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Chris Brown
Marketing Communications Manager
National Arborist Association

TCI’s mission is to engage and enlighten readers with the latest industry news and information on regulations, standards, practices, safety, innovations, products and equipment. We strive to serve as the definitive resource for commercial, residential, municipal and utility arborists, as well as for others involved in the care and maintenance of trees. The official publication of the non-profit National Arborist Association, we vow to sustain the same uncompromising standards of excellence as our members in the field, who adhere to the highest professional practices worldwide.
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**The Path Ahead for ROW Vegetation Management**

*By Robert Rouse*

From herbicide regulation to utility deregulation, tree care companies that provide vegetation maintenance services face complex new challenges. Only the adaptable will survive.

**Be Sure to Secure**

*By Mark Chisholm*

How to tie in safely when rigging wood into a block. First, examine the choices the climber faces and the consequences of making the wrong choice.

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California Snapshot

Each ecosystem requires unique, well-tailored methods of vegetation management. Each poses unique problems for vegetation management. California, however, poses some of the more impressive challenges to ROW maintenance. All aspects of Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) are represented due to the incredible variations in the environment. From the Mojave desert bordering Mexico to the temperate rainforest along the extreme north coast, California has an incredible diversity in ecosystems. The year-round growing season in many areas helps trees to grow phenomenal amounts in one season. As a result, tree trimming can be especially intensive.

The high potential for wildfires has prompted the state of California’s Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to make special requirements in line clearance operations. They have issued the 18-inch rule that states no tree shall grow within 18 inches of any electrical conductor. According to Geoff Kempter, Technical Services Manager with Asplundh Tree Experts, “This has had a huge impact on our industry. As you drive around most utility distribution systems you will see branches very close to the wires, if not touching the wires. The fact that the PUC has issued this mandate, and will fine utilities if they do not comply, is very significant.”

The combination of six months with little rainfall and the presence of some chaparral plant species which actually contain compounds that promote their own ignition, creates a real threat of major fires. This is the first time a state has taken such a proactive stance in utility line clearance tree trimming operations. California also requires the immediate area around poles carrying connections that could fail to be cleared of brush for a 10 foot radius.

The PUC in California has decided that utilities have a duty to help prevent wildfires. As a result, tree care companies contracting with utilities must be more vigilant than ever while providing service. Tree care companies in California have become an integral link in the prevention of wildfires.

The Path Ahead for Right-of-Way

Vegetation Maintenance

By Robert Rouse
The great western blackouts last summer crippled the region for days. Nine U.S. states, including California, Washington, Nevada, Arizona and Texas, as well as the province of Alberta in Canada and Baja California in Mexico, were affected by power outages. Some lasted for a few minutes, others several hours. The Pacific coast states suffered longer periods of blackout, with at least 2.7 million customers without power for days. Customers sweltered in the summer heat, travelers were stranded when airports shut down, and popular Los Angeles beaches were closed by health officials after pumps at the local sewage treatment plant stopped, causing six million gallons of raw sewage to spill into the Pacific Ocean.

Although the blackouts occurred after a succession of unusual events that are unlikely to be repeated, an increase in demand for electricity during the summer heat wave and tree interference with transmission lines were key events in the catastrophic disruptions in service. As transmission lines sagged due to the unusually high voltage, one line contacted with a poplar tree, causing a major blackout. Another transmission line came into contact with a grove of filberts, creating the second outage. It’s amazing that a few trees could be included on the list of culprits in such a real life disaster!

These blackouts help to remind all members of our industry just how important utility right-of-way (ROW) vegetation maintenance really is. “Perfect is good enough” is a saying that is easily applied to this field. You can understand why when one interfering branch of any tree on a transmission line right of way could cause a major blackout.

When one is considering the complex issues facing tree care companies that provide vegetation maintenance services, it helps to take a look back at the rich history.

In the Beginning ...

Imagine a world without multiple-knife cutting machines, without herbicides to kill unwanted plants, without tree shears and chippers! And finally, a world devoid of the chain saw. In this world the axe and crosscut saws were kings! In this world no one awoke early on Saturday mornings to the drone of the neighbor’s lawnmower! In this world tree care company crews relied on hand tools and brute strength to clear utility rights of ways. Henry Thibodeau, vice-president of Lucas Tree Expert Co., in Portland, Maine, remembers that world. Thibodeau has been involved in right-of-way vegetation maintenance for 47 years.

