractors to chain saws – but the agency also determined that non-road, spark-ignition engines under 25 hp (including everything from lawn mowers to string trimmers to chain saws) accounted for 16 percent of the hydrocarbon (HC) and 21 percent of the carbon monoxide (CO) emissions nationwide. In other words, small engines had become a problem. They were making a disproportionate amount of pollution for the size of the engine, and the EPA needed to create new guidelines to improve air quality.

These laws are good news for arborists who have been inhaling pounds of emissions running saws every year. Recall how you feel when you flush a large stump. While you are making the cut it feels like the fumes are bouncing off the ground and into your lungs. Then when you stand up again, it’s not unusual to feel dizzy. The new regulations are being put in place to both protect the chain saw user and the overall air quality.

In 1997, Phase 1 went into effect and lowered the level on some pollutants by 32 percent. Phase 2 will be implemented between 2002 and 2007 resulting in a 70 percent reduction in HC and nitrous oxide (NOx) levels. The big year is next year, 2005, and it’s crunch-time for small engine manufacturers.

Again this is good news because old style saws had raw fuel mixing with exhaust resulting in inefficient burning and excessive fumes. Only a few years ago it wasn’t unusual to see a poorly tuned or dull saw spewing out a greenish exhaust, which was a sign of almost liquid fuel coming out of the muffler. A combination of low pollution standards and bad operator practices caused an unnecessary amount of emissions.

The EPA modeled its regulations after tough California laws that earlier had established the original two-tier system, beginning with a simple law to reduce
emissions, then a tougher law coming into effect a few years later. The manufacturers met the first round of regulations by simply making the fuel/oil mix leaner, but for Phase 2 everything is more difficult. Major engineering changes have increased chain saw costs, and the manufacturers are concerned they will have difficulty recouping their costs.

Chain saws are an extremely price-sensitive item, as much of the volume is controlled by Sears, Wal-Mart, Home Depot and Lowe’s, who keep prices down. Look for the manufacturers to rely more than ever on their vast network of small dealerships to get the word out on why the new saws will cost more.

Two other factors are important points that will drive the market. One is that it is much easier to improve emissions on smaller engines than large ones, and the second is that the EPA will allow manufacturers to average their emissions across their product lines, a process called banking and trading. Just as clean air standards have allowed auto manufacturers to pollute more with their high-emissions SUVs by selling lots of lower-polluting, mid-size cars, they will allow the small engine manufacturers to sell lots of string trimmers or small chain saws to average out the heavier emissions of larger saws. This will give manufacturers some breathing room before they have to improve the emissions on all chain saws, especially the larger ones, in future years.

“As of this year, several of our saws will have catalytic converters to meet the 2005 standards,” says Dave Tilton Jr., president of Tilton Equipment, the Rye, N.H., distributor for Jonsered and Efco. As expressed earlier, the converters will probably be on the smaller saws, as the technology doesn’t seem to be there yet for the bigger saws. “Saws will get hotter, but the weight increase is less than half an ounce with no loss of power. The changes have not affected price,” says Tilton.

Tilton also gave his views on the manufacturers’ resistance to the new EPA regulations. “It’s the nature of any industry to resist change,” he says, “but in the end it’s better. Jonsered has always been about the operator – ergonomics, comfort and safety. These new emission controls are better for everyone.”

Stihl Inc. took a very strong stand on the new laws. “We haven’t made compromises on saws because we want to look after the professional,” says Dr. Martin Maass, manager of engineering/quality reliability at Stihl. Maass knows all too well the consequences of trying to change the professional from using a saw he likes to a saw the government regulates. “Stihl was the first manufacturer in the world to market a catalytic converter on its saw,” says Maass.

In the mid-1980s the German government required improved emissions and even gave professionals a small stipend to help defray the increased cost, but sales were lower than expected. More recently Stihl installed a catalytic converter on its 180 model to meet tough California regulations, and again sales did not meet expectations. Obviously, the professional knows what he likes and is resistant to change.

“It’s easier to adapt a catalytic converter on a small saw because there are less heat problems,” says Maass. “We are working
Stihl and the other manufacturers will improve their emissions on their smaller engines, such as string trimmers and backpack blowers, until they have it figured out how exactly they can make their large saws meet the standards that they know the professional will demand, says Maass. He and others at Stihl are reluctant to tell how they will do this, because the small engine market is so competitive. They are more than aware that copycat models can quickly spring onto the market, but they didn’t give one heads-up.

“I don’t think the catalytic converter is the answer, it’s more of a stop-gap,” says Maass. As mentioned earlier, catalytic converters increase tremendously the heat expelled by the saw. If this increase in heat makes a small saw hotter to use, a large saw would be unacceptable. “You need to address the problem where it originates, which is the combustion chamber,” says Maass.

Mark Michaels at Husqvarna says many of the same things. “Emissions have always been important to Husqvarna. The laws have been tougher in Europe for years (Husky is a Swedish company) but with the new laws the U.S. has jumped ahead. Now there is a line drawn in the sand. In the past our engineers focused on power, weight, durability, less vibe and, finally, emissions. Now the number one issue is emissions. It’s changed the focus.”

With carb and cylinder changes, Husky has so far been able to meet the standards. They also see the combustion chamber as the solution to the emissions problem, with four-stroke or hybrid four-stroke engines coming on the market instead of the traditional two-stroke.

“The truly new technology will be on the engines by the end of the year,” says Michaels. “We will be able to meet the engineering challenges without compromising power, weight, or durability. We’ll improve torque while improving (fuel efficiency) and meeting emissions. The biggest disadvantage to the user will be the reduced interchangeability of parts. Entire families of saws will eventually go away.”

However, Michaels noted that getting parts on old saws will be continue to be easy, as Husky and the other manufacturers continue to make the old saws for other parts of the world. You just won’t be able to cob together the parts from two beat-up saws and try to make one good saw, you’ll actually have to go to your dealer and buy a new part.

Another approach is what RedMax is doing with their Strato engine. Komatsu of
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The STIHL MS 200 T is built to be the ultimate chain saw for working in trees. With a 7.9 pound powerhead, it’s one of the lightest, most well-balanced, gas-powered chain saws on the market. The STIHL MS 200 T — it’s the saw built for the pro. Are you ready for a STIHL?
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Japan owns RedMax and they seem to have a small leg-up on most manufacturers. Back in 1999 when most small engine companies lobbied the government to ease the emissions regulations, Komatsu pushed for continued enforcement. Their reason was simple; they felt they had the solution. In April 2004, RedMax will come out with the GZ4000, a medium weight ground saw that meets the 2005 EPA standards. It weighs 9.5 pounds and has a 2.4 hp engine. The interesting thing about this saw is that it is capable of meeting these standards without a catalytic converter, making the saw lighter and less hot.

What happens is that at a certain point in the piston’s travel, the strato engine allows fresh air into the combustion chamber. This air is wedged between the fuel/air mix that is entering the chamber and the exhaust which is leaving. The fresh air mixes with the exhaust and the exhaust is expelled significantly cleaner. In traditional two-stoke engines, the incoming fuel mixes directly with the exhaust, much of which is expelled as the dirty culprit, but the Strato engine seems to have found one of the answers to this great emissions riddle by squeezing some extra air into the combustion chamber and expelling that clean air with the exhaust, creating a cleaner burning saw. An added benefit is that, since less fuel is being wasted as exhaust, more fuel gets burned in the chamber, giving a 30 percent increase in fuel efficiency.

So where does this all leave the professional arborist and what can we can expect from our saws over the next few years? The small saws will change first with catalytic converters on many models, though not the large saws. Other companies like RedMax are already figuring out how to make changes in the combustion chamber, though they have not installed this new engine on their larger saws. Stihl and Husky are not far behind. Expect them to roll out saws over the next year or so that have all the power and features professionals demand, while meeting the EPA regulations. They too will find the solution in the combustion chamber, not the muffler.

The other real issue is money. Right now a handful of the largest retailers control much of the sales for power equipment. This one item – cleaner emissions – could turn out to be a major watershed moment for the independent small engine dealer. The giant retailers will not be interested in passing on the increased cost for a cleaner burning saw, and could move the market in one of two very different directions. One is the manufacturers will be prevented from recouping the tens of millions of dollars they have invested to meet the cleaner emission guidelines by major outlets, forcing the manufacturers to come out with a line of saws with poorer quality components in order to maintain margins. This could drive some small retailers under. The other direction is professionals will rely more than ever on the expertise of their local dealer to steer them in the right direction. Because, after all, cleaner emissions should only add about $40 more to a piece of equipment that is the life-blood of this industry.

“For a long time the total number of dealerships declined,” says Michaels at Husqvarna. “What is left is the strong that have survived. The amount of power equipment sold every year in the US is growing. The guy who survived is bringing in more customers because of service. These customers then look to that dealer for their next purchase. With small dealerships offering the same price as the bigger retail outlets – and the service to go with it, their businesses will improve.”

Michael Roche is a certified arborist and president of Stowe Tree Experts Inc. in Stowe, Vt.
Finally, a purer and safer pesticide that makes everyone happy. Except pests. Introducing the next generation in horticultural spray oil - Petro-Canada PureSpray™ Spray Oil 10E. If you’re not using the purest spray oil available, you’re risking the health of the environment, plants, wildlife and people. Check the labels and you’ll see that many spray oils claim as little as 92% purity. That leaves up to 8% Sulphonated Residue (SR) including toxic aromatics - a primary source of toxicity in spray oil and the leading cause of phytotoxicity - making it harder to maintain a risk-free, healthy yard. PureSpray guarantees 99% purity with virtually no aromatics. This makes PureSpray your safer choice. For you, that means peace of mind, reduced plant damage and greater pest killing power. So make the switch, your customers will thank you. The pests won’t. Call for more information and the name of the distributor near you. 1-866-730-2045. PureSpray 10E. The purer alternative.
Jonsered has introduced the new model CS 2156 C Turbo, a high-performance model saw designed for experienced chain saw operators who want peak power at high rpm. The CS 2156 C has an engine displacement of 56.5cc and develops 4.4 hp at 9600 rpm. It features a new, patented automatic decompression valve for easier, simplified starting. The all-new model also has turbo air filtration, steel coil spring vibration dampening, side-access chain tension adjustment, a quick-release top cover and a compensating carburetor. A version with electrically heated handles and carburetor will also be available. Contact Jonsered at (877) 693-7729 or via www.usa.jonsered.com, or Tilton Equipment Company, Jonsered importer, at (603) 964-9450 or tiltoneq@ttlc.net.

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Sluggo-AG has recently been registered for commercial growers in a 40-pound size. Now professionals have an effective bait to use for snail and slug control based on the popular active ingredient iron phosphate. Sluggo-AG’s advantages over snail and slug baits that contain metaldehyde include that it can be used around pets and wildlife, and that it eventually breaks down into fertilizer. Sluggo-AG can be used on ornamental plantings, groundcovers, turf, fruit trees, citrus, herbs, berries, vegetables and greenhouses. It has a re-entry interval and a pre-harvest interval on edible crops up to the day of harvest, only controls slugs and snails and remains effective after rainfall or irrigation. Once the bait is consumed, snails and slugs stop feeding on plant materials and crawl away to die. This product can be used alone or as an alternative bait in IPM programs. Contact Monterey Lawn & Garden Products at (559) 499-2100 or via www.montereylawnandgarden.com.

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Baker Equipment’s new Aichi Model ITZ65A aerial platform has a 70 foot working height, 2,200 pound capacity on a 6- by 14-foot platform and 360-degree platform rotation on a four-stage telescopic boom. The ITZ65A also has XYZ-compensated platform movement, a load rate indicator, boom/platform interference prevention system and boom/cabin interface prevention system, and a jack/boom interlock system and illuminated controls. The ITZ65A is mounted on 19,500 GVWR chassis (Isuzu NRR, GMC W5500 HD). It has automatic transmission, a tight turning radius and does not require a CDL to operate. All models have air conditioning, block heater, AM/FM/CD stereo, spot mirrors and power roof vent fans. Check out Baker Equipment at www.bakerequipment.com.

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Shaver Manufacturing has two new log splitters: the SL-2030-T and SL-2030-S. Both units feature a three-way splitter configuration that allows the operator to choose between ground-level, waist-level or vertical setups. This is especially useful when loading the splitter from a truck or from a tall stack of logs, or when the logs to be split are too large or bulky to carry. Switching between each configuration is as easy as pulling a hinge pin.

The SL-2030-T Three-Point Log Splitter is powered by a tractor with a category I or II hitch and a minimum of 2,000 psi. The splitter is operated from a lever at the side of the unit, so all log loading and splitting can be done easily by a single operator.

The SL-2030-S Skid Steer Log Splitter, also powered with a minimum 2,000 psi, is built for farms, rental operations and contractors. Mounted to a universal bracket, this unit also allows for easy one-person operation with a simple hydraulic lever. Both units feature an optional four-way splitter blade that allows the operator to quarter a log in one cut – reducing time, labor, fuel use and wear on the splitter. Contact Shaver via www.shavermfg.com.

Echo’s 33.4 cc top-handle CS-341 chain saw features a Slope Advance Ignition System (SAIS2) that matches the ignition timing of the engine to the operating rpm, resulting in consistent power throughout the entire rpm range and easier engine starts. The CS-341 incorporates an automatic adjustable oiler, a side-access chain tensioner and comes standard with a 14-inch bar and chain (optional 12- or 16-inch bars and chains available). The unit features an 8.5 fluid ounce capacity fuel tank and weighs in at a light 7.8 pounds without bar and chain. The CS-341 has a lanyard ring, an inertia-type chain brake, a chain catcher to stop the chain if it breaks or jumps and a throttle lock-out for prevention of accidental throttle engagement. For more information, visit www.echo-usa.com.

Vermeer SC60TX

Vermeer’s SC60TX stump cutter is designed with greater horsepower, a patented gearbox-driven cutter wheel system and a narrow profile, allowing higher performance – especially in tight places – with the Vermeer SC60TX stump cutter. The self-propelled machine’s 60 hp (45 kw) Caterpillar 3024 Tier 11 diesel engine combined with a direct drive system efficiently transfers horsepower from an upper gear box to a lower gear box and eliminates any belt alignment or replacement tasks. For increased stability in residential or land clearing environments, the SC60TX has an operating width of 51 inches (130 cm), yet also has the ability to retract and fit through a 36-inch gate or other tight openings. For maneuverability, the planetary driven rubber track undercarriage delivers the torque for effective tractive effort in difficult conditions, and the rubber tracks minimize turf damage by evenly distributing the machine’s weight. The 27-inch (69 cm) cutter wheel can cut 16 inches (41 cm) deep and 69 inches (175 cm) wide in a stationary position, but the SC60TX is easily repositioned by counter rotating the tracks. Contact Vermeer at 1-888-837-6337 or via www.vermeer.com.

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Swingle Tree adds Jodi Johnson

Swingle Tree and Lawn Care recently added Jodi Johnson to the firm in the newly created position of commercial sales coordinator. Johnson comes to Swingle with a bachelor of science degree in ornamental horticulture and more than 15 years of experience in the industry, specializing in commercial consultation, including drought-related programs. Johnson previously managed the landscaping for more than 250 homeowners associations and 80 million square feet of commercial and industrial landscape. Her new responsibilities at Swingle Tree and Lawn Care will focus on sales and operations servicing the commercial client.

Davey continues with acquisitions

The Davey Tree Expert Company continues its expansion initiative with the acquisitions of Pagura Landscape in Columbus, Ohio; Melton’s Tree Service of Bettendorf, Iowa; and Sean McCarthy Tree Care Service in Richmond, Va. Davey’s acquisitions in the past two years now total 16.

The Pagura organization has merged with Davey’s Columbus commercial grounds management office. Melton has joined Davey’s Quad Cities area residential office and McCarthy has joined the Richmond residential office. “When it comes to acquisitions, our primary objective has always been to find companies that fit Davey’s ideas and goals,” says Karl Warnke, president and COO of The Davey Tree Expert Company. “Pagura, Melton and McCarthy do just that.”

With the Pagura merger, Davey will offer a second location in the Columbus area to better serve its clients. Jeff Pissocra, manager of Davey’s Columbus commercial division office, will head the joint operation. Founder Steve Pagura has joined Davey as a sales representative. In Quad Cities, Melton founder Rick Melton and owner Michelle Tinman have both joined Davey. Richmond manager Mark Bennett looks forward to the growth offered by the addition of the McCarthy staff. He added that the staff that has joined Davey includes founder Sean McCarthy.

ITODA names leaders for 2004

Chris Petersen, president of Tom Irwin Inc., Burlington, Mass., will serve as the new president of the Independent Turf and Ornamental Distributors Association (ITODA) throughout 2004. Previously he served the organization as vice-president and as chairman of the Professional Development Committee. He has been a member for seven years. Through ITODA, Petersen says he plans to continue to foster a trusted environment in which “colleagues” and vendors can share business concerns and viewpoints. “I want to help develop stronger business strategies through networking and education,” Petersen says.