He still recalls his first job out of forestry school. He helped clear “200 miles of pipeline for the federal government for aviation fuel. We did it all with crosscut saws and axes,” says Thibodeau. “The crews ran from ten to a dozen men, and the crews were scattered over 200 miles. We had
seven or eight crews all working basically with axes. That’s how it was done before chain saws came into being.”

Thibodeau’s beginning with Lucas coincided with the first experimental use of herbicides to control right-of-way vegetation. Immediately after World War II, the introduction of herbicides—along with the invention of labor-saving machines for mechanical clearing—transformed the industry.

The growing post-war demand for power, both electric and petroleum based, created a booming business in utility line clearance and maintenance. One of the first to answer the call was The Davey Tree Expert Company in Kent, Ohio. Founded in 1880 by John Davey, the company began line clearance tree-trimming in 1921. Shortly thereafter, a host of companies were formed that met the demand for this growing need. John Lucas started Lucas Tree Expert Company in 1926 and the Asplundh brothers (Carl, Griffith and Lester) started the Asplundh Tree Expert Company in 1928. Trees, Inc. of Houston, Texas was founded in 1953. Lewis and Monroe Tree Service, Inc., founded in 1938 by Thomas Terry, expanded seriously into the utility ROW maintenance business in the 1970s.

If necessity is the mother of all inventions, then the necessity of having to clear huge tracts of land with hand tools was the mother of many new labor-saving inventions. During the 1930s and ’40s Asplundh pioneered the development of chain saws, chippers and aerial lifts to increase the efficiency of its line clearance operations.

From the beginning in the 1920s up through World War II, all line clearance operations relied on mechanical clearing procedures. After the war, herbicides became available for public use. Utilization of herbicides for vegetation management quickly caught on with some utilities, especially those with rights of ways in mountainous, rocky areas where crews and mechanical equipment had difficulty reaching. Many utilities with less rugged and rocky terrains, such as those in the southeastern United States, opted to stay with mechanical vegetation management, since most of the right of way vegetation could be easily reached and controlled by crews with mechanical equipment.

At first, herbicide sprays were used non-selectively. The early chemicals were very effective, but little scientific information concerning the chemicals and possible side effects was available. According to Thibodeau, “the Maine Weed and Brush Control Association was formed by Lucas Tree and a group of utilities to set standards in Maine for how to treat brush with respect to public relations and the impact on the environment. We did that in the early 1950s, years before OSHA and EPA came into being... There was a definite sense of responsibility on the part of utilities and contractors. Some of the standards we set were adopted by the Maine Pesticide Board when it came into being.”

When some herbicides in this first wave of products were found to have harmful side effects, the regulation of herbicides began. Scientists began working on ways to reduce the amount

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of herbicides needed to control vegetation, both to increase the cost effectiveness of chemical control and to limit the volume of chemicals introduced into the environment. Today vegetation control is highly tailored to the needs of the utility.

According to Jim Orr, general manager of chemical and technical services for Asplundh, “One of the basic objectives is to achieve a low growing community of plants. You utilize whatever technique is appropriate given the various considerations. And those considerations could be local ecosystems, local species mix, local politics, and certainly local land form—wetlands versus steep slopes, versus flat lands or uplands. A major component of the decision-making process is the local utility’s philosophy and the local residents’ attitude and influence regarding the use of chemicals.”

Some utilities prefer 100 percent mechanical control of vegetation, while most combine mechanical and chemical control. This type of approach to vegetation control, called Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) is tailored for the utility and ecosystem being serviced. A highly generalized IVM program would include mechanical clearance in the first year and herbicide applications using varying methods designed to promote the growth of understory plants in the second year. Follow-up, selective-control measures designed to prevent the re-colonization of tall-growing tree species may be performed mechanically and/or chemically. A tree care company may even use brush hook crews or low volume, backpack sprayer crews to accomplish this.

While chemical companies were advancing their scientific knowledge and introducing new products, equipment manufacturers were not resting on their laurels! Efficient right-of-way clearance required new and more efficient types of mechanical equipment. In addition, tree care companies demanded machines with multiple uses to justify their investment. New attachments appeared that could be mounted on existing equipment. Other inventions required more in-depth engineering. Blount, Inc., the makers of Hydro-Ax, has produced a number of different machines. Hydro-ax feller/bunchers can be fitted with a number of differently sized bunching saws and bunching shear attachments. Hydro-ax also builds a multipurpose tractor that can be equipped with a rotary axe, stump grinder, bunching saw or bunching shear attachment.