ITODA is a national organization representing independently-owned businesses who sell to the turf and landscape industry, as well as the suppliers and manufacturers who sell to them.
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<th>Model</th>
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<tr>
<td>91 FORD F8000</td>
<td>7.8L diesel, 215 hp, Allison 4 spd auto, 34,700 lb GVW, with 6½ ton IMT 8205 knuckleboom, picks 2,900 lb at 20 ft max side reach, 14 ft wood flatbed.</td>
<td>$22,500.</td>
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<td>98 INT 4700</td>
<td>DT466E, 210 hp, 6 spd +lo, 33,000 lb GVW, with 14 ton TEREX TC2863 crane, 73 ft hook height, cap alert / shutdown, 30 ft max, 18 ft wood flatbed.</td>
<td>$46,900.</td>
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<tr>
<td>90 FORD LT8000</td>
<td>7.8L diesel, 240 hp, 8 spd +lo, +lo/lo, 50,000 lb GVW, with 12½ ton NATIONAL 500B crane, 66 ft hook ht, cap alert, 18 ft steel flatbed.</td>
<td>$39,500.</td>
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<tr>
<td>93 MACK RB6000</td>
<td>EM7-300, 300 hp, ext range 6 spd, 56,380 lb GVW, with 27½ ton PIONEER 4000 crane, 148 ft hook ht, cap alert / shutdown, 2 man pin-on basket, 18 ft wood flat.</td>
<td>$79,500.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>87 FORD F8000</td>
<td>7.8L diesel, 210 hp, Allison 4 spd auto, 30,000 lb GVW, with 5 ton IMT 6420 knuckleboom, picks 3,100 lb at 20 ft max reach, 12 ft flatbed w/ stake sides.</td>
<td>$21,900.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94 INT 4900</td>
<td>DT466, 195 hp, 6 spd +lo, 33,000 lb GVW, with 3½ ton AUTOCRANE A50 crane, picks 1,250 lb at 32 ft max reach, 18 ft steel flatbed w/ stake sides, lift gate.</td>
<td>$34,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95 MACK RD600S</td>
<td>EM7-300, 300 hp, 8 speed +lo, with 8 ton NATIONAL N-95 knuckleboom, picks 1,850 lb at 50 ft max reach, 20'6&quot; utility body.</td>
<td>$29,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88 FORD F9000</td>
<td>7.8L diesel, 13 spd, 48,000 lb GVW, with 12½ ton JLG 1250BT crane, 77 ft hook ht, 20 ft steel flatbed.</td>
<td>$34,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94 FORD LNT8000</td>
<td>8.3L Cummins, 275 hp, 8 spd +lo +lo/lo, 56,000 lb GVW, 15 ton TEREX TC3067 crane, 117 ft hook ht, cap alert / shutdown, 20 ft steel flatbed.</td>
<td>$49,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 VOLVO WG04</td>
<td>Cummins ISM-305Y, 305hp, engine brake, 10 spd auto shift, 52,250 lb GVW, 20 ft wood flatbed w/18&quot; steel sides.</td>
<td>$39,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92 MACK RB600S</td>
<td>EM7-300, 300 hp, 8 speed +lo, with 8 ton NATIONAL N-95 knuckleboom, picks 1,850 lb at 39 ft max reach, 20 ft wood flatbed.</td>
<td>$39,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87 FORD F8000</td>
<td>429 gas engine, 5 speed + 2 speed rear, 31,000 lb GVW, 66 ft ALTEC AM900 bucket, joystick controls, 14 ft steel flatbed.</td>
<td>$29,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94 GMC TOPKICK</td>
<td>CAT 3116, 215 hp, Allison 5 spd auto, 31,000 lb GVW, 50 ft ALTEC AA600L bucket, end hung 2 man basket, 15 ft utility body.</td>
<td>$26,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97 FORD LNT8000</td>
<td>Cummins, 8.3L, 275 hp, 9 spd, 58,000 lb GVW, with 22 ton MANITEX 2284 crane, capacity alert, 119 ft hook ht, 20 ft steel flatbed.</td>
<td>$84,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97 FORD F9000</td>
<td>7.8L diesel, 210 hp, 10 spd, 46,000 lb GVW, with national 656B-NY crane, 87 ft hook ht, 20 ft wood flat.</td>
<td>$29,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92 MACK DM690SKX</td>
<td>EM7-300, 300 hp, 7 spd, 70,300 lb GVW, with 6 ton PALFINGER PK14080 knuckleboom, 2 man bucket, 16 ft steel flatbed, 27K miles.</td>
<td>$39,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97 FORD LT9000</td>
<td>CAT 3306, 300 hp, 8 spd +lo +lo/lo, 58,000 lb GVW, 27½ ton PIONEER 4000 crane, 148 ft hook ht, 360° full cap operation, roofers pkg.</td>
<td>$89,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93 Gmc TOPKICK</td>
<td>CAT 3126, 215 hp, Allison 5 spd auto, 33,000 lb GVW, with 50 ft ALTEC LRIII-50 bucket, joystick controls, 14 ft utility body.</td>
<td>$29,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97 PETERBILT 330</td>
<td>8.3L Cummins, 250 hp, 9 speed, with 14 ton MANITEX 1461 crane, 111 ft hook ht, 18 ft wood flatbed.</td>
<td>$64,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, please circle 46 on Reader Service Card.
Events & Seminars

April 22, 2004
Building with Trees Seminar/Nat. Arbor Day Foundation
St. Paul, Minn.
Contact: (888) 448-7337; fax (402) 474-0820;
arborday.org/phcseminar

April 23-24, 2004
Climbing Workshop/Texas Tree Climbing Championship
Bobo Woods,
Fort Worth, Texas
Contact: Mike Walterscheidt (512) 281-4833

May 3-14, 2004
Arboriculture I - “Basic Tree Climbing Course”
Committee for the Advancement of Arboriculture
Jackson, N.J.
Contact: John Perry (732) 833-0500

May 9-12, 2004
ISA Western Chapter Annual Meeting
Konocit Harbor,
Clear Lake, Calif.
Contact: (530) 892-1118, www.wcisa.net

May 25, 2004
IPM for Landscape Professionals OSU Campus,
Stillwater, Okla.
Mike Schnelle, (405) 744-7361 or
mas@okstate.edu

May 27-28, 2004
Oak Wilt Workshop
Austin, Texas
Contact: Gene Gehring (817) 307-0967 or
ggehring@mailcity.com

June 26-29, 2004
North American Commercial Real Estate Congress
and The Office Building Show
Royal York Hotel and
the Metro Toronto Conv. Ctr.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Contact: www.boma.org

July 16, 2004
2004 Conference on Woody Plants
The Scott Arboretum, Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pa.
Contact: Kelly Ronafalvy (610) 328-8025
Brochure: (610) 388-1000 Ext. 507

August 7-11, 2004
ISA Annual Conference & Trade Show
Pittsburgh, Pa.
Contact: Jessica Marx, (217) 355-9411, ext.24
jmarx@isa-arbor.com, www.isa-arbor.com

September 15-17, 2004
Texans for Trees
ISAT/TUFC Annual Convention
Round Rock, Texas
Contact: Mike Walterscheidt (512) 281-4833

September 22-23, 2004
Multi-State Plant Materials Conference
Stillwater, Okla.
Contact Mike Schnelle, (405) 744-7361 or
mas@okstate.edu

October 8-9, 2004
Nursery/Greenhouse Trade Show and Convention
Cox Convention Center,
Oklahoma City, Okla.
Contact Mike Schnelle, (405) 744-7361 or
mas@okstate.edu

October 20-21, 2004
Garden Expo
Canada’s Fall Buying Show for the Green Industry
Toronto Congress Centre,
Toronto, Canada
Contact: Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trade Assoc., (905) 875-1805; fax: (905) 875-3942;
showinfo@landscapeontario.com

November 3, 2004
Tree Care Issues Workshop
Stillwater, Okla.
Contact Mike Schnelle, (405) 744-7361 or
mas@okstate.edu

February 6 -10, 2005
Winter Management Conference
Tree Care Industry Association
Los Cabos, Mexico
Contact: Carol Crossland, 1-800-733-2622, Ext. 106;
crossland@treecareindustry.org
or www.treecareindustry.org

---

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Huge 600’ Reel Only $339.95!

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16” Loop Only $9.95

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Like it or Not, Decisions in Washington Directly Affect Your Business

By Peter Gerstenberger

“You thought [Mr. X’s] comments didn’t quite fit, wait until you read [Mr. Y’s]. Déjà vu… does it seem reminiscent of our Mother’s Day trip to Florida?”

These comments came from my TCIA Safety Committee chair recently as we struggled to craft stronger, more detailed standards language to guide crane use in the tree care industry. Mother’s Day in Florida? That was our attempt one year ago to impress upon the ASME/ANSI B30.5 Committee the wisdom of making some accommodations for the tree care industry in their crane standard. We didn’t get everything we wanted, but neither was the Florida trip a total loss. At least we found, in Mr. X and Mr. Y, two influential individuals sympathetic to our cause and willing to listen to, if not accept, our point of view.

As my chairman so aptly puts it, “The original problem exists due to the fact that when OSHA came into existence they developed a crane bill, but not all industries that used cranes were consulted. The ASME (American Society of Mechanical Engineers) committee never saw us on the radar screen, nor do I think they care about other industries’ use of cranes, and thus they are unwilling to make any allowance outside of their standard.”

We have witnessed, as this story plays out over and over, decisions made in Washington and elsewhere directly affect your business, whether you like it or not. The voice of commercial arboriculture can no longer afford to be absent from the table in Washington, or in state capitals where our fate is being decided. To that end, the TCIA Safety Committee has taken on the charge of improving safety and lowering accident rates, not just among members, but in the industry as a whole. When we have accomplished those goals, we will have earned credibility.

To that end, TCIA forged an Alliance with OSHA more than a year ago. The relationship has helped us get our foot in the door on several important issues, and promises to provide very tangible benefits in the near future.

To that end, TCIA is following, and involving itself in, a broader and deeper agenda of legislative and regulatory affairs than ever in its 65-year history. Furthermore, we are involving the industry in grassroots efforts to make our voice heard. You can study the array of issues that TCIA works on by visiting our Web site, www.treecareindustry.org, and following the links from our Laws & Standards page to our Governmental Affairs tracking chart.

To that end, a new TCIA political action committee (PAC) – called the “Voice for Trees” – will channel contributions to serve as the political voice of the tree care industry. The ultimate purpose of the PAC is to amplify our members’ voices so we can improve the legislative and regulatory climate for our industry, thereby ensuring Congress will give far greater consideration to TCIA members’ concerns.

The voice of commercial arboriculture can no longer afford to be absent from the table in Washington, or in state capitals where decisions are being made. Those who stepped forward at our inaugural event should take satisfaction in knowing that they are the pioneers who led commercial tree care toward a new political reality.

The Voice for Trees PAC is funded apart from TCIA, so that membership dues and political donations are not mixed. Great things can be accomplished for the industry at large by the forthright actions of a few. We are garnering more support every day, and we are certainly looking forward to our next event – Casino Night – at TCI EXPO Spring in Sacramento.

We urge all members to educate themselves on the issues affecting their businesses and get involved at the local, state and national level.

In the months ahead, industry support will be critical to the PAC and its success. TCIA members will be contacted and asked to offer their time, ideas and financial support to ensure that the voice of tree care is heard loud and clear in the political arena. Please consider taking part in whatever way you see fit.

In the meantime, as far as more detailed standards language to guide crane use in the tree care industry is concerned, the TCIA Safety Committee would like to hear your thoughts. Go to the TCIA Web site to see what we have so far, then send us your feedback as to what is missing that needs to be addressed.

Peter Gerstenberger is TCIA’s senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards. He can be reached at peter@treecareindustry.org.
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MAUGET'S MICRO-INJECTION FERTILIZERS CAN DO THAT FOR YOU!

WHETHER YOUR TREES NEED NUTRITIONAL HELP

NEED TO BE TRANSPLANTED

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The INJECT-A-MIN family of Fertilizers.
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AN AVG. 10 IN. DBH TREE CAN BE FERTILIZED AS LOW AS $8.80 IN LESS THAN 5 MINUTES!

EQUIPMENT COST UNDER $50.00.

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MAUGET'S PRODUCT'S ARE COST EFFECTIVE
Looking for a profit center? You’re standing on it. Many small business owners spend a lot of time wondering, figuring, consulting with financial “experts” and losing sleep over how “I can crank just a little more profit out of this business of mine. If I could make just a little bit more money, I could buy that new bucket truck the guys have been hoping for, maybe a new sales vehicle for Kathy. Or, take a break from this long dreary winter – warm sun and some sand under my feet.”

My advice? Put your money worries on hold, get out your credit card and put some warm sand under your feet for a week. Then, while on vacation with the warm sand, take a few minutes to go through this thought process: “Sand. Nicer than mud. Mud, soil, tree roots. Tree roots? Now that’s a part of the tree we don’t think about much.” (Maybe you live in a warm climate, in which case you can skip ahead directly to soil.) Why are you mumbling about tree roots? “Tree roots, yes. We spend all of our time in the top of the tree pruning, bracing, killing insects. We rarely deal with the bottom half of the tree. Am I NUTS? What kind of a fool am I? That would be like a restaurant that didn’t serve dessert or beverages.”

Indeed – tree roots. As arborists we don’t spend enough time including tree roots in the whole tree-health picture. As business people, we are ignoring one of the best profit centers that exist in our industry – fertilization of trees. We spend way too much time trying to figure out how to grind out a few extra billable hours per week from our pruning crews when a much more sensible and effective solution lies right beneath our feet. To return to the restaurant analogy, we’re trying to tweak an already excellent main course while we forget to serve the highly profitable chocolate cheesecake with Irish coffee and whipped cream. A high calorie dessert with rich drink may not be the best diet for us, but we do know that proper fertilization of trees is a sound practice.

How profitable is a fertilizer program? This short answer is that fertilizing is 100 percent more profitable than pruning. But I have been preaching this to other arborists for a number of years and it doesn’t always seem to sink in. Perhaps an example is in order. This example would be representative of companies operating in New England where we do our work. Your numbers are your own and will vary by region.
An arborist on a pruning crew can be billed out at $50 per hour; a productive day of eight billable hours yields a gross of $400. Overhead for a chipper, truck and chain saws along with a high workers’ compensation premium would need to be included on the cost side of this equation.

An arborist applying fertilizer (or other soil additives) using a liquid delivery system commonly misnamed “deep root feeding” can easily gross $1,000 in the same eight-hour day. The cost side of this equation would include overhead for a spray rig and truck plus the cost of materials applied to the soil and root zone. For purposes of this example, let’s say that the overhead cost for equipment, insurance and payroll are roughly equal. (In reality, overhead cost for a fertilizer program will be somewhat less than for the pruning crew.) Assuming you are using a high-quality, state-of-the-art blend of soil injected materials, your material costs will be about $200, resulting in a gross revenue

An arborist applying fertilizer (or other soil additives) using a liquid delivery system can easily gross $1,000 in an eight-hour day. That is 100 percent more revenue than your pruning arborist can produce.

FREE Report Reveals How to
“Double Your Tree Service’s Profits In Six Months Or Less - Even in a Tough Economy!!”
Introducing one of the ONLY Truly PROVEN SYSTEMS For Turning Your Tree Service Business Into A Mega-Profit Money Machine - If you intend to stay in the Tree Service business, this will be the most important Report you will ever read.

Listen: There is a “dirty little secret” about making good money in the Tree Care Service business… and… it doesn’t have a whole lot to do with how good of a job you do. You can be, technically, the very best Tree Care Service in your area, use only the highest quality products, know more about tree removal and pruning than anybody else, always do a super job… and still starve to death! You’re busy one week and lonely the next, and always worrying about where your next job is coming from. DREADING WINTER! I know… because… at one time, I nearly starved myself right out of the business by stubbornly believing that… being good ought to be good enough; that by getting better and better at the technical aspects, I’d automatically make more money. Wrong!

I nearly went broke copying the ways everybody else seemed to get customers… plus… wasting money on all kinds of dumb advertising… plus… trying the “cheapest price approach”… which is actually the worst thing you can do. The only way I was able to survive was by begging for just about anyone… plus… doing cold call prospecting which I literally hate!

Then a few discoveries (and a lot of money spent learning) changed my life. They can change your life, too. In fact, if you order my special report… you’re going to learn, too…

How To Make More Money Each Week Than You Now Struggle To Earn In Your Best Month… And… Do It Easier Than You Can Imagine… And… You Will Even Start To Enjoy Being In The Tree Service Business!

Why should you respond and ask for this report? Hopefully, for these six very important and brutally honest reasons:

1. You are very unhappy (disgusted) with the money you get to take home from your tree service. Hardly enough to pay the bills.
2. You would be thrilled to do LESS work, especially less HARD work, but make more money.
3. You detest “week-end bandits and fly-by-nighters” and would prefer to promote your tree service differently.
4. You’re a great Arborist, climber or tree person, but you don’t know beans about marketing and getting customers to make your phone ring.
5. You’re sick and tired of all the so-called advertising experts from Val-Pak, Money Mailer and the Yellow Page company’s that sell advertising that never works.
6. The thought of another winter with no work makes you sick to your stomach.

If you know in your heart you should be making more money, I’ve got the PROVEN, very different, tree care secrets that can blow the lid off your income almost overnight.

It doesn’t matter if you’re a “little guy” dragging a trailer around like I used to, working from a pickup, a one crew operation or a good-sized company. These systems will work for you to as much as triple your income in just a few months no matter how small your company. It’s also worked with many big companies to dramatically improve profits. My system is valuable even if you’re a franchise. It works anytime, anywhere, for anybody. Period. It’s proven, and I’ll send you the PROOF with my free report.

Simply fax or e-mail me your name, company name, mailing address, and phone number with FREE REPORT on it and I will rush it out to you immediately. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE!

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of $800 per day. That is 100 percent more than your pruning arborist can produce.

This example also assumes that the fertilizer technician can deliver 400 gallons of material per day at a cost of $2.50 per gallon. The $2.50 per gallon is an average rate in our region depending upon materials used. And 400 gallons per day is very doable; I have spoken to owners of other companies who claim their technician can pump double this amount. The one-day record here at Northeast Shade Tree is about 750 gallons.

Now to the multiplication tables. If this fertilizing work can be sold, there is no reason why a small company with five to six field people cannot generate $100,000 to $150,000 per year in gross fertilizer revenues. This model does require that one person and one spray rig be dedicated to the fertilizer program for approximately seven months of the year.

It is important to note that with the materials we use in our own operation, which include mycorrhizal spores, spores of beneficial bacteria, humic acids and very low rates of N-P-K (nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium) and other essential elements, we do not believe that the timing of the application is at all critical. For example, if soils become dry to the point where roots become dormant, the materials do not leach away and cannot “burn.” When soil moisture levels increase enough to restart biological activity, these materials again become available to the tree. If soil moisture freezes after an application, the materials are likewise not degraded or leached and will be available when thawing occurs. We know from Dr. Alex Shigo’s work that thawed soils during winter months support a host of biological activities and root growth. We have more than 20 years of field observations accompanied by written records in customer files that have convinced us that we are on the correct path. However, if you believe that the timing of applications is critical due to the materials you use or other scientific considerations, you may need to operate two spray rigs during desired timeframes to accomplish your goals for gross revenues.

The next question is: How in the world can I sell $150,000 of fertilizer? The simple answer is by trying, and it’s true. Fertilizing is an overlooked revenue source
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- Same Day Shipment, Knives Shipped Day Order Received
- Guaranteed Performance
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- Convenient, Safe Packaging, Knives Are Individually Wrapped

### Vermeer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Number</th>
<th>Part No.</th>
<th>Knife Description &amp; Size</th>
<th>SALE Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC1000</td>
<td>KCH20109</td>
<td>Double Edge 9&quot; x 4-1/2&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
<td>$27.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC1220-BC1250</td>
<td>KCH20002</td>
<td>Single Edge 8&quot; x 3-1/2&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
<td>$16.75</td>
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<td>BC1400</td>
<td>KCH20110</td>
<td>Double Edge 8&quot; x 5&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
<td>$28.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC1800-BC2000</td>
<td>KCH20103</td>
<td>Double Edge 10&quot; x 5-1/2&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
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### Morbark

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<tr>
<td>100, 200, 290</td>
<td>KCH10001</td>
<td>Double Edge 7-1/4&quot; x 4&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
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<td>10, 13, 17, 2050</td>
<td>KCH40001</td>
<td>Double Edge 10-1/2&quot; x 5&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
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### Brush Bandit

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<tr>
<td>Model 90</td>
<td>KCH10002</td>
<td>Double Edge 5-3/32&quot; x 4&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
<td>$14.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 90XP, 280XP</td>
<td>KCH10004</td>
<td>Double Edge 5-3/32&quot; x 4&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
<td>$18.36</td>
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<td>Model 100XP-250XP</td>
<td>KCH10003</td>
<td>Double Edge 7-1/4&quot; x 4&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
<td>$16.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 250XP, 254XP after '01</td>
<td>KCH10101</td>
<td>Double Edge 7-1/4&quot; x 4-1/2&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
<td>$21.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 1890 Intimidator</td>
<td>KCH20103</td>
<td>Double Edge 10&quot; x 5-1/2&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
<td>$33.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 1290 Drum</td>
<td>KCH30001</td>
<td>Single Edge 12&quot; x 3&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
<td>$16.40</td>
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<td>Model 1690 Drum</td>
<td>KCH30002</td>
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### Asplundh

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<td>Timberwolf</td>
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<td>12&quot; Drum</td>
<td>KCH30001</td>
<td>Single Edge 12&quot; x 3&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
<td>$16.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>16&quot; Drum</td>
<td>KCH30002</td>
<td>Single Edge 16&quot; x 3&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
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### Mitts & Merrill

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<tr>
<td>Drum Style</td>
<td>KCH60001</td>
<td>Double Edge 4-1/4&quot; x 2-3/8&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
<td>$9.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*To receive this special pricing, you must use this code: 4394
All Brush Chipper Knives on sale. Call if your model is not shown.*

Offer ends May 31, 2004
because so many of us as sales people are simply taking orders. A large oak tree in the backyard needs to be pruned of deadwood so that the children who play beneath it will be safe. “We can do that for you, Mrs. Jones and the cost will be $400.” Did I hear, “May I interest you in dessert?” No, the question is rarely asked. Why? Are we afraid to share our knowledge? Can we take a few minutes to explain to Mrs. Jones that the children playing beneath the tree compact the soil? That the beautiful turf growing beneath the branches of the tree inhibit tree roots in many ways? That the annual removal of fallen leaves breaks the natural cycle whereby essential elements are returned to the soil? We don’t try to sell fertilizing. It is an extra step in the sales process.

People can see deadwood and they know it can be dangerous. They may even know it can be unhealthy for the tree. To sell a fertilizer application you must show people tree roots, or the lack of tree roots, with a spade and one minute of digging. With a hand lens you can show mycorrhizal roots and non-mycorrhizal roots. You can show the abundance of turf roots and the limited amount of tree roots to be found beneath turf. Your sales people must have a working knowledge of tree biology. And here is where the restaurant analogy breaks down. We are not selling dessert. Indeed, we are not selling tree food at all. What we are selling is tree health and a proper tree fertilization program. This is as important for tree health as deadwood pruning or insect management. An established fertilizer program will also help the health of your business. Try setting a goal for fertilizer sales to be accomplished by a certain date. You will be surprised by how easy it is to sell.

It must be stressed that, as with any service, tree fertilization can be done improperly or unethically. In the past, some arborists have used rates of nitrogen that were much to high and detrimental to tree health. It is certainly much easier to get away with a sloppy fertilizer application than a sloppy pruning job. In order to sustain a fertilizer program year after year, it must result in healthy trees.

Your clients can easily see the improvements made by a good pruning job. But they don’t need to have you back for four or five years. If you can help make their trees healthy through proper fertilization, they will also be able to see the results and they will renew their application year after year. Now, you are on the path to establishing a whole new profit center for your business.

Jeff W. Ott has owned and operated Northeast Shade Tree in Portsmouth, N.H., since 1978. He has worked with PHC Inc. to introduce new products for the fertilization of trees. His company also hosts workshops with Dr. Alex Shigo.

“It is certainly much easier to get away with a sloppy fertilizer application than a sloppy pruning job. In order to sustain a fertilizer program year after year, it must result in healthy trees.”
Treat more trees in less time. Add to your profits.
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“Variety is the spice of life” is true even in a landscape.

A landscape can easily have a variety of plants no matter how small its size. Flowering trees that offer color, beauty, texture or fragrance will certainly spice up any garden, anywhere in the world. Recommend them as accent plants, or as hedges or walls to create garden rooms. Trees add vertical dimension to a garden and enhance the beauty and real estate value of a property. There are a wide range of trees – tropical to temperate, native to exotic – that have the potential to paint a garden with rainbows of color.

Going tropical has become the fashion of the day. Exotic tropical trees produce flowers of vibrant colors, and most of them exude sensuous fragrances. Growing tropical trees in a subtropical, temperate or cold climate is a challenging but rewarding experience. Given the right conditions for growth and reproduction, a tropical tree will bloom anywhere.

An understanding of the USDA map of plant hardiness zones will help an arborist in choosing the right type of flowering trees, and in providing the appropriate care for their healthy growth. The map shows 11 zones and the annual minimum temperatures in each. Zones 9 to 11 are good for growing tropical trees. However, most trop-
ical trees will require winter protection in zones 9 and 10. In other zones, one may grow dwarf varieties of tropical trees in containers and move them indoors or to green houses where the temperature is warm enough (65 F to 70 F) for their survival during winter. Once established, most of them are drought tolerant.

Orchid trees are a species of Bauhinia (family: Leguminosae) that produce beautiful orchid-like flowers that come in a variety of colors: red, purple, lavender, yellow or white. Orchid trees, also known as butterfly trees, are native to India and China. The flowers are about 3 to 4 inches across and very fragrant. Bauhinia flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies. Depending on the variety, Bauhinias bear blooms in winter, spring or summer. The light green foliage is bi-lobed. Because of its heart-like leaves, Bauhinia is known as the ‘Love Tree’ in tropical countries. B. purpurea, B. blakeana and B. alba are a few of the popular species of Bauhinia.

The purple orchid tree, Bauhinia purpurea, is a perennial deciduous tropical tree with a long blooming period. It produces beautiful purple flowers. The tree can reach up to 20 feet tall and 15 feet wide. Plant the purple orchid in a protected location with full exposure to sun. A humus-rich soil with good drainage ensures its healthy growth and bloom production; water thoroughly once a week during the first year of tree growth. Established trees require infrequent watering. Seed propagation is the common method of propagation. It is hardy in zones 9 through 11, however, make sure to protect it during the winter.

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Kong orchid tree. Discovered on the shore of Hong Kong Island near Pokfulam around 1880, the tree was originally described as a new species in 1908 and was named after a Hong Kong governor, Sir Henry Blake who had a strong interest in botany. In 1965, Hong Kong adopted the flower of *Bauhinia blakeana* as its emblem. Since 1997, the flower has been a part of Hong Kong’s flag. This is often the orchid tree of choice in urban landscapes because of its large, six-inch blossoms that appear in multiple shades of purple, rose and pink during summer, fall and early winter months, when little color is usually present in a garden.

The bi-lobed leaves are 6 to 8 inches in diameter. The tree grows in part shade/part sun in clay, loam or sand, slightly alkaline or acidic soil with good drainage. Follow a regular watering schedule during the first growing season to establish a deep, extensive root system. Reduce watering after establishment. Use a general (20-20-20) fertilizer before new growth begins in spring. It has high drought tolerance and grows to 20 to 40 feet high and 20 to 25 feet wide. Prune it during the first few years to give a beautiful rounded canopy. The flowers are sterile and will not set seed, so the plant will not drop long pods as other orchid trees do. Propagate by layering or stem cuttings. The tree is hardy in zones 9B through 11.

*Caesalpinia pulcherrima* (family- *Leguminosae*), popularly known as peacock flower, is native to the West Indies and tropical America. The tree in cultivation is usually 8 to 12 feet tall, hence it is ideal for a small garden. It grows that large even after freezing to the ground in the previous winter. The striking orange-red flowers will light up any garden. Use peacock flower as an accent plant in a front yard or in a mixed shrub border. It has an open, spreading habit. Still, a line of peacock flowers makes a showy fine-textured screen or informal hedge. The tree benefits from pruning, and can be shaped to a tree or a shrubby bush form. Cut the tree to the ground in late winter or early spring to get a bushier, more compact shrub form.

The tree is forgiving to any soil condition – alkaline to acidic, well-drained soils. It is moderately tolerant of salty conditions. While it grows both in full sun to partial shade, it blooms best in full sun. It is drought tolerant. USDA Zones 8 through 11 are good for growing the tree. It usually dies to the ground following frost or freezing temperatures, but in zone 8B, at least, it comes back late in mid spring. It can survive under temperatures as low as 18 F. Grow it as an annual in colder climates. Even under frost-free conditions, peacock flower may lose its leaves when temperatures drop to 40 F. Seed propagation is the usual method of propagating peacock flower.

There are quite a few other gorgeous legume trees to make a bold and beautiful statement in a landscape in warmer zones (9b to 10). One such tree is *Poinciana regia*, (*Delonix regia*, *Royal poinciana*) popularly known as the flame of the forest.
During the blooming season, the tree bears no leaves but thousands of scarlet red blooms that would light up the very skies. The semi-deciduous, fast-growing tree prefers full to partial sun. It has a moderate water requirement. When mature, which may take 10 years, for two to four months in summer it continuously bears bright orange-red flowers, a glorious sight for any sore eye.

A truly exotic and majestic tree that grows to a height of 75 feet is *Couroupita guianensis* (cannonball tree). Indigenous to the Amazon rainforest, it is cultivated in tropical regions of Asian countries. The tree is grown in most of the Southern Indian Shiva temples especially in the Southern Indian state, Tamil Nadu, where it is popularly known as nagalinga maram (in Tamil, nagam is the cobra snake, lingam is the god Shiva, and maram is tree). One of the petals that shelters the lingam from rain and sun looks like the hood of the cobra, hence the name. Everything about this tree is exotic. The tree bears large (3 to 5 inches in diameter) waxy, aromatic pink and dark-red flowers on racemes that grow directly on the bark of the trunk. The large, globular woody fruits look like big rusty cannonballs and hang in clusters, like balls on a string. Seed propagation is the usual method of propagation. The tree grows in full sun or partial shade, moist soil, and high humid regions. Plant the tree in frost-free locations. It is hardy in USDA zones 9B through 11.

For breathtaking, sweet fragrant flowers, plant one or more *plumeria* (*Apocynaceae*). Indigenous to Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean islands, it grows well in tropical Asian countries, in subtropical North American states bordering the Gulf of Mexico, and in Southern and Northern California with winter protection. *Plumeria* grows all over Hawaii, where they make the garland, or lei, with its flowers. In tropical countries during dry summers the tree is dormant, and in North America it is dormant during winter. From early summer through early fall, the tree bears clusters of showy, waxy flowers that come in all different colors – white, yellow, pink, purple, red or blends of all these colors; and fragrances – sweet, spicy, mild or strong. The corolla looks like a pin wheel with half of the petal curled. Shape of the petal is highly variable. *Plumeria* in warmer climates can grow to a height of 20 feet. In colder climates, it can be grown as a container plant and should be brought indoors, as the tree is susceptible to frost. During the growing season, water it deeply and let the soil dry out in between. Reduce the frequency of watering in mid-October, as the cool season approaches. Stop water-
ing after all leaves have fallen and the plant has gone dormant. Resume watering in the spring as new growth begins. Feed with a high nitrogen fertilizer when growth begins. Use a high phosphorous fertilizer in early May and fertilize every two to three weeks through the end of August to encourage abundant bloom production.

Propagate *plumeria* with stem cuttings to perpetuate the cultivar of choice. To take stem cuttings during the dormant season, make a sharp cut at a distance of nearly 12 inches from the tip. Store the cuttings in a refrigerator. Use a container for rooting the stem cuttings. Early in spring when there is no threat from frost, root cuttings in potting soil containing vermiculite. Application of a rooting hormone promotes good root development.

Selection of *plumeria* cultivars is unlimited with reference to color or fragrance. Some of the popular cultivars are: *P. Carmen* (yellow-orange at the center, red-purple on the left and white on the rest, spicy); *P. Celadine* (pale yellow to yellow at the center, strong fragrance); *P. Cerise* (red-purple mostly with central (base) color and barely visible red purple stripes on the left and mild fragrance); *P. Cranberry Red* (orange-red at the center, rest of the petal is red-purple with stripes, mild fragrance); *P. Courtade Pink* (center, brilliant yellow; top and bottom of the petal, pale red-purple, mild fragrance); *P. Gold* (top of the petal, yellow; bottom of the petal, yellow fading toward the tip and right side, strong fragrance); *P. Intense Rainbow* (blend of yellow, red and red-purple, strong peach fragrance).

*Callistemon* spp, (*Myrtaceae*) popularly known as the ‘bottlebrush tree’ is a native of Australia. It is available as an erect tree (*Callistemon rigidus*) or as a weeping tree (*Callistemon viminalis*). *Callistemon rigidus* is small, about 15 feet tall, with aromatic green leaves and bright, shiny red flowers in late spring. *C. rigidus* prefers well-drained soil in a sunny location and requires very little water. *C. viminalis* grows to about 20 feet tall, 15 feet wide, and flowers on branch terminals. From late spring to early summer, it blooms continu-

ously bearing masses of 6-inch-long red flowers on an inflorescence axis that looks like a bottle brush. It grows in full sun to part shade. Avoid over-watering. Some of the popular cultivars are *Callistemon citrinus*, *Callistemon citrus* ‘Little John,’ *Callistemon citrinus* ‘Splendens,’ *Callistemon lanceolatus* (citrusinus), *Callistemon ‘Red Cluster,’ Callistemon sieberi ‘Powell’s Hardy Red,’ *Callistemon violaceus* ‘Purple Bottlebrush,’ *Callistemon viminalis* ‘Hannah Ray,’ and *Callistemon viminalis* ‘Texas’ Bottle brush tree is hardy in zones 8 through 10.

*Hibiscus syriacus* (*Malvaceae*), popularly known as ‘rose of sharon,’ is a small tree, about 10 feet tall. It bears beautiful five-petaled flowers of colors ranging from white to reddish-purple, depending on the cultivar, and 3 to 4 inches across. It blooms most of the summer. Popular varieties are ‘Blue Bird’ (blue flowers), ‘Helene’ (shiny white blooms with deep burgundy central flames), ‘Aphrodite’ (large, 4- to 6-inch, single open bells of dark pink flower with a prominent red eye) and ‘Freedom’ (coral-red variety with unique 4 to 6 inch double blooms). The tree blooms abundantly from early summer to fall, nearly for four months. Grown as an accent plant, a hedge or a screen, rose of sharon is an asset to any landscape. It prefers full to part shade. It grows well in slightly acidic or neutral soil. Water regularly but do not over-water. It is hardy in zones 5 through 9.

*Magnolia* (*Magnoliaceae*) is a magnificent evergreen tree with gorgeous fragrant blooms that come in a wide variety of colors – white, cream, pink or red – and shiny green foliage. Gardeners in cold as well as warmer climates can grow cultivars suitable for their zones. The tree grows to a height of 12 to 80 feet and a width of 10 to 50 feet. Dwarf cultivars suitable for a small landscape are available. It prefers partial to full sun.

*Magnolia grandiflora*, the southern Magnolia grows to a height of 80 feet and does best in partial shade. It bears fragrant white blooms in late spring, throughout zones 6 through 9. Some of the popular shorter *M. grandiflora* cultivars are ‘Bracken’s Brown Beauty,’ ‘Baby Doll,’ ‘Little Gem’ and ‘Satin Leaf.’ Bracken’s Brown Beauty is hardy even in zone 5.

*Saucer magnolia* (*Magnolia x soulangiana*) is a deciduous tree that produces saucer like fragrant white or pink flowers. It flowers early in spring when the whole tree is covered with blooms. The tree grows well in full sun or part shade in moist, deep, slightly acidic soil to a height of 20 to 30 feet. Hardy in zones 5 through 9, in colder northern zones, frost may kill the tree at times; hence choose a variety that is not frost susceptible. Plant balled and burlapped or container-grown plants in late winter in warmer zones or early spring in colder climates. Some of the popular varieties of saucer Magnolias are ‘Alba Superb,’ ‘Lombardy Rose,’ ‘Lilliputian,’ ‘Verbanica’ and ‘Lennei.’