J.B. Brown Manufacturing is a ROW vegetation maintenance contractor and an equipment manufacturer. The company produces a machine called the Brontosaurus that was “born out of necessity,” says inventor John Brown.

Ten years ago the local utility had financial problems and requested that selective mechanical clearance be performed on a right of way that had an “out of control” brush problem. Brown asserts that “selectivity is always a major concern of utilities. They like to have blueberry bushes and mountain laurel
Low-volume foliar applications work best in areas with low stem densities and stems averaging under 7 feet. and ground cover left if possible."

Brown designed a brush mower head with centrifugal knives mounted on a rotating shaft. The head was fitted on the arm of an excavator and Brown was on his way to creating the modern day Brontosaurus. The machine allowed Brown to control the brush selectively in the right of way while having the mobility of an excavator to reach areas with rough terrain. The mower head simultaneously chips as it reduces the tree from the top down. The wood chip mulch is distributed downward, due to the orientation of the cutting knives. The mower head is also interchangeable with digging buckets and other attachments.

Another Brown, Brown Manufacturing Corporation of Alabama, produces another popular ROW vegetation maintenance machine. The 2600 Series Brown Tree Cutter is a PTO attachment that uses a rear, folding hydraulic deck that provides the operator with two distinct mowing operations. With the deck folded up, the unit can back into and cut standing trees up to 8 inches in diameter. Positioned down, the unit cuts and grinds material that the tractor has driven over. The 810 rpm blade bar allows blade contact 54 times per second.

Jeff Thagard, a sales representative for Brown Manufacturing, touts the benefits of mechanical clearance: "The regrowth of plant vegetation after a mowing operation ... helps provide cover and food sources for all types of wildlife ... as well as controlling soil erosion."

Chemical companies have adapted to popular demands for safer and more effective materials. The merger of Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz resulted in the formation of the Novartis Corporation. One of its biggest sellers is Vanquish, which is effective in removing volunteer pines and unwanted conifers from along transmission lines. According to Keith Sparks of Novartis, "the pine control that Van-
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quish has is what got our foot in the door. Now we are expanding with it, mainly in combination with Arsenal (Cyanamid) to pick-up hardwoods.”

Sparks touts Vanquish as especially successful in this combination when backpack applications are used. Novartis will be testing this formulation using aerial applications this summer. They have also combined Vanquish with Garlon 3A (Dow/Elanco) for successful backpack application control of conifers and hardwoods.

Just as environmental concerns have come into prominence and helped to shape ROW operations, so have worker health and safety issues. Both are impacted by pesticide handling, mixing and disposal practices. According to David Schoonover of Aqumix Inc., “Everybody always focuses on what type of product to use and how to apply it. Nobody focuses on what to do with used containers? How do you make sure the material is mixed accurately?”

To address these questions, Aqumix offers container management programs where products are pre-mixed and delivered in returnable and refillable containers. Problems of disposal and triple-rinsing are eliminated for the client. Bar-code tracking allows the product to be tracked cradle to grave. Aqumix has also developed a closed transfer system to avoid spillage when backpack filling.

Economic Currents

The next major change in right-of-way vegetation management may not be an incredibly ingenious new design in equipment or the perfect herbicide. Instead it promises to come in the form of economic pressures from the free-market economy. Utility deregulation is the driving force with the potential to change the way ROW maintenance services are rendered in the future. Industry analysts predict that utility deregulation and the resulting competition will result in a vast reduction in the number of investor-owned utilities. As utilities tighten their belts in hopes of surviving deregulation, the need for cost-cutting will trickle down to tree care companies and an already tough business will become more difficult.

Traditionally the utility decided what management techniques will be used, even right down to the herbicide to be applied. Utilities often consult tree care companies, but ultimately utility arborists design the program to fit the utility’s needs. All that tree care companies had to do was bid on the contract and provide the service. Now, however, some utilities have started to change the way contracting is accomplished.

A small but growing minority of utilities have decided to ask tree care companies to devise a ROW vegetation management proposal for them. The potential savings to the utility by introducing even more competition is obvious. According to Richard Alt, president of Lewis and Monroc Tree Service, Inc., in Rochester, N.Y., “More and more utilities are...
going to say, [We’re] hiring you to provide a maintenance program. You tell me how to do it, when to do it and what’s it going to cost me. And if your proposal is the best or most feasible for us, we will hire you.”