*Lilacs* (*Syringa spp, Oleaceae*) are known for their fragrance and hardiness. Lilacs are small trees that grow to height of about 10 feet and produce clusters of blue, purple, pink, burgundy red, pale yellow, creamy or white flowers in masses from late spring to early fall. Grow them as accent plants or hedges to fill the landscape with color and fragrance. Lilacs prefer humus-rich soil with a pH 6.5 to 7 with
good drainage. They are easy to grow and once established require very little watering. Use organic mulch to conserve water, control weeds and maintain temperature around the roots. Prune immediately after blooming to improve their vigor and appearance. They are hardy in zones 2 through 9. Some cultivars prefer colder climates while others can grow happily in warmer climates.

*Ilex spp.* (Aquifoliaceae) popularly known as holly tree is a small spiny evergreen tree. Grow these trees as foundation plants, screen or hedge. The most familiar American holly (*Ilex opaca*) is known for its bright red berries that brighten up the landscape during cold bleak winter season. American holly is native in southeastern Missouri. It is hardy in zones 5, 6 and 7.

Holly is unisexual, and as such it produces either male or female flowers. To get berries on a female plant, include both male and female trees in a landscape. One male plant is enough to pollinate flowers of six to eight female plants. *I. opaca* grows best in rich acid soils with good drainage.

The Chinese holly (*Ilex cornuta*, horned holly) produces large, spiny, glossy green leaves and bright red berries. Hardy in zones 6 and 7, it is unisexual but does not require pollination to produce berries. Therefore, there is no need to plant the male tree. The most popular cultivar of Chinese holly, ‘Burford,’ has smoother leaf margins and a spiny leaf tip. This cultivar has more berry production than any other holly, but is less hardy than the common Chinese holly.

Fosters holly (*Ilex x foster*) serves as an excellent specimen, accent plant or screen in zones 6 and 7. The female tree bears berries abundantly and does not need a male plant nearby for fruit production.

Meserve hybrid (*Ilex x meserveae*) hollies are hardy in zones 5 through 7. The blue hollies (‘Blue Girl,’ ‘Blue Maid,’ ‘Blue Princess’ and ‘Blue Prince’) have blue leaves and are cold hardy. ‘China Boy’ and ‘China Girl’ have better cold hardiness and heat tolerance than the blue series. Japanese holly (*Ilex crenata*) is a small compact evergreen tree with small, spineless leaves and black berries. Use Japanese hollies as hedge. They are winter-hardy and do well in zones 6 and 7. Some of the popular cultivars are ‘Convexa’ (4 to 5 feet tall), ‘Hetzi’ (a dwarf form of ‘Convexa,’ 2 to 3 feet tall), ‘Stokes’ (2 to 3 feet tall) and ‘Helleri’ (3 feet tall).

*Wisteria* is another popular member of Leguminosae. Native to China, Korea and Japan, there are three species of *Wisteria*: Chinese species (*W. sinensis* or *W. chinensis*), Japanese species (*W. floribunda*) and an American native species (*Wisteria frutescens* ‘Amethyst Falls’). It is difficult to control the growth of Japanese or Chinese wisteria as a vine. These are now available as weeping trees. *Wisteria frutescens* Amethyst Falls is not invasive like the exotic wisteria species. *Wisteria frutescens* Amethyst Falls is an American native species, found in the northwest corner of South Carolina and introduced by Head-Lee Nursery. It flowers early in spring, once the frost is over. It blooms again in late spring. It is vigorous but not invasive, deciduous hardy in zones 5 through 9.

Some of the other widely grown tropical flowering trees are *Crepe Myrtle*, *Oleander*, *Mimosa*, *Acasias* and *Cassias*. Dogwood (*Cornus spp*), flowering peaches, plums and cherries are suitable for colder climates. There are hundreds of flowering trees suitable for all climatic zones. Consult local nurseries for trees that would grow best in your area. Given proper care, trees will last for decades beautifying any landscape with flowers of all colors and fragrance.

Lakshmi Sridharan is a scientist with a Ph.D. in molecular biology, botany and microbiology.
The three most common causes of death or injuries related to the use of aerial lifts in the tree care industry stem from failure to use fall protection, failure to inspect and adequately maintain the vehicle, and violating minimum separation distances from electrical conductors, according to Peter Gerstenberger, senior advisor for safety, compliance and standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.

The main contributing factor for accidents in those categories, according to Gerstenberger, is an aging fleet of boom trucks. “People are dying, usually because of boom failure,” says Gerstenberger. “I hear about accidents connected with metal fatigue, but also due to fiberglass components failing, particularly in older units.”

But in talking with aerial lift equipment manufacturers about maintenance as it relates to operator safety and equipment longevity, we quickly found that those two do not necessarily go together – at least in their minds.

Technology and better design have created a stronger, more forgiving aerial lift. Still, fatalities and serious accidents occur because there are 25- to 30-year-old trucks out there. With newer trucks, accidents are mostly attributable to operator error. Both of these observations are backed up by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) fatality statistics.

Tom Biddle, president of Mat-3 Inc., an aerial lift manufacturer, agrees that most accidents involving aerial lifts of recent manufacture are caused by operator error. Any equipment manufacturers who were less than outstanding when it came to building safe equipment have long since been weeded out of the market, according to Biddle. And, whether it is his equipment or that of his competitors, all the aerial lift equipment being built today is built to exacting standards for reliability and safe-
ty, insists Biddle, and is rarely a contributing factor in accidents.

“I think you’ll find that equipment failure doesn’t rank up there very highly,” says Biddle. “If you look at all of the accidents that happen, it’s not equipment failure. People aren’t producing unsafe machines these days.”

“The majority of the accidents are electrical contacts,” says Biddle, agreeing with Gerstenberger, and adding that those incidents are most often “phase to phase” contacts, when the operator himself or a piece of hand equipment provides a connection from one phase to another.

Biddle says fiberglass booms on aerial lifts used in the tree care industry today completely insulate the operator from making a ground connection to the truck, and that he’s never even heard of an electrocution caused by a compromised fiberglass boom. Some trickle-through may occur – enough for a low reading on a dielectric test or even for an operator to feel a tingle – but not enough to cause electrocution.

“You might get some high leakage readings because of dirt, but all that gives is a sensation,” says Biddle. “You’d have to
have an awfully filthy boom to compromise the boom. Fiberglass is very forgiving.”

Biddle says some older equipment that may still be in use — equipment that has changed hands three or four times — may be susceptible to failure, but even then it would likely have to sustain abuse or a great amount of neglect to become a safety hazard.

Biddle at one time was in charge of investigating accidents for Hi-Ranger equipment. “I investigated about 300 accidents of all kinds and only two or three of them were due to equipment failure,” reports Biddle. Most were operator error, the majority consisting of falls from buckets, tip-overs and electrical contacts.

One of the great myths in the industry is that tree care workers are involved in more electrical accidents than trained, experienced power utility workers, says Biddle. He had thought that was the case until someone challenged him. When he went back and examined the electrical accidents, he found they were right. “I was amazed,” he says.

The reason is that the utility worker is around electricity so much he starts to look for shortcuts — until he slips up — and the slip-ups are usually spectacular, Biddle says, resulting in severe injury or death. The tree care worker, on the other hand, knows only that electricity is dangerous. “The tree care industry has a healthy respect for it and stays away from it.”

The most common cause of electrical accidents with boom trucks seem to be when an operator bridges the insulation gap provided by the fiberglass boom, such as running a water hose or painting hose up from the ground. Other ways to circumvent the truck’s insulating ability, according to Gerstenberger, include running extension cords to the bucket, pulling cable to the bucket from a reel on the ground, even replacing the unit’s non-conductive hydraulic hose with braided metal hose.

No matter what safety features manufacturers build into equipment, operators will find a way around them. For example, says Biddle, some trucks feature an outrigger limit switch that prevents the boom from operating without the outriggers being down. But many operators will bypass the switch, figuring they know their limits and sometimes don’t need the outriggers.

Michael Dunican, president of North American Equipment Upfitters Inc. in Hooksett, N.H., recalls going out to a job site and seeing a tree worker standing on top of a milk crate placed in the bottom of the bucket to reach a couple of feet further for a cut.

So, barring egregious operator misuse or error, are there things that owners and operators can do to improve safety and reliability of lifts? We took that question back
to North American Equipment Upfitters, which builds and maintains aerial lift trucks for a variety of utilities and tree care companies.

The lift unit consists of five major parts: The pedestal is attached to the frame of the truck. The turret is the rotating piece on top of the pedestal. The boom consists of an upper boom and a lower boom, which are joined by the knuckle. The upper boom, and sometimes the lower boom for aerial lifts used in tree work, will have a fiberglass section. Since fiberglass does not conduct electricity, or is dielectric, it prevents electricity from a touched wire from reaching the truck. The platform, or bucket, is attached to the outer end of the upper boom and is made of fiberglass for the same reason.

Metal fatigue in an aging fleet can result in mechanical failure of the knuckle or in the bolts that mount the lift to the pedestal, according to Jay Bornstein, general manager at North American. Old or worn fiberglass can lead to boom failure, although this type of failure is less common. Worn or cracked fiberglass can also result in dielectric failure and, potentially, shock or electrocution.

**Dielectric integrity**

An OSHA accident report from the early 1990s recounts how a ground worker who was leaning against a truck was electrocuted when the boom contacted a 7,620 volt power line, “energizing the truck.” With today’s equipment, that accident should not happen thanks to the insulation provided by fiberglass booms. And the insulating qualities of the boom, or its dielectric integrity, should be tested annually, or any time certain mechanical work is done to the boom, according to ANSI standards and OSHA requirements.

A dielectric test can be done in the field and costs $250 to $350. The test involves a
unit that looks sort of like a rolling battery charger on two wheels. The tester connects a probe to the ground on the truck, and then provides a high voltage charge, up to 46 kilowatts, through the boom and checks for any through-flow of electric current. (ANSI A92.2 allows up to 1 milliampere leakage during a three minute test for a class-C aerial lift.)

According to Bornstein, the two chief contributing factors of dielectric failure are dirty booms or wear in the outer coating of the fiberglass. “Usually they’ll fail because they’re dirty,” says Tom Ryan, service manager for North American.

The leading cause of failure is dirt, oil or pine sap on the outer boom, or leaves, pine needles, dirt and oil that has fallen down inside the boom.

The easiest way to maintain a safe boom, and pass a dielectric test, is to make cleaning the boom inside and out a part of your regular preventive maintenance. Cleaning debris out of the boom and washing the boom’s outer skin with warm water and soap is usually all it takes to remove the dirt that can cause dielectric failure, says Bornstein.

Aerial lift users should also develop practices that do not increase the chance of dielectric failure. According to Gerstenberger, one of the most common causes of dirty booms is the gas-powered or hydraulic chain saw that slings excessive amounts of oil from the spinning saw chain. Another easy fix is never doing equipment maintenance in the bucket that could result in grease, fuel or oil dripping into or onto the boom.

The other major cause of dielectric failure is worn or cracked fiberglass. Fiberglass booms are coated with a waterproof shield. Over time, rubbing against trees or wires can wear away the coating, allowing water to get into the fiberglass, potentially compromising its protective properties and causing dielectric failure. “If they have a small crack in the fiberglass and water gets in there, it will cause wicking,” says Bornstein.

Mechanical failure

There are no tests commonly used to check for metal or fiberglass integrity, according to Bornstein, and the best way to prevent this type of failure is making visual inspections part of routine maintenance. “That is the most important thing for them to do for the life of their unit,” he says of owners and/or operators.

Adopting certain maintenance practices, such as replacing parts rather than reusing them, is also part of good safety and maintenance, Bornstein says. For instance, after 30 days in service, all critical fasteners, such as the bolts that mount the pedestal to the truck frame, should be re-torqued and marked with a new seal. If they loosen again – or if for any reason that seal is broken – the nuts and bolts are replaced. “A bolt will stretch – and it will stretch once; you don’t reuse them,” cautions Bornstein.

“On some older lifts with aluminum castings, the knuckle could fail. Wipe it off and check it for cracks,” he says.

North American uses a dye test that aids in the visual inspection for cracks. It uses a three-part solution that includes a dye that
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Cracked paint is a good sign of a break in a weld,” says Bornstein. Inspect the bucket platform for wear and cracks.

Hydraulic failure should not cause a boom to fall with today’s equipment, says Bornstein. Lock valves in the hydraulic system will halt the flow of hydraulic fluid in the case of a broken fluid line. While this may result in the bucket worker having to lower himself to the ground by rope, it will not cause the boom to drop.

“Contaminated (hydraulic) oil will really hurt a lift,” says Bornstein. Metal shavings can get into the spool valves. Also, viscosity in the oil is important, he says, and don’t use an oil not recommended by the manufacturer. “Keep an eye on flashpoints – the thinner the oil, the lower the flash point. You don’t want to mix oil either – different brands of oil – because some brands might not mix with another.”

“Lubrication of your rotation bearings is a critical thing, too,” notes Bornstein. “If you don’t lubricate this it will decrease the life of your lift.”

And the pinion gear? “All you have to do is adjust that, and that’s an important thing, to keep those greased.”

“Tire pressure really adds to the stability of a lift,” adds Bornstein. “Stability tests take one-and-a-half times the bucket capacity and hang it off the completely extended boom, and the tires must stay on the ground. It can pass a utility test with the tires coming off the ground, but does it feel good for the operator? Absolutely not.”

“Every three months or 250 hours of use, whichever comes first, you should do a general inspection,” says Bornstein.

It all comes down to maintaining and caring for the equipment, he says. “I get trucks back after a year and they look like they’ve been through a war.”

Don Staruk is managing editor of TCI magazine.
Please circle 18 on Reader Service Card
When I graduated from college in 1979, there weren’t many jobs around so I ended up going into sales. I worked for W.R. Grace, a company that specialized in chemicals. I was the worst salesman in the world.

I learned what I call the Xerox method of selling. You show up, open your bag, point to it and ask the customer if they need one. If they don’t buy, you choke them until they buy something. The technique, commonly called the peddler technique, doesn’t work very well in a service business.

For commercial tree care, the phone rings, you show up at the property and write up a bid. In some cases that may be enough, but it isn’t enough to land you the kind of margins and opportunities that are available. Over time, as I watched very successful salespeople, I began to understand some of their techniques. One of the first techniques I had to learn was to listen. We all have two ears and one mouth, and we should follow that ratio in selling – listen twice as much as we talk.

Great salesmanship is a very simple process:

• Show up;
• Stop selling yourself the minute you show up;
• Listen very carefully and document what you hear.

Sales isn’t writing up orders; it is a process, just as marketing is a process.

Selling is different today

The peddler was a very common sales technique for many years. In the old days, the milkman ran the route. The greatest fear back then was that the horse would die, because the horse knew the route. The milkman delivered milk and collected orders. Too many contractors have a tendency to do the very same thing. A call comes in for a removal, they bid the job and collect their fee.

It’s getting harder and harder to make money with that method. Clients are requesting multiple bids, so sales technique matters now. The cheapest bid will win if three tree companies show up at the door.
and the client thinks all are equal in quality and capability. A good salesperson's job is to differentiate your company in some way. Every client does not rely on price alone.

In recent years we have seen a boom, a recession and tremendous changes in workforce demographics. We have see more of our services become commodities, which means more companies are offering the same service – driving down prices.

The key is to differentiate your company through the sales process or marketing, or both. Buying habits are changing for your services, with more and more people gathering information from the Internet. A commercial tree care company doesn't sell products like Amazon, but customers will check out your company on the Internet first to see who you are, what services you offer, what professional affiliations you have. Three years ago when I made this point, people laughed. Nobody is laughing anymore. The upscale consumers you want do their buying research on the Internet.

A successful salesperson is …

… Someone with effective interpersonal skills. To be successful a salesperson has to like sales. Many people are only in sales reluctantly. A good salesperson likes selling, and has the interpersonal skills to be effective. He will have the ability to communicate and be understood. It means that she will have the ability to look somebody in the eye and communicate the right voice tone and body language.

… Someone with high product and technical knowledge. I will tolerate a salesperson who doesn’t have great skills if they have high product and technical knowledge. For commercial tree care, buyers really want to be educated about their trees and landscape. The more a salesperson can educate a potential buyer, the more success he will have.

… Someone who is a constant learner. Great salespeople want to be at the top of their game by being self-motivated, driven and having the ability to know the target

![Sales Consultant’s Pyramid](image)

**Working the Pyramid**

The pyramid starts at the bottom with qualification – of you by the customers and of them by your office. On a sales call, the customer qualifies your salesperson and your company, which includes everything from professionalism to appearance to knowledge. The second piece of that is qualifying them. The next stage is to identify their needs and wants. They may want more than they are willing to spend. Sometimes what they want is wrong. The next level is the presentation. A good presentation demonstrates to the client that your company truly is different from the others who will submit low bids.

Too many salespeople start at the wrong level of the pyramid. They move right into the presentation: “Hello, I am so and so from ABC Tree Company. We have been in business 32 years and we have 14 trucks and a really nice logo.”

If you do that you aren’t working the pyramid properly. Don’t start with selling the client on the company. You are there to sell the client on what she needs and wants. She wants you to listen to what her needs are and then tell her how you can meet those needs. Great salespeople never talk about their company. If they have qualified the client and listened to his needs and wants, then they don’t need to talk about the company. When people call they are ready to buy. They have a need, and the first person who comes to me and hands them a date of when the work will get done is higher on the list to hire.

If you start at the bottom of the pyramid, sales will become much easier. Work the pyramid from the bottom up.
market. Nobody has to motivate a successful salesperson, since the most effective are the ones who are self-motivated. They enjoy the process of walking a customer through the landscape and watching them recognize something of value and then, ultimately, collecting that sale. Salespeople have to be strategic thinkers with the ability to follow through on a plan to share with the potential customer.

… Someone who is a business analyst. A salesperson must understand the property owner’s business. A property owner or commercial property manager has certain goals and a certain amount of money budgeted for common area maintenance. A salesperson must understand their plan and budget. What are they trying to accomplish and how long they are going to own the property? Find out if the buyer is interested in something long term or a low price.

Outsell others 100 to 1

Consultative selling is the most successful and profitable. Consultative sellers don’t just take orders, they ask questions of clients:

What is it you are trying to accomplish?

What are your goals here?

How long are you going to be here?

What type of look do you want?

Are you looking for this to be a showplace?

What kind of regular maintenance do you expect?

Consulting is about asking the questions to discover what the client needs and what they want. In sales, the hardest questions are easiest when asked up front. If you show up at a property and ask what kind of a look the client wants and then slide in a question regarding budget, the client will probably give you an answer. On the other hand, if you only talk about money as you hop into your truck, you can forget about getting an accurate answer.
The best salespeople in the world always qualify clients to determine which people fit in their sales funnel. Which people deserve most of your time? The quicker you can ask questions up front the better. A consultative seller will outsell a peddler 100 to 1.

How do you recognize or train a consultative seller? You have to know their characteristics. A consultative seller:

• Is concerned with the quality of customer service.

• Realizes that closing is the easy part. Since they work the front end of the process so well, the back end usually becomes the scheduling part.

• Spends time educating the client because the only commodity a salesperson has is time. Part of this process is figuring out how much time needs to be spent with the client and if they a client worth educating.

• Asks to participate in the client’s forecasting – even for a residential client. The client may have called to have two maples pruned, but what are they thinking about for next year and the year beyond? Even if some of the ideas are not services you provide, you may refer them to and therefore help that customer solve a problem.

• Acts as an unpaid staff member for the customer. For commercial accounts, good salespeople see themselves as partners, not vendors.

• Proposes options and solutions rather than positions. A lot of salespeople lose jobs because they will only do something their way. If you have enough business to be that arrogant, fine, but sometimes you can give a customer three different ideas with three different prices.

• Engineers down-line marketing and purchasing. A consultant looks down the road and talks about next year and the year after that.

• Meets with the customer first hand.

When I was in business, unless a property manager or a representative was willing to meet me at the site, I would not go out. You may disagree with me, but it was a waste of time. Great salespeople qualify leads on the phone. That is one of the downsides of yellow pages advertising. Lots of calls coming in, but the person answering the phone isn’t pre-qualifying and selling.

• Learns to ask open-ended (but not obnoxious) questions. Some open-ended questions, such as “Is quality important to you?”, “Are you the decision-maker?” or “Can you make a decision today?” are insulting rather than enlightening.

Conclusion

Figure out where the money is for your business. Figure out what type of customer fits your funnel. Ask incoming callers:

• What type of work needs to be done?
• What is the time frame?
• How did you hear about us?

There is a right buyer for your company’s services. You may think that everybody fits your funnel, but they don’t. Some companies are best suited for medium-income residential clients. Some may specialize in high-end residential work. Some concentrate on commercial property managers. Most companies have a mix, but every company tends to have a natural funnel. Figure out yours, then develop the practices and techniques that will enable your salespeople to become consultative sellers. If you do, by the end of the year you will have made more money than last year.

Jeff Stokes is CEO and founder of Pinnacle Performance Group Inc., a national training and consulting firm that specializes in productivity and profit improvement.

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North American Emerald Ash Borer Infestation:  
Ashes, Ashes, All Fall Down

By Dr. Randall Frost

Some time around 1994, a new Asian beetle arrived in southeastern Michigan, probably on pallet wood loaded on a cargo ship bound for the Motor City. From there the insect flew into Windsor, Canada. By 2002, the beetle — by that time recognized as the emerald ash borer (EAB) — was well established in Michigan and Ontario, Canada, and estimates were that it had already killed or infested at least 5 million ash trees in open settings, woodlots and forest stands. In response, quarantines were enacted in the United States and Canada to stop the human-assisted spread of the infestation.

But the pest was not to be stopped that easily. At least five isolated EAB populations were discovered in Ohio in 2003, having apparently arisen from the transport of infested firewood, nursery stock or logs out of Michigan. In April 2003, 121 ash trees were moved from Michigan to a nursery in Maryland. By the time that the situation was recognized, 94 of the trees remained in the nursery, with 27 sold. Although all of the nursery stock, some of which was shipped to Virginia, was later accounted for, many of the recovered trees exhibited signs of infestation and EAB larvae, indicating that EAB adults had emerged and reproduced in Maryland. There is now also evidence that the pest may be established in Indiana, where a dead borer was found in 2003 on an ash tree that had been moved to that state from Michigan two years earlier.

North American ashes have commercial importance as timber, landscape trees, and sources of food for wildlife. USDA Forest Service scientist Dr. Robert Haack feels that the entire continent is at risk from EAB attack, and that spread of the pest to the rest of the country would cause considerable economic and environmental damage.

The emerald ash borer (Agrilus planipennis) is native to northeastern China, North and South Korea, parts of Mongolia and Russia, Japan and Taiwan. In China, the beetle has only been known to attack ash trees, but in Korea, elms have been found to be hosts. In North America, however, only ash trees have been found so far to be susceptible to EAB infestation.

Of the roughly 60 ash species worldwide, 16 are found in North America, occurring naturally in the eastern U.S. and along the West Coast. EAB susceptibility among species varies. Says David Cappaert, a research entomologist at Michigan State University, “Green ash (Fraxinus pennsylvanica) is probably more susceptible than white ash (F. americana); blue ash (F. quadrangulata) may be quite resistant … We’ve looked quite a bit at the possibility that other species — elm, walnut, hickory — might host EAB, but it looks like the answer is no.”

Adult emerald ash borers are slender – from 7.5 to 15 mm long – and metallic, coppery-green in color. Studies in China have found the adult to be active from mid-May to July, during which time they feed, mate and lay eggs on the bark surface. Females are said to lay from 68 to 90 eggs during their lifetime.

From mid-June to October, the larvae feed in the tree’s cambial region. The larvae, which are white and about 30 mm
long when fully grown, have a characteristic pair of “pinchers” on their abdomen. Most of the larvae spend the winter in pupal cells constructed in the outer sapwood or in the outer bark. Pupation takes place the following spring or summer. Upon emerging from the tree, the adult beetle feeds on foliage throughout its several-week life.

A major difficulty with EAB is that it is practically impossible to detect an infestation in its first year because eggs are usually deposited in the upper trunk deep inside bark cracks, and because the larvae feed under the bark. The only way to detect these early infestations is to remove the bark and look for larval galleries. In the year following the initial attack, the insect’s characteristic D-shaped larval exit holes may easily be overlooked. Also, in the first year there may be little crown dieback. In subsequent years of infestation, however, the crowns become thinner and do show signs of dieback.

According to Deborah McPartlan, who is the operations officer for USDA APHIS’ emerald ash borer plant protection and quarantine program, there are no known natural enemies to the pest in North America. A few parasitic wasps that are predators, however, have been found in China.

Michigan State’s David Cappaert notes that woodpeckers have proven valuable indicators of the presence of EAB – particularly during the first year of infestation when the insect remains in the upper reaches of trees. Unlike the small EAB exit holes, woodpeckers are visible from the ground. “Woodpeckers are the highest natural mortality factor, typically killing about half of the EAB,” he says.

Surprisingly, no one knows exactly how the woodpeckers locate their prey. Most predation takes place in winter, when the larvae are presumably immobile, so Cappaert doubts that sound is a factor. Nor does he think that odor plays a role. Whatever the cues the woodpeckers are responding to, the birds seem to make direct hits on the larvae under the bark.

Shortly after the beetle’s initial detection in Michigan in 2002, the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) initiated a plan of action that included a multi-agency task force, a quarantine, press releases, meetings, surveys, a 1-800 hotline, and an EAB Web site. That May, the USDA granted Michigan $14 million to contain the beetle, which was actually $3 million less than the state had requested.

When MDA enacted the quarantine that restricted the transport of live trees, limbs, firewood and untreated logs and lumber in July 2002, it included five Michigan counties. A sixth county was added in August, and seven more counties were added to the quarantine in 2003. As of January 2004, there were 13 quarantined counties in the state – Genesee, Ingham, Jackson, Lapeer, Lenawee, Shiawassee, St. Clair, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne.

Among the businesses hardest hit by the infestation have been Michigan’s nurseries. Bernie deWitt, president of Lincoln Nursery in Ottawa County, has found himself stuck with a couple of thousand healthy ash trees that he cannot sell. Says deWitt, “A blight is a cost of doing business. But this isn’t. They say it probably came in on dunnage on a ship. If I buy plants from Europe, they have to go through an intensive inspection process. I think they ought to do that with the dunnage.”

In October, the Lansing State Journal reported that Michigan had asked the USDA for an additional $33 million to contain the EAB and destroy dead and infected ash trees, plus $9 million from the U.S. Forest Service for research. An MDA official was quoted at that time as saying that he hoped the funds would be allocated before winter, when dead ash trees could fall under the weight of ice. The spokesperson estimated that the containment effort could cost up to $350 million over the following 12 years. To eradicate the pest, MDA was proposing to cut buffers or “firebreaks” around outlying sites of infestation.

But not everyone saw the wisdom in MDA’s strategy. On Dec. 17, 2002, the Lansing State Journal published comments by TCIA member Chris Smith, president of
Smith Tree & Landscape Service in Lansing. Smith argued that MDA’s plan to eradicate the EAB was fundamentally flawed. Noting that estimates had placed EAB in Michigan for six to 12 years, and that the identification of outlier infestation sites typically lagged infection by one to two years, Smith concluded that the spread of the pest was too late to control. Meanwhile, he noted that the core infestation area in and around Detroit was being left to expand even as attention was being focused on outlying infestations.

Two days later, the Lansing State Journal reported that MDA was planning to cut 1,000 ash trees in Michigan’s Delta Township, with an undetermined number of trees to be felled in February at a site near Potterville. Both sites represented outlying infestations, well away from the core area. MDA’s expectation was that federal money would cover the cost of cutting the trees, and that federal funds would be matched with community funds to cover the costs of planting new trees.

According to McPartlan, the decision to cut the trees was based on a science advisory panel’s recommendation that all ash trees within the first half mile of an EAB infestation be removed by cutting, then chipped to pieces less than 1 inch in size. McPartlan added that eradication efforts would continue as long as federal and state funds remained available.

The Forest Service’s Robert Haack was involved in the study that led to the half-mile-radius figure. He says the distance was arrived at based on a study done around infested ash firewood that had been inadvertently moved to a farm outside the core infestation area. Says Haack, “The firewood had been taken to a farm area, and there were ash trees growing along a drainage ditch. The trees were in a nice straight row for a long distance. About a year ago, we cut down all ash trees, and checked the bark. In that study, the last infested tree we found was about a half mile out.”

But Haack has also performed laboratory experiments that suggest the insect can fly up to 5 km in a two-day period. “We don’t know if they do that in nature because they might stop at the nearest encountered ash tree and lay eggs,” he says. “Or maybe they can fly a couple of miles, but they never have to because there are so many ash trees nearby. If a fire break is cut, will the beetles fly over it? We don’t know yet.”

Haack adds, “If they could cut a half-mile buffer around every infestation, that would probably dramatically reduce the population. Probably in many cases it would take out all of the EAB in that area.” He cautions, however, “If [the beetles] can fly several miles, then we’re in trouble. But everything now is based on this field study where we went out to that firewood area. It was done under natural conditions. But [we don’t know] if a couple of beetles flew five or 10 miles, because we didn’t cut trees that far out.”

McPartlan notes that there is no aerial spray capable of preventing the movement of female borers to new trees, and that injectable treatments have the drawback of requiring periodic re-application. But according to Kenneth Rauscher of MDA,
chemical treatments will be considered beyond the half-mile radius if peeling efforts and trapping along perimeters in the summer of 2004 indicate the need for them.

In Ohio, plans are to cut and chip all ash trees within a quarter mile – rather than a half mile – of an infestation, and then to treat all ashes within the next quarter-mile radius with the systemic insecticide imidacloprid. Canada, meanwhile, is planning to cut a 10-km, ash-free zone around its infested area. On Jan. 16, 2004, the Toronto Star reported that more than 60,000 ash trees would be destroyed over the following 10 weeks. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has announced that there will be no compensation for property owners whose trees are cut in the 25-kilometer-long, 10-kilometer-wide “ash-free zone.”

McPartlan expresses sympathy for those who stand to lose their trees. “We understand that cutting trees down is often a sad experience for residents in an infested area. However, in the case of this pest, it is the best available action to take in order to totally remove the pest from the environment and keep it from spreading to your neighbors’ yards and their woodlots, to additional cities in the state, or to other adjacent states,” she said.

Robert Haack summed up his perception of the conflicts of interests in January, shortly before MDA was to begin its tree removals: “Some in the tree care industry want to protect trees with insecticides. Logging groups say ‘There’s no hope for your trees, sell your trees to us and we’ll give you a good price for them.’ Regulatory agencies like MDA and APHIS are trying to handle quarantine issues.”

By mid-January 2004, MDA had begun performing tree inventories and conducting public meetings about the planned tree cuttings. Kenneth Rauscher announced that tree removal would begin in the outlying areas in late February. Ominously, however, the Grand Rapids Press had reported just one day earlier that a new EAB infestation in Berrien County had been found outside of the quarantined counties, near Michigan’s border with Indiana.

Later in January, the Michigan Forestry and Park Association (MFPA) and the Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA) issued a joint statement on EAB that called for tree removals, chemical and/or biological treatments, further research, continued monitoring efforts, tree restoration and exchange of information. The statement read in part:

“We support what the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) has done thus far, however, in our best expert opinion, the financial resources the MDA has been given are not sufficient to eradicate the pest. The severity of the impact of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) on the state’s natural areas, community and urban settings, consumers, industries, and state and federal economies cannot be understated. Immediate focus on this issue requires astronomical resources in terms of both manpower and funding. The Michigan Forestry and Park Association and the Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association, representing the experts in the fields of tree care, urban forestry, landscape contracting, growing facilities, landscape suppliers and retail garden centers, support suppression and containment and ultimately eradication of this devastating invasive insect pest.”

On Jan. 22, 2004, the Lansing State Journal reported that survey crews were poised to begin marking ash trees targeted for removal in Delta Township. Tree cutting was also targeted for 11 other isolated infestation sites, with the cutting at 10 of these sites contingent on federal funding from USDA. Tree removal was reportedly being timed to take place before the beetles began to emerge in April or May.

Chris Smith, meanwhile, argued that levels of funding for 2004 were inadequate for addressing all outlying infestations, and was predicting a 3,000-square-mile core infestation zone by September 2004. He also expressed concern that tree falls would continue to pose a threat to residents in the urban core area even as local politicians there attempted to find funds to pay for the removal of the dead trees. According to Smith, a fundamental flaw in the eradication plan was the attempt to eliminate the pest from outlying sites without adopting a
firewall around the 900-sq-mile core area. “If the core area can’t be contained and has been abandoned, anything done in the outlier areas is of no value either. There is no logical sense in pursuing outliers,” he said.

But MSU’s David Cappaert believes that containment in outlying sites is essential to slowing down the spread of the infestation. While he concedes that leaks are likely to occur in the control effort with the resulting spread of the beetle, he says, “In a worst case scenario, EAB could largely destroy the seven billion urban and forest ash in the lower 48 states, with costs at least in the tens of billions of dollars. But if the current quarantine and control program can provide additional years before EAB is established in Chicago or Boston, we will have far more information about how to forecast and mitigate damage.”

TCIA board member Randy J. Owen, who operates Owen Tree Service in Attica, Mich., is currently under contract with MDA to remove the trees in outlying areas of infestation. While he is concerned about the ability of the containment effort to succeed, he is also optimistic. “I believe they are going to have troubles. But if they have the proper management and aggressiveness they should be able to get a handle on it,” he says. Owen feels that the loss of Michigan’s ash trees would be a disaster for the state’s ecology and economy, but he adds, “The ash tree population in Michigan might represent 10 or 15 percent of our forest trees. Our ash tree population is very minor compared to Tennessee, Kentucky and the Appalachians. It would be truly devastating if the infestation went through Ohio and into Kentucky and Tennessee.”

But another TCIA member, Mike Burger, who operates Mike’s Tree Service in Troy, Mich., thinks it’s too late to start creating buffers around local infestation sites. “They talked about it too long. And I’m not sure it would have worked,” he says. “My belief is the insect was beyond the quarantined areas to begin with.”

Robert Haack remains cautionary but hopeful. “A lot of us suspect the beetle is in more sites than they have been found, but we haven’t found them yet. Hopefully in a year we’ll have better monitoring tools. People are looking visually instead of using a trap,” he says.

Professor Michael Raupp, an entomologist at the University of Maryland in College Park, questions whether eradication is achievable. “I think eradication is going to be very difficult. This pest is distributed over an extraordinarily wide area of the North Central region. It’s popping up in new places all the time. It is a big disperser and good flyer. It attacks healthy trees of all ages. That’s a tough scenario.”

But containment is a different story,” he says. “I think there is some sense to that perhaps. The gypsy moth project has been relatively successful. A slow-to-spread approach is very different from an eradication. The goal of the approaches is fundamentally different. Eradication means to get rid of. I don’t think we are getting rid of this pest.”

Raupp continues, “Everybody’s hope is that they can reach some sort of balance here, that we can slow things down enough that we can get some natural enemies in. I think ultimately the natural enemies are the solution. Of course there are all sorts of problems in terms of importing things. But that would clearly be the way to go.”