This type of contracting could pit commercial tree care companies against in-house utility arborists, not to mention increasing the management burden on tree care companies to design the best programs.

Environmental Currents

While deregulation may be the call in providing utility services, more regulation seems likely in the application of pesticides. Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (R.I.S.E.) reports that states are taking a very close look at herbicide regulations these days. In Hawaii, a bill to ban the use of roadside herbicides was recently defeated. Massachusetts is considering a universal notification law that would require a seven day advance notification and 48 hour pre-posting of all pesticide applications, including ROW’s! A similar bill was defeated in New Hampshire.

ROW vegetation maintenance has come a long way since the days of axes and crosscut saws. The vast array of labor-saving devices and techniques have made ROW vegetation management easier from a sheer physical standpoint. Politically and economically, the issues are more complicated than at any time in the past. Increasingly, tree care companies will be called upon to provide more of their expertise, be fluent on local political issues, make and defend decisions as to what is the best vegetation-management strategies for a given ROW, and, to do it all in the most economical method possible. This will have the net effect of making tree service companies the recognized experts in the field of ROW vegetation management. Is your company prepared?

Robert Rouse is staff arborist for the National Arborist Association

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The tree care profession has been advancing at a rapid pace over the past decade. Arborists are scampering around from convention to convention in a never-ending quest for better methods of attacking their everyday tasks. While these meetings are great vehicles for exchanging ideas, during all of the excitement the part that sometimes gets lost in the shuffle is how to adapt new techniques to your personal climbing system without compromising safety or efficiency.

Combining two of the more widespread innovations, the split-tail system and the arborist rigging block, poses a question that I am constantly approached with, "How do I tie in safely when rigging wood into a block?" The best way to answer this question is to closely examine the choices the climber faces in using this combination to his advantage, the consequences of making the wrong choice, and how an educated climber never needs to choose.

My first preference in any rigging situation is tying into another lead—a tree, a crane or a pulley suspended between any of two of these—rather than the rigging point. If, however, the only plausible solution is to tie in where the block is being anchored, as is so often the case in wood blocking, the climber then faces several options. The choice: Do I tie in above or below the rigging block? Let's say you decide to tie in below the rigging block. Your decision now puts you at greater risk for one or more of the following to occur:

1. The lowering line or rigging block could lock down on your climbing line and/or lanyard, preventing your descent to the ground in an emergency.

2. A sudden jolt could knock your gaffs out from under you, sending you skidding down the trunk until your line is caught on a nub, or you've already reached the ground.

3. The lowering line could burn through your climbing line and/or lanyard, sending you directly to the ground.
4. The rigging block, when loaded, could chop through your climbing line and/or lanyard, again leaving you to the merciless laws of gravity. All of these scenarios are potentially life-threatening, and have happened to some very experienced climbers all across the country. The only positive result is that we can all learn from their misfortune, and prevent the repetition of that same sequence of multiple mistakes from occurring in your future. Therefore, since the only educated decision is to tie in above the block, we still have certain risks to consider:

1. A violent jolt could flip your lanyard off of the trunk after the piece is cut.

2. If you lose track of where your lanyard is, you could easily cut through it with the saw.

If your solution to the latter risk is simply to replace your standard lanyard with a steel core flip line, without using a climbing line, then I have only one question: Have you ever tried to perform a successful aerial rescue of an unconscious climber whose weight is placed solely on a lanyard? It’s almost impossible, even with the aid of an aerial lift. That is assuming, of course, that the lanyard actually kept the climber from falling to the ground. As an educated professional climber, you must always be prepared for the worst and have a suitable emergency escape route.

The only way I see to avoid all these risks and still remain a practicing arborist is to secure yourself to the trunk with both your climbing line and lanyard above the block. In this instance, securing doesn’t mean simply draping your climbing line around the trunk, but choking off so that you are secured from a fall in any direction. With the split-tail system, this is easily done. Using your lanyard to support your weight, disconnect the terminating end of your climbing line.

Next, take the same end and tie a running bowline or equivalent around the trunk and advance your friction knot (Blake, Prusik, etc.) as far as possible. This way, in the event of a fall, the running bowline and friction knot will keep you secured to the tree.

Finally, place a small figure eight rappelling device directly below your friction knot and connect it to your harness. The figure eight device will take some of the strain when rappelling, providing an additional safety factor