Additional resources
“Emerald Ash Borer Cooperative Eradication Program in the Lower Michigan Peninsula; Environmental Assessment,” USDA, December 2003
“Emerald Ash Borer,” USDA Forest Service; available online at: www.nrcs.fs.fed.us/4501/eab
“Emerald Ash Borer,” Michigan Department of Agriculture; available online at www.michigan.gov/mda/0,1607,7-125—65294—,00.html
Please circle 53 on Reader Service Card
What would an appraiser see looking at your business? Chances are that he or she would see something different from what you see. The appraiser’s point of view is worth considering, regardless of whether you have any intention of selling your business or refinancing. You may be surprised at what appraisers notice and what the details say about your business.

The details

“I like to sit down with the proprietor and talk extensively, particularly if someone is interested in buying the business,” says Paul Muriello, of Muriello Appraisal and Consulting in Chicago. “I want to get a feel for how the business deals with people. How fast does the business return phone calls, for instance? Do people make eye contact when they’re talking to you? How does the proprietor treat customers?

“Look at the employees. What do they look like? Is the place clean? Messy? Do you get a sense of people being friendly? Notice the clutter. Everyone has some clutter, but there are differences. Does the clutter result from there being a lot going on? Or is it chaos clutter?”

Key man (or woman)

A key person is crucial to the sustainability of the business. How dependent is the business on that key person? How many clients would leave if that person left the business is hard to assess with any accuracy. Whether or not the business is too dependent on one person is more obvious. That dependency leaves the business vulnerable – and it also decreases the value of the business, particularly if that person has skills, contacts or personality that someone else couldn’t duplicate or replace. The “key-man discount” is not only a monetary “penalty” in an appraisal, but it highlights a spot in which the business is susceptible should certain changes occur.

The extent of the discount can vary according to how long the business has been in operation. In a business that’s been going for 80 years, key man isn’t the factor that it is in a relatively new business. Obviously that business has some sustainability and momentum that can compensate for a key-man situation.

Depth of management also plays a part in the discount, and in the appraisal in general. Again, it’s an issue of vulnerability. A business in which management consists of one person is vulnerable. The weakness is somewhat lessened if there is at least someone else who can run the day-to-day operations of the business.

The money

The money aspect of the business is of course a factor in an appraisal, but the essential question comes down to profitability: For every dollar in sales, how many pennies go to the bottom line?

Liquidity adds value in a business’ appraisal. The amount of indebtedness is a negative. “In recent years, management has concentrated on reducing debt, and often reducing the money paid to themselves as well. They’re getting more conservative, and their businesses are getting more liquid,” says Joseph P. Muriello, partner in Hutchinson Bloodgood LLP in Glendale, Calif.

Other positive factors in a valuation include growth in earnings, stability and staying power. Market demand looks not only at current customers but potential customers as well; the business may be doing all right now, but what is the outlook for the near future? The long term? Can the business sustain its present level? How dependent is it on a few key customers – again, that issue of vulnerability.

The business plan

The business plan enters into several considerations. Particularly in these economic times, an appraiser will look carefully at the question of how well the business can carry on through adverse conditions. A sound business plan that’s conservative in its estimates and allows for alternative scenarios in levels of sales gives a business more flexibility in dealing with downturns. Other items an appraiser will look for in a plan include a realistic growth rate and profitability level.

Momentum, although less tangible, is a
significant factor in the sustainability of a business.

The challenge of valuation

The amount of assets isn’t a significant figure for valuation in many businesses, especially service businesses where the “product” involves a significant amount of expertise, or where the “production” doesn’t require major equipment and the business typically carries little or no inventory.

Expertise is hard – if not impossible – to quantify. Whether that expertise is centered in one person is what is important. Accountants often speak of “goodwill,” and in some businesses goodwill is an item on the balance sheet. One common definition of goodwill is that it represents the ability of the business to generate above-average earnings. This definition carries some problems, but it is a step to quantifying the fact that the business is worth more than the sum of its parts. Various factors affect goodwill: the quality of the service, location of the business, the business’ history and reputation, and favorable prices.

Some valuation methods focus on the business’ profitability or its cash flow. These methods go by various titles, but underlying them is the assumption that much of the value of a business lies in its ability to generate cash in the future. This has the appeal of common sense; most purchasers are buying the business in anticipation of future income from that business. Because the history of earnings and profitability are factors, these methods of valuation don’t work well with very young companies.

The essence of a valuation based on cash flow is the question: What is someone willing to pay today for the anticipated future cash flow? This is known as the discounted cash flow or present value method. Present Value Tables are used to compute the amount of the present value, or the amount someone is willing to pay today for earnings in the future. For example, at a discount rate of 14 percent, the net present value of $1 earned a year from now is 88 cents. Using the same rate, $1 earned five years from today has a net present value (NPV) of 52 cents.

Comparables, so frequently used in residential real estate appraisals, aren’t as applicable in businesses, simply because comparisons between businesses are much more difficult to make. Determining what factors to use, then finding businesses with those comparable factors, can be nearly impossible. The apples and oranges scenario is the usual result.

What does an appraiser see when he or she looks at your business?

Are you going to take over the business? Will the current proprietor continue to run it? Does he or she do business in a manner that you want representing you? While customers and the general public may not know who the new owner is – that business is your business, and it represents you in the business world.

Quality is obviously a key factor. If you take over the business, can you maintain the level of quality? If the present quality is lower than you want, can you successfully market the upgrade? While customers (or former customers) are often willing to give the new ownership a chance, memories of poor quality die hard. In order to show customers that you’re doing business differently, you’re going to have to make a significant showing of being different.

If you are considering buying…

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What does an appraiser see when he or she looks at your business?

What do you see?

Are you missing something?

Although images and impressions may seem superficial, they can provide significant indicators of your business, how it is run, its health and its viability. Selling your business may not be on your horizon, but questions of value and valuation are closer than you think. The factors that make up a valuation are pertinent to the sustainability of your business. Take a look at your business from the outside.

34 on Reader Service Card
As arborists head back outdoors in this growing season, poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac are in full bloom, ready to wreak havoc on millions.

Allergies to these poisonous plants are among the most common in the country. According to the American Academy of Dermatology, each year, anywhere from 10 to 50 million people in the United States develop the oozing, itching rash associated with these poisonous plants.

The noxious plants all contain urushiol oil, a toxin that adheres to the skin and causes the symptoms associated with poison ivy, oak and sumac. The human body responds to the oil in such a way as to attack itself where the urushiol is attached. The most important step in treating an allergic reaction is to detach and rinse the oil from the skin completely.

While many experts advise washing with soap and water immediately after contact, most people do not know they have made contact with the poisonous plant until many hours after exposure. By that time, the urushiol oil will have adhered to the skin, so cleansing with soap and water is
only effective if used immediately after exposure.

How to spot the poisons

One of the best ways to avoid contact with these toxic plants is to learn to identify their often indistinct characteristics. Poison ivy and oak leaves typically have three pointed leaflets that can be smooth or jagged, with a longer middle leaf. The plants are reddish in spring; green in summer; and yellow, orange or red in the fall. Some plants may have a bunch of green flowers or white berry clusters.

The poison sumac has seven to 13 leaflets per leaf and grows as a shrub or small tree in standing water, peat bogs and swamps in the Northeast, Midwest and Southeast. Often confused with its nonpoisonous sister plant, poison sumac can be distinguished by the location of its fruit, which grows between the leaf and branch vs. the end of the branch.

How to Prevent Contact

The best precautions against contact with poison ivy, oak and sumac are to:

• Learn to identify the plants;

• Dress properly when outside by wearing long sleeves and pants to cover exposed skin;

• Cover your hands when gardening or handling foliage by wearing thick gloves;

• Avoid burning plants that even resemble these poisonous plants, as inhaling the burning oil and ash can produce severe reactions, even death;

• Wash everything thoroughly after being outside, including tools, clothes, shoes and pets.

Avoid burning plants that even resemble these poisonous plants, as inhaling the burning oil and ash can produce severe reactions, even death.

Three separate poison ivy vines growing up a pine tree. Notice the very hairy vine. Urushiol is in the vine as well as the leaves – approach with caution.

Poison sumac in autumn.

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Managing Your Hispanic/Latino Workforce

By Mauricio Velasquez

The Hispanic/Latino workforce has moved into the tree care industry, and if the industry does not manage this population effectively, there will be nobody behind them to do the work.

There are two kinds of employers in the tree care industry. Employers who value and respect the Latino/Hispanic worker. Employers who do not understand the changing make-up of the potential workforce or truly do not care and could be mistreating this recent wave of labor in the industry.

Latino/Hispanic workers talk to each other, and some employers are finding their businesses going belly up because there is nobody to do their work. It isn’t really a question of whether or not you are going to deal with these issues, it is more of a question of when.

Many tree care company owners have dramatically different workforces than just 10 years ago. Not enough of those employers are doing things differently. If the workplace has changed, then the status quo doesn’t work any more. We are doing the same things we have always done, but expecting better results. That is ridiculous. What should you be doing differently? Acknowledge that “times are changing.”

The first thing we need to do is to get some stereotypical notions and attitudes out of the way.

At a trade show in New England a guy told me that he couldn’t work with Hispanics. He said this in front of 300 people. He told me that one of his guys was mowing a property and hit a rock. It kicked up dirt and the worker got something in his eye.

“'It was serious enough that I had to take him to a hospital,” he recounted, “And he wanted me to pay for the medical attention.”

He told me the bill was for $100. He would not pay it and the guy quit. That employee then went back to the other employees and told them what had happened. They all quit. If you do not see your Hispanic/Latino workers as unique individuals, if you treat them like cattle, they will move to greener pastures.

Let’s start with the most basic question: What is the difference between Hispanic and Latino?

Hispanics are descended from the inhabitants of Spain, either directly or from Spain to Central and/or South America. Latinos are from Central and South America (Latin America). A person can be Latino and Hispanic. Someone can be Latino and not Hispanic, which would make them Indio, Indian or native. They could be Inca, Maya or of native Central or South American origin.

My parents are immigrants and I prefer to be called – by my name. The most important thing to keep in mind when hiring is whether or not the person can do the job. It doesn’t matter if he is Hispanic/Latino – can he do the job?

I sometimes hear employers say things such as, “Our Mexicans don’t get along with our Bolivians.” It sounds like they are talking about two different gangs. If you treat people as unique individuals and not as members of groups, you will go a long way toward maximizing the productivity of your workforce. If you treat people with respect and dignity, you will get even further.

There are unique benefits and challenges
in working with your Hispanic/Latino workers. They tend to be very loyal, have a good quality of work and are very dependable and hard working. Their work ethic is unbelievable. They learn very fast regardless of the language issue. They are very adaptable, teachable, respectful and intelligent.

As for the challenges, the obvious ones are language, accent, culture, national origin and the plight of an immigrant. Keep in mind that some of these workers don’t even have a third-grade education from their own countries, let alone our country, which brings up literacy issues on the job.

The toughest issue you will come across is that your customers may not want one of “those people” working on their property. That is a serious concern for a lot of my landscape contracting clients – the bias and prejudice of the customer. As the owner, it often becomes necessary for you to explain that they are the only people available who can do the work – and do it well.

Solving the legal issues in hiring non-citizens is another challenge. H2-B visas are one way, however, many in this industry tell me they will take anyone with a pulse because they have no choice.

I have studied landscape contractors and tree industry employers who are doing it right. I had one client, Chapel Valley Landscape, based in Western Howard County, Md. At one point they realized that they had 175 Hispanic/Latino workers, and they wanted to keep each and every one of them. They were pumping training dollars and investing enormous amounts of money and time into these employees and wanted them to stay.

In order to keep them, they offered all communication materials in both English and Spanish. Employee handbooks, benefits packages, performance evaluation forms, individual meetings, company newsletters, all postings and announcements – even recruitment brochures are in Spanish. Company meetings are even translated. In every meeting, somebody is speaking in English and somebody else is translating in Spanish.

When employees go back to Mexico, they take employment or recruitment literature in Spanish to hand out and share with people they know.

More than a Thanksgiving turkey

Times have changed, and maintaining a loyal and productive workforce takes more than a paycheck every two week and a pat on the back once a year. Try some of the suggestions below at your company.

• After-Christmas raffles
• Provide transportation
• Courtesy around crews when they start up introductions
• Provide training materials in Spanish
• Produce company handbooks in Spanish
• Offer incentives to English-speaking employees to learn some Spanish

This was a huge move for them. All in-house training was done in English and Spanish, and they hired one of their workers’ family members to work part time as a liaison to these workers. They wanted the liaison to keep them up to date on everything, which led to success with retention.
and loyalty. What is the message that is sent to these employees when they are translating? They encourage their Spanish workforce to enroll in English classes and, of course, what is the flip side of this? They encourage their English-speaking workforce to speak Spanish.

If you are reading this and thinking, “These people are in America now and should be speaking English, you are going to die on the vine with that attitude. They will learn English eventually, but they will work for your competitors in the meantime. An interesting fact to consider: by the third generation – most immigrants have lost their native tongue. I am bilingual but I got there faster because I was raised in the United States speaking both languages.

The future leaders of this workforce will come from the children of your current employees. Long term, they will be your future foreman or supervisor.

Your English-speaking workforce should be encouraged to learn Spanish – and be paid for it. If employees acquire a new skill, and learning a second language to communicate more effectively with fellow employees certainly qualifies, they should be paid more. As we all know, if there is a financial incentive people will earn it. Don’t forget to offer incentives to everyone. One company offers an international long-distance calling card if employees hit certain performance marks. One of my clients actually awarded their top performer two airplane tickets home halfway through the season.

Be creative. Bring an immigration law attorney to the shop to work with your Hispanic/Latino workers. Some of them are not permanently illegal but are just undocumented. You should see the joy in their faces when you can help them get legal and documented. They will be grateful and loyalty will never be an issue. Not only have you just landed a legal worker, but they will tell everybody they know about you and your company. You will not have a problem finding help ever again. If you have on-site English-as-a-Second-Language classes, which you might be able to set up with government funding through the local community college, as well as on-site legal assistance, you will be the most popular employer in town.

I did a survey of what landscape contractors and tree industry employers were doing for their Latino/Hispanic workers. Here are the top things that came up in the survey:

• Vacation after a year
• Profit sharing after three years
• Extra money for transportation each month
• Help with legal questions

You can also be creative when it comes to bridging communication barriers. I had one client who was having communication problems. Hispanic/Latino workers were out in the field and threw a rod on their truck. They didn’t speak English but had to get word back to the mechanics and the mechanics didn’t speak Spanish. I asked what the top 50 mechanical failures were and had them write them down. They now have those top 50 on a list, coded, in English and Spanish. Now, when there is a mechanical problem, the employee gets back to the mechanic on the radio and just tells him No. 4. The mechanic knows exactly what the problem is and there is no guesswork.

Employers need a strong commitment from management to support the development of Hispanic workers. If you invest money in them, ask them what they want, and offer them the help that they need to be successful, you convey the message that you want them for the long haul.

Value your labor force because that labor force is what keeps you in business. I have clients who closed shop and are trying to start their businesses again. They realize that they did it wrong before and are now trying to do things the right way.

Mauricio Velasquez is president and CEO of the Diversity Training Group in Herndon, Va., and its sister firm, Spanish Translations Services, LLC. He can be reached via www.diversitydtg.com.
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Please circle 63 on Reader Service Card
Chances are that you haven’t been giving much thought – or any thought – to inflation lately. The white-hot increases in the cost of living throughout the ’70s, ’80s and early ’90s are largely a memory now. With inflation running around 2 percent these days, there are other, more important economic considerations in our lives. Besides, inflation rates are an abstract concept to many people – just a lot of numbers.

In truth, inflation, whatever the current rate, plays a vital role in everyone’s economic life. I started thinking about this when gasoline prices shot skyward last summer. Like a lot of Americans, I groaned at the “highest prices ever” for a gallon of gas. I wondered, is the $1.82 per gallon we’re paying now the highest ever?

No way. A little research revealed that gasoline averaged about $1.35 per gallon 20 years ago. With inflation factored in, a gallon of that same gas would cost $2.42 per gallon today. At today’s general price level, that makes gasoline cheaper than it was in 1983.

If, like me, you’ve been around long enough to remember when McDonald’s introduced the 15-cent hamburger in 1955, you sometimes feel nostalgic when you dish out 89 cents for that same treat today. But which is the better deal? Surprise! That same hamburger would sell today for about $1.05 if it kept pace with inflation.

That’s the trouble with inflation. It’s misleading. It makes direct price comparisons from one year or one era to another meaningless. It makes some of today’s products seem expensive when they are actually cheaper. The only meaningful way to compare prices from one period to another is to compare them with the general price level of each period or to the percent of average wages necessary to pay for the item during each period.

Money itself takes on a flexible value when inflation rears its ugly head. We’ve all heard that computer guru Bill Gates is the richest person in America today. With a net worth reportedly at $45 billion, some regard Gates as the richest American ever. But he’s a long way from that distinction when you compare his fortune’s purchasing power with some of the great industrialists of a century ago.

While the fortunes of John D. Rockefeller and J.P. Morgan were less than $45 billion expressed in dollars of their day, their purchasing power was far in excess of Bill Gates’ purchasing power today. That’s because a product or service that costs $1 today sold for 5 cents a hundred years ago. Put another way, if you paid $1 for a product in 1903 and bought the exact same product today it would cost you $20.76.

Obviously, the bargain-price phenomenon evident in such areas as the price of hamburgers and gasoline doesn’t extend itself throughout our universe of products and services. During the Great Depression, a first-run movie ticket in a neighborhood theater sold for 15 cents. How does that compare with the tab at one of today’s multiplexes? With inflation factored in, a movie ticket should cost $1.90 today. Obviously, with ticket prices now running
at $6 to $8 or higher, it’s costing us a lot more to visit the local movie emporium than it did back in the dark days of the Depression (and don’t forget that $2.50 for a Coke that used to cost a nickel). Anyone paying for medical services or health insurance today is well aware that their costs have risen at a pace far in excess of inflation. College tuition is another of today’s costs that is mind-numbingly more expensive than in days of yore.

So what does all this have to do with your personal and business finances? Plenty.

Misleading comparisons of prices can lead not only to a healthy dose of nostalgia, but faulty financial and business decisions as well. Being aware of the true increase in costs after inflation is a necessary part of good financial management.

As the accompanying chart shows, the rate of inflation can vary wildly from one year to the next. However, regardless of the variations, it continues relentlessly year-after-year. And, of course, one year’s increase compounds on top of another.

Here’s an example of how inflation affects your business: If the cost to cut a tree down in 1983 was $100, the cost for that same job in 2003 would be $182.35.

The calculations for figuring inflation’s effect from one era to another are complex, that’s why it’s difficult to make simple dollar-to-dollar comparisons. One type of economic comparison that is comparable from one era to another are figures expressed as percentages. For example, the 25 percent unemployment rate reached at the height of the depression would be just as devastating today as it was in 1933. Another economic yardstick that remains valid through the years is the prevailing interest rate. An interest rate of 2 percent on a passbook savings account would bring the same return today as it brought 60 years ago. From another perspective, that miserly 1.2 percent interest rate on your one-year CD today, quite simply, is worth far less to you than the 10 percent you were getting 10 or 15 years ago.

The complexities of inflation and its effect on our lives can be daunting when viewed from a strictly technical perspective. However, you don’t have to be a mathematical wunderkind to benefit from an understanding of the inflation phenomenon and how it affects your business and personal finances.

Among the most important constraints involving inflation is the need to resist the temptation to look back with nostalgia at “the good old days.” Despite the apparent difference in the cost of things, most of us are much better off today than we were back then.

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**TREE CARE INDUSTRY – APRIL 2004**
Happy New Year! If you’ve ever written an article for magazine publication, you know that you must write your article almost two months before the issue goes to press (I am writing this article in mid-December 2003). This procedure can be quite a challenge, depending on the content of your article. Before sitting down to put pen to paper, I reflected on today’s headlines for inspiration. There was quite an array of stories:

- Investigators are poring over patient records in two states after a nurse with a checkered work history claimed he killed 30 to 40 terminally ill patients to alleviate their suffering and was charged with murder.

- In an ambush north of Baghdad, guerrilla scouts released pigeons to signal to comrades that a U.S. patrol was in range. In a gun battle that followed, U.S. snipers killed 11 insurgents, the military reported.

- President Bush said “good riddance” to captured Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and called for him to go on trial for more than two decades of crimes against his own people.

- Single-family housing starts rose to a record high in November, as persistently low mortgage rates fueled strong demand, a government report showed.

- Energy prices retreated 3 percent in November. That was led by a 5 percent drop in gasoline prices. Natural gas prices fell 3.1 percent, and electricity prices went down 0.6 percent last month. However, fuel oil costs rose 1 percent.

I can’t say that one news story is more exciting or important than another other, but I can say that they all have one thing in common – they will have some effect on nonprofit organizations. What effect? Only time will tell. Almost everything that happens in this world has an effect on nonprofits. We have seen it so many times as a result of political, cultural and social issues and events. Consequently, leaders of the independent sector (the nonprofit community) not only have to be on top of their craft but on top of what is taking place in this world.

Who would have thought that after Sept. 11, 2001, donor confidence levels in charity-giving would have dropped? You most likely would have believed that, as U.S. citizens, we as a country would have united in support of our independent sector as a whole. Don’t get me wrong; we did a superb job in donating to causes related to Sept. 11, but other nonprofits saw their contributions decline.

But one thing turned the nonprofit world upside down. You might say it altered the nonprofit landscape. That one thing was the American Red Cross stating that it was going to use some of the funds collected in the name of Sept. 11 for future disaster relief. This simple but powerful statement created backlash not only for the Red Cross but for all charities. The good news is that since then, confidence in the Red Cross and other charities has risen.

Nonprofits are a major social, cultural and economic force in our society. The nonprofit sector in the United States is vast and diverse, and it touches all our lives. It includes more than 1.5 million organizations with combined annual revenues of more than $670 billion.

Every day, committed individuals in the independent sector inspire millions of their fellow citizens to volunteer, to donate and to participate in the work of religious, cultural, environmental, educational and other nonprofit institutions.

The one thing nonprofits have in common no matter their size, budget or cause is that they all are nestled on the fragile foundation of trust. For the nonprofit community, that foundation fuels us but ethics frames our daily work.

The American Red Cross controversy was not an isolated incident. In the past year, barely a week passed without a story on questionable behavior in a nonprofit organization. Perhaps some organizations failed to represent themselves in a fair and accurate manner in the rush to connect with volunteers and donors. Perhaps they felt that their cause was so just that they did not have to follow the rules – the that end justified the means.

The TREE Fund is not excluded from that fragile foundation of trust. We are like any of the one million nonprofit organizations; we operate on a strong foundation of ethics – that’s what the public expects. The TREE Fund family consists of dedicated, hard-working volunteers who give freely.
of their personal time and financial contributions to carry out the Fund’s mission in an ethical manner.

In the past three years (since the merger of the ISA Research Trust and the National Arborist Foundation), the TREE Fund family has worked hard and made tough decisions to guide the organization through a period of substantial change. During this time, the TREE Fund’s assets have grown more than sevenfold and, on top of that, we have awarded more than $700,000 in grants for research and scholarships.

In addition, the TREE Fund created a five-year strategic plan, hired an executive director, convened the second National Research and Technology Transfer Summit for the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council, in order to produce a revised national research and technology transfer agenda for urban and community forestry, continued acting as fiscal managers of the Treasures educational program for youth, launched a new initiative called the Tree Dynamics and Arborists’ Techniques Fund, converted its accounting system and implemented many new policies to allow for more efficient and effective monitoring of its assets, and adopted the Better Business Bureau’s standards for charitable accountability.

The TREE Fund does not believe that our cause is so just that we do not have to follow the rules, that the end justifies the means. We know better. We realize that breaching the trust of our public is detrimental. We also realize that constant improvement – the courage to do better – is one of the many keys to success.

The last item I read that day stated, “In the midst of the busiest fund-raising season for many charities, The Chronicle of Philanthropy (Dec. 11, 2003) conducted a spot check of nonprofit leaders to gauge how their organizations are faring. While many leaders described the past year as particularly challenging – with foundation and corporate gifts especially hard to come by – numerous charity officials said they expected to conclude 2003 ahead of initial expectations.”

How the news of today will ultimately affect us is difficult to predict; however, we can predict that staying on top of our game, focusing on our mission, and remaining ethical will allow the TREE Fund to continuing serving as a forum for discussion and dissemination of new ideas; an efficient vehicle for delivering research grants and scholarships; and a guardian of our environment, values and heritage.

Cindy M. Stachowski is executive director of the TREE Fund, located in Champaign, Ill.
On April 30, Americans will celebrate Arbor Day, the national observance that encourages and celebrates tree planting and tree care. Each year, thousands of trees are planted on Arbor Day but sadly, many mature trees are lost at the hands of plumbers.

Tree roots are naturally drawn to sewer pipes as a source of water and nutrients. Roots enter pipes through cracks and seams allowing the trees to thrive. That is, until the roots grow large enough to break the pipes, forcing homeowners to seek repairs.

Repairing broken underground pipes often equates to a death sentence for nearby trees. Now Roto-Rooter, a long-time provider of plumbing and drain cleaning services, is using innovative technology to save trees. This environmentally friendly technology, called trenchless sewer pipe replacement, allows broken underground pipes to be replaced without digging the conventional trenches that disturb trees.

Before trenchless technology, lawns, driveways, landscaping and, most impor-
tantly, trees were often destroyed during the process of replacing underground sewer pipes. Plumbers routinely had to cut a wide swathe through nutrient gathering root fields in order to expose and replace broken sewer pipes. This process, more often than not, left surrounding trees to wither and die. Many times the trees were simply cut down to make way for the work because experience proved they would never survive the process.

Recognizing the inconveniences and risks homeowners, businesses and communities were enduring, Roto-Rooter implemented trenchless technology to eliminate the wear, tear and expense caused by traditional excavation. “In the old days, the only consideration was a clear pathway for the pipes, but we were forced to kill a lot of trees that way,” says Paul Abrams, spokesman for Roto-Rooter. “Trenchless technology allows us to consider the entire environmental picture and now we go out of our way to preserve trees.”

This trenchless excavation technology uses equipment adapted from the gas industry to enter the ground via a small access hole. Using the existing broken sewer line as a guide, Roto-Rooter’s hydraulic machinery pulls full-sized replacement pipe through the old path while breaking up the damaged pipe at the same time. The small entrance and exit holes can be quickly refilled, leaving little or no evidence of excavation. Most importantly, the new pipeline doesn’t intrude into a tree’s root system beyond the compact space of the original pipeline, which means trees in the area are almost entirely unaffected.

The new high-density polyethylene pipe is fused without joints to eliminate root intrusion or leaking and it has a longer life expectancy than any previous pipe material. This means a water or sewer pipeline can peacefully co-exist with surrounding trees for generations to come.

“Trees benefit the community environmentally and aesthetically,” says Abrams. “We’ve always regretted the fact that trees were sacrificed during the course of certain jobs, but now we’re working to save them.”
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Last year, we talked together about the need to establish best business practices, to take responsibility for our industry, and to truly undertake the role of a trade association.

I also shared with you that I had had the pleasure of working with an amazing Board. I want you to know today, that THIS Board can stand up to ANY Board of ANY industry or profession in the United States.

This Board made the decision to take on the challenge of setting a path to achieve the Transformation of the Industry. [Turn to page 82 for some of the details of this plan from our incoming Chair, Greg Daniels.]

In order for us to achieve this, we have undertaken a realignment of all of our resources – staff, volunteer, and financial – to support the direction of TCIA.

Staff has been reorganized and new talent hired around the five outcomes we seek for the industry.

The Board has directed changes in our volunteer structure to support this work as well.

The Safety Committee, under the new leadership of Steve Chisholm from Aspen Tree Expert Company as chair, and Kathy Shaw from McCoy Tree Surgery as vice chair, will be leading our efforts to lower the accident and fatality rate in the industry. Steve, Kathy, Peter and I have recently completed a work plan for the year that outlines four goals that this committee will focus on to achieve this outcome. The Safety Committee will be reviewing this and establishing work groups at our meeting today. Thank you Steve and Kathy.

Along with enhancing our credibility through our safety efforts and the launch of our company Accreditation program this year, TCIA is moving from a reactive to a proactive stance with legislative issues.

Here is what we are up against. We have been absent from Washington. During this absence, our friends at ANLA have become very active in D.C. PLCAA has claimed that they are the “Voice of the Green Industry.” The Landscape Architects are getting active, making similar claims, as are other groups.

We’re nowhere to be found on the Hill, and yet we complain about unfair business legislation and regulation. Mark Garvin and I have been interacting for four years with ANLA in various forms, assessing how we can begin to have influence, where it makes sense to partner, and learning the D.C. ropes. We have now hired D.C. lobbyists and have a new staff member on board who worked for a former Senator on the Hill.

Now, it’s our turn, and it requires each one of you – and I do mean EACH ONE OF YOU. The key to ANLA’s success, and others, is that they have a Political Action Committee, and their members are involved all over the United States. You see, when Mark and I go to the Hill, the only people interested in us are the New Hampshire and Massachusetts Senators and Congressional leaders, because that’s where we live and where their votes count. Every single one of you must get involved in the grassroots efforts, become familiar with the issues, contribute money, and get to know your legislators.

With the Board’s establishment of the Political Action Committee, we can begin to travel down a road that gives us equity on the Hill. I’m pleased to announce that the following members have agreed to serve on this critical committee:

Gary Mullane, past president of TCIA and a consulting arborist from Low Country Tree Care in Hilton Head Island, S.C.

Scott Packard, president of Wright Tree Service, a utility tree care company in Des Moines, Iowa.

Robert A. Bartlett, Jr., chairman of the board, The F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company, a residential tree care company in Stamford, Conn.

Karl Warnke, president & COO, The Davey Tree Expert Company, a residential and utility tree care company in Kent, Ohio.

Bernie Spigt, president of Northern Virginia Tree Experts, a residential tree care company in Chantilly, Va.

(Continued on page 82)
Randy Finch, president, Finch Tree Surgery, a residential tree care company in San Gabriel, Calif.

Gregg Asplundh, Asplundh Tree Expert Company, a utility tree care company in Willow Grove, Penn.

Bill DeVos, president, Treeworks, Ltd., a residential tree care company in Montpelier, Vt.

David Fleischner, president, Trees Inc., a utility tree care company in Houston, Texas.

Lou Nekola, president, Nelson Tree Service, a utility tree care company in Strongsville, Ohio.

This committee will become familiar with the key issues with staff, lead our fundraising efforts for the PAC, and make decisions with staff on which candidates to support on key congressional committees, as well as those who are small business and industry friendly.

The job of the rest of the membership is also going to be becoming informed. We are changing the manner in which we have handled these issues by exchanging our former Governmental Affairs Committee for the Political Action Committee, while opening up the issues to the entire membership.

Draft comments on regulations and legislation will be available electronically to the entire membership to view and comment upon. These matters are so critical that it is important for the Association to take the lead in providing the information to everyone, collecting as much input as we can from everyone, and educating the entire membership on the issues at the same time.

Eventually, we need to either partner with ANLA, or hold our own legislative conference, so that our members can come to the Hill, get briefings on the most pertinent legislation and go visit their senators and congressional leaders. Craig Regelbrugge from ANLA is here on Wednesday to share with us ANLA’s lessons learned and to help us kick off our first PAC event – an elegant dinner off site on Wednesday night. We MUST become more sophisticated at this as an industry and become the true trade association we were established to be, or others are going to continue to control our destiny.

As additional support for our work in this area, the TCIA Board has also appointed former Government Affairs Committee Chairman David Marren to the position of Legislative and Regulatory Advisor to the Board and President. David has the unique vantage point of being an insider in the industry, formerly ran a utility division, is an attorney, has testified on the Hill, and is someone who has crafted laws and influenced regulation for our industry. He currently serves as Vice President of Safety and Government Affairs for The F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company.

With our association aligned to five major outcomes to Transform the Industry; and our staff, financial resources, and volunteers actually focused on the same thing, we have a chance of truly effecting the industry in a positive way – tackling problems that have plagued us for at least 20 years.

Is this going to happen overnight? No. We are calling this a journey of a decade. Relationship building, visibility and credibility are an evolutionary process. The longer we wait to get started, the further we get from our destiny.

It’s time to move past a video here and there, a couple of meetings, and a magazine. When those in this room are still tackling some of the same problems that your fathers did, it calls for a change in method; an acceptance of the responsibility to DO something differently; and action from everybody to build the future you want.

To do that, each person and each company must answer the call to Transform the Industry. I believe in you – you’re worth it – and together, we’re going to define and control our destiny.

Cynthia Mills, CAE
President

TCIA Board and ISA Executive Committee meet

On March 3, 2004, the Executive Committee of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and the Board of Directors of the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) held a joint meeting in St. Louis, Missouri. The meeting was facilitated by Glenn Tecker of Tecker & Associates, an international consulting practice focused on meeting the needs of organizations managing through change.

The purpose of this meeting was to explore how our associations can create enhanced value for the community of arboriculture in the future.

The Boards spent time discussing current conditions and evolving trends within the tree care industry and the profession of arboriculture.

The leadership also explored what the future might hold for the field and what would constitute success in helping our members meet the future opportunities and challenges on the horizon.

As a result of this meeting, the two associations have agreed that continued discussion is warranted.

An informational presentation will be made to the ISA Board of Directors on March 27, at their regularly scheduled meeting in Nashville by Glenn Tecker.

The TCIA Board and the ISA Executive Committee will meet again on April 10 to continue the conversation.

TCIA and ISA will keep their memberships informed regarding the ongoing conversations.
Greg Daniels new chair of TCIA Board of Directors


A lot of things have changed since I entered the tree care business. We have better equipment; new technology; better research in tree biology; and different approaches to long-term tree care.

And yet, a lot of things haven’t changed. We still have employee problems. Our accident rate is not getting better, and our insurance premiums are showing it. The consumer has just as many complaints about bad tree care companies and shoddy work. Most of all, our peers in companies who have worked hard to become more professional are dragged down by those who refuse to use best business practices and have earned the term fly-by-nighters. It doesn’t matter whether you work for a small or a large company; there are things we should all be doing to improve our businesses and to earn credibility in the public’s eye.

Unfortunately, we have seen increased government regulations in our industry. We are one of five industries on OSHA’s target list in their current strategic plan. Increased regulations happen when industries don’t self-regulate and address their problems.

TCIA has always worked hard to be there on the back-end of regulation. I know you have read about the efforts we are going to be making on the front-end by influencing future legislation and regulation through our Political Action Committee – Voice for Trees. We need everyone in this room who is eligible to sign the permission form and to make a contribution to this effort on our industry’s behalf.

However, that is not going to be enough. We cannot be perceived as credible when we send our staff to Capitol Hill or into OSHA if we have not done all we can to get our industry in good shape.

We have finally recognized that our industry needs to take strong steps toward admitting and controlling the high accident and fatality rate that continues to plague us. Regardless of whether it is people in our membership or outside of our membership, the industry as a whole is affected. Safety is good business, and morally, it’s the right thing to do. Instead of fighting OSHA every step of the way, we have formed an alliance with them, which is directing federal funds towards building resources that will help our industry improve safety.

When we surveyed our membership on what they needed from TCIA, we found that the responses were the same as those when we asked people what their challenges were 20 years ago. Not a very good track record. The Board recognized that we were at a turning point. We could continue to put out videos, hold seminars, and come together at meetings. But without a road map for our industry to follow, we would be sitting in the same place in another 10 years with the same problems.

Making sure that that doesn’t happen, TCIA has developed a template for this industry’s success for the next decade called the “Transformation of the Industry.” It contains five goals that we want to see accomplished over the next 10 years. I’d like to share those with you now:

Goal 1: Consumers will have practical, viable means to identify qualified tree care companies that are credentialed and trustworthy in their business, arboriculture, and safety standards and practices.

Goal 2: Safety will have measurably improved. Accident rates will have lowered.

Goal 3: The government will regularly seek the advice and counsel of TCIA as a source of industry standards and as a partner in legislation and regulation.

Goal 4: TCIA will have measurable brand image as the voice of the tree care industry with members, government, and consumers; and growing media awareness.

Goal 5: Associate Members will be partners with TCIA building stronger markets between consumers, accredited tree care companies, and other Associate Members.

These are no small tasks we have set for ourselves. When we have achieved these outcomes, our industry will fundamentally be changed.

The Board has committed to develop an Accreditation program for tree care companies. It’s time to build best business practices for our industry that will help our members have a blueprint for how to improve their companies. By following that blueprint, companies will increase credibility with consumers, lower accident rates, reduce insurance premiums, attract quality employees and improve profitability. The insurance company we have been working with to develop a new comprehensive program for tree care companies has assured us that our Accreditation program will increase the likelihood of finding a company that is willing to underwrite us.

For the consumer, the government, and the media, our Accreditation program will finally give us a way to prove we are a quality industry that contributes critical services to every community. We will have
businesses that adhere to best business practices AND best tree care practices. At last, we will have our “Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval” that will help us to distinguish those companies who are truly committed to arboriculture as a profession and to running businesses to the highest standards. We will finally have a recognized industry with credibility. And best of all, we will have developed the standards ourselves.

The Accreditation Council includes a wide variety of representatives from all sizes and locations of business plus a SCORE executive with expertise in quality management and John Ball, who is conducting ground-breaking research on our safety issues.

TCIA’s Accreditation goal is to give the commercial tree care company a means of evaluating itself against industry standards and best business practices. By identifying areas of excellence and/or areas where improvement may be needed, businesses can focus on motivating employees to be safer and more efficient while improving profitability.

TCIA Accreditation will also help commercial tree care companies create and maintain a formal, in-house safety and technical training program. According to safety statistics, companies with formal safety training programs have lower accident rates. Training also helps workers develop their tree care skills, which helps improve the quality of work delivered by your company.

TCIA Accreditation will give consumers, for the first time, a practical, viable means to identify tree care companies that are trustworthy in their business and tree care practices. Government and institutional agencies will also have a means of recognizing companies that meet industry standards for safety and performance.

As an industry, we deserve recognition for the contribution that we make to our communities, for the jobs that we provide, and for the safety that we provide for families and public spaces. We have not done all we can to see that our credibility is enhanced and to distinguish ourselves from those who choose not to follow best practices. This is our chance to create a future that benefits each individual company, enhances our professional image, and allows us to take our rightful place in our communities.

We currently have 23 companies in the pilot program who are helping us to work the bugs out of it. In May 2004, the Accreditation Council will meet again and tweak the program based on results from the pilot. By summer 2004, TCIA plans to roll-out the new Accreditation program for our entire industry.

It has been a long time coming, but I believe that this is going to be the best thing that has ever happened to any individual tree care company and to our industry. It’s time for us to build the future our industry deserves.

To complement this program, we also took the final step in a process that began four years ago. At the urging of John Britton we revised our Code of Ethics two years ago. If our industry is to have credibility, we must take responsibility for our own professional community. Instead of complaining about issues, we need to be willing to take action like any other profession or industry, such as the American Bar Association or the American Medical Association. Our Ethics Committee, established by the Board this year, is made up of a cross-section of members. Since June, it has already had five cases come before the Committee. Two were referred to the Board for action. The recommended action was termination of membership, to which the Board unanimously agreed.

This is a bold new and necessary step for our industry that, again, adds credibility when we are talking to the government and the media. It also provides us with a mechanism to take action against inappropriate business practices and behaviors within our community. We have now begun setting the bar and taking responsibility for ourselves. It is time.

The Board of Directors and staff knew that in order to serve you, we had to address the problems that you have identified. There really was not an in-between or an alternative choice. You can be assured that we will tackle the real issues of the industry. We are committed. I am committed. And I am honored to serve as your Chairman of the Board in the coming year.
New PAC off to a rousing start

The Voice for Trees Political Action Committee held its first fund-raiser last month at Winter Management Conference. And the final number is – $34,530 in contributions!

The elegant affair was held at the Hervé Restaurant and Wine Bar – one of the top restaurants in the Virgin Islands. A 270-degree view of the harbor and town (as well as a brief rain shower) greeted the group. From the glass-enclosed dining room, the twinkling lights of Denmark Hill behind the restaurant provided the perfect ambiance.

Great things can be accomplished for the industry at large by the forthright actions of a few. Those who stepped forward at our inaugural event should take satisfaction in knowing that they are the pioneers who lead commercial tree care toward a new political reality.

At the dinner, The Voice for Trees also announced the formation of its fundraising and advisory committee, which will be charged with directing the PAC’s operations.

TCIA must have access to legislators and key committee leaders. There is only one way to do that. We must support candidates who support our industry by regularly contributing to their campaigns.

The Voice for Trees – founded, supported and directed by the membership – will channel contributions to serve as the political voice of the tree care industry. The PAC will also bring our valuable information and perspectives directly to elected and non-elected officials.

The Voice for trees is funded apart from TCIA, so that membership dues and political donations are not mixed. We are garnering more support every day, and we are certainly looking forward to our next event – Casino Night – at TCI EXPO Spring in Sacramento.

High-vis clothing for workers

A change of attire will be in order for some companies when the International Safety Equipment Association and the American National Standards Institute release a revision of their ANSI/ISEA 107-1999 American National Standard for High Visibility Safety Apparel later this year.

This will be the first revision for the Standard, which provides design and performance specifications for high-vis vests and other safety apparel. It is expected to address advances in sight-distance recognition that advance worker apparel. In other words, it may make some of the high-vis clothes your crews have been using obsolete.

Relevant OSHA as well as DOT standards for roadside work-site safety and traffic control all rely on this standard to provide specifications for the apparel to be worn. In other words, this standard has the force of law.

To see what your company may be required to upgrade, check the ISEA’s Web site, www.safetyequipment.org, periodically. The ISEA plans to place a review draft of the Standard on their site later this year.
Cut Your Own Chain?

By Tim Ard

It’s much easier to open the bag or box and pull out a loop of saw chain already sized for your saw. But there are situations where having the ability to produce your own loops to length can be great!

If you have a company or organization that uses a large number of chain loops in its saw operations or you have several guide bar lengths and need the ability to size chains, there may be a few ways you can cut costs. Purchasing saw chain in bulk, such as in roll lengths of 100 feet, could greatly reduce your cost-per-foot of chain. With the proper tools, you can break and spin saw chain and make up chain loops of any desired length. You can also repair some of your damaged chain loops.

Breaking is the process of separating saw chain at the tie straps to size it for a given guide-bar length. Spinning is the process of re-joining the links by replacing the preset and tie-strap with new ones, making the loop complete.

Breaking and spinning tools, such as Oregon Cutting System’s new professional units, make the process a breeze. These tools are bench mountable and can be quite efficient and productive. There are handheld tools for the process, but I can tell you that other than an occasional in-field repair, these tools are not going to give you professional results. If you invest in a good bench-mounted, breaker-spinner set, you will be much happier. (You can make a bench-mounted tool somewhat portable by mounting it on a short board and c-clamping it to a work area. You can also attach a bracket to the mounting board and secure it in a vise at the work site.)

The process:

1. Make sure to wear gloves. Saw chain will cut you! Also, when working with breaking and spinning tools you should wear safety glasses or goggles to protect your eyes.

2. Locate the number of drive links needed to make up the loop. Count the drive links on the inside of the old saw chain loop. Recheck the pitch and gauge of the saw chain needed for the bar and sprocket of the saw. Make sure to cut the chain from the proper bulk roll. Sometimes the guide bar will have markings indicating pitch, gauge and link counts. If not, you can reference materials like Oregon’s chain and guide bar manual or their online information at www.oregonchain.com. Typically a regular 3/8-inch pitch, 16-inch guide-bar saw will use a 60E (the E designates drive links) chain loop. A 20-inch is 72E.

3. Roll off enough chain, counting the drive links, to construct the desired loop size. Make sure and be accurate with the count. You’ll also want to keep an eye on the strap to break. You don’t want to punch out the wrong rivet. A felt marking pen can be used to mark the strap as you finish your count. This will keep you focused on the
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right link when approaching the breaker.

4. Reference the breaking tool information/manual to make sure the tool is equipped with the proper size punch. Then line up the chain on the correct area of the anvil. The anvil will be marked for the chain pitch. You must use the proper anvil slot so it will support the chain link properly. The punch is somewhat pointed to line up correctly on the rivet head of the strap you desire to punch out. The anvil must support the link to make sure the chain drive links and adjacent straps are not bent under the pressure of the punch process.

Mark the drive link with a marker to identify the link to remove.

The breaker presses out the old rivet. The anvil holds the chain during the pressing process.
5. With the selected link on the anvil, pull the lever down slowly lining up the punch on the first rivet to remove. The long lever of the Oregon Professional Breaker makes for easy work of pressing out the rivet. Apply slow, even pressure downward on the handle. Jerking the handle will cause damage to the chain and the tool. Then move to the second rivet of the strap and repeat the handle process. The cut length of chain should now be ready to move to the spinner.

6. To join the two ends of the chain piece together into a loop, you will need the proper preset and tie-strap for the chain. The preset is a strap with rivets already pre-set into it. This preset can be placed into the two drive links you want to connect. Once you have the preset in place, put the tie-strap in place over the preset. Make sure to turn the cut out area of preset and the tie-strap down toward the drive link. This cut-out area of the strap gives clearance to the sprockets. It is very important to perform this assembly correctly. Look at the straps around the rest of the loop to make sure they’re right before spinning the rivets.

“The next step is to spin the two rivets ... It sometimes seems to take three hands to accomplish this, but the new spinner makes it a lot simpler.”
7. The next step is to spin the two rivets to flare or expand them securely. This is done with the chain on the spinning tool. It sometimes seems to take three hands to accomplish this, but the new spinner makes it a lot simpler. You just align the rivet to spin with the spinning anvil, and then tighten the handle against the backside of the tie-strap. Now, turning the handle compresses the rivet and flares the rivet head. Once the rivets are “braded” from the spinning process the chain loop is completed. Take the time to inspect the loop one more time. Inspect the rivets, tie-straps and links. All should be secure. The joints should be tight but still move freely.

Finally, with everything correct in the inspection, you’re ready to mount it up and enjoy the new sharp saw chain. Don’t forget your leg, head, eye and ear protection (PPE). Good Sawing!

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Please circle 11 on Reader Service Card
Consider the Can of Worms Opened

Your editorial on ethics in the January 2004 TCI was appropriately titled, “Can of Worms.”

As you aptly point out, there are strong feelings on all sides of the issues raised. Please do not allow arborist’s opinions to discourage you from delving into pertinent issues that will help to guide our industry. You have the right to cover these topics and (in my opinion) a duty to our profession.

Far too many issues were raised in the article to allow adequate dialogue on each subject. Each topic could be the content of an entire article. Many arborists have opinions on these subjects (boy do we have opinions!) and it will be interesting to determine how many have the time and inclination to write. Most arborists are not writers, and some became arborists to avoid writing!

With regard to the first question of appropriate hiring practices, obviously all local, state and federal guidelines must be followed, and employers must be very cautious of the types of questions that are posed to potential candidates. Intercompany management guidelines should be instituted to comply with the laws and standard business practices. They should also reflect company philosophies that may pertain to a variety of issues.

Ethics come into play when you consider relations between tree companies that may compete in the same market. If a competitor’s employee should call or walk into our office to look for work, we will consider setting an interview – and if we should make a courtesy call to the competitor in an effort to stay on good terms with them. Obviously our response depends on the exact circumstances involved.

Since our company is involved in the state tree climbing competition every year, there is seldom a year that a competitor has not approached an employee to offer a job. We believe this to be unethical. Likewise, we contend the practice of stopping by a job site of a competitor to offer a job or disrupt another competitor’s crew is unethical. Although I doubt that this will ever stop, these practices should be shunned by the industry and exposed as being inappropriate and unethical.

“We contend the practice of stopping by a job site of a competitor to offer a job or disrupt another competitor’s crew is unethical. Although I doubt that this will ever stop, these practices should be shunned by the industry and exposed as being inappropriate and unethical.”

If you wish to continue to cover these subjects, I will continue to write, as time allows. A continued dialogue can only serve to benefit our industry.

Steve Houser
Arborilogical Services Inc.
Wylie, Texas
“I found that ethics is a very personal thing; it is the decisions an individual makes and it is more than just ‘right’ or ‘wrong.’ A ‘wrong’ action might be wrong in some cases but right in others.”

Richard E. Almstead
Almstead Tree & Shrub Care Company
New Rochelle, N.Y.
Tree Care Industry magazine has launched an added service for its readers and advertisers aimed at making it faster and easier for readers to get product and service information from advertisers.

Reader Service Online (RSO) allows readers interested in products or services advertised in the magazine to go to the TCIA Web site and click the RSO program button to bring up a list of advertisers. The reader then checks the box for each advertiser for whom he or she would like to receive more information about a product or service, and that request is sent to the advertiser electronically, greatly reducing turnaround time for readers getting the information back to them, whether it be by e-mail, phone call or mail. The reader will also then have the option of clicking a link to the Web sites of the advertisers selected.

Currently, readers seeking additional information from an advertiser can fill out the Reader Service Card that is included in each issue of TCI magazine, circling the Reader Service number that corresponds with each display ad in that issue of the magazine. Readers fill in their contact information, and are asked to check a box if they would like to subscribe to TCI magazine. Or, if they already subscribe, they are asked to check a box indicating that they want to continue to receive the magazine. All these options are now available online via the RSO program.

“The RSO program will reduce the time it currently takes to get a request for information to the advertiser,” says Sachin Mohan, vice president of corporate relations & marketing for TCIA. “And, there is no filling out cards or mailing them.”

Readers get a quicker response to their questions. Advertisers should receive more response from readers, particularly from those who have developed an affinity for doing business over the Internet. TCI magazine hopes the program will provide enhanced services for both advertisers and readers. And, a side benefit will be that more readers will visit the TCIA Web site and be exposed to the great variety of services the association provides its members.

To check out the RSO link, go to the TCIA Web site (www.treecareindustry.org or tcia.org) and click on Publications, then click “RSO program.” If you have any questions or would like further information regarding the RSO program, please call Dawn Stone at TCIA at (603) 314-5380, Ext. 110 or e-mail stone@treecareindustry.org.

Shigo on Tree Biology

Do you have a question on tree biology? Chemistry? Do you know the difference between elements and nutrients? Do you understand why we can’t feed a tree, or why trees don’t heal? Is a lichen algae or fungi? What about questions on the parts and structure of the tree system?

Each month in the pages of TCI magazine Dr. Alex Shigo will discuss your questions on trees and their associates. He will not discuss any consulting-type questions.

Base your treatments on understanding rather than myths. Send your questions for Dr. Shigo to Tree Care Industry, 3 Perimeter Rd, Unit 1, Manchester, NH 03103. E-mail staruk@treecareindustry.org, or fax: (603) 314-5386.
Please tell these advertisers where you saw their ad. They appreciate your patronage.

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* Please circle this number on the Reader’s Service Card for more information.
Mysteries Around Us

By Lloyd Nicholson

Scientists can make an imitation seawater whose composition is chemically identical to natural seawater, but marine life will not develop in it. Yet, add only a small percentage of natural seawater to the artificial, and marine life will flourish again. Life is a mystery only because we do not know the first thing about it.

It takes a good deal of imagination to think of water traveling up the long tapering cylinder of a tall tree in an unbroken column, from the deepest rootlet to the topmost twig, and spraying out through the perforations of the leaves as from a fine nozzle. Yet every leaf of the several million on a great elm and every blade of grass is constantly performing like a nozzle. The spray is so fine that it is invisible.

Apple trees will be equipped with about 500,000 leaves each. An orchard of 40 mature apple trees, through a highly efficient mechanism, will lift 16 tons of water a day, four gallons per tree per hour. And as trees go, apple trees are comparatively small!

The earth holds a silver treasure, cupped between the ocean and sky. Forever the heavens spend it, in the showers that refresh our temperate lands and the torrents that sluice the tropics. Every sucking root absorbs it, the soil drains it down; the rivers run unceasing to the sea; the mountains yield it endlessly, in bubbling spring and far lost slim cascade that flings away forever its bright similitude of life. Yet none is lost. In vast convection our water is returned, from soil to sky, and sky to soil and back again, to fall as pure as blessing. There was never less; there could never be more. A mighty mercy on which life depends.

Lloyd Nicholson is a freelance writer, a Vietnam vet and a lover of trees living in Zanesville, Ohio.
How would you feel if you paid $500 for a chain saw and found that the manufacturer certified it to only 50 hours of useful life?

When you buy an Echo, you get premium features such as light weight, superior balance and exceptional power — in a chain saw that’s certified with CARB and EPA to their highest useful life rating – 300 hours. That’s the highest possible “Emissions Durability” and “Useful Life” rating.

This durability makes Echo chain saws the favorite choice among Arborists and Tree Care Specialists worldwide. And every Echo chain saw is confidently backed with an industry leading one year commercial warranty.

So next time, “Grab an Echo” and get the highest level of durability!

Call 1-800-432-ECHO for more information or visit www.echo-usa.com.

* EDP is defined by CARB as “Emissions Durability Period.” EPA uses the term “useful life,” which is defined as “...when engine performance deteriorates to the point where usefulness and/or reliability is impacted to a degree sufficient to necessitate overhaul or replacement...” (U.S. Government, Code of Federal Regulations, Vol. 40, Chapter 1, Sec. 90.185, par. 5, iii)
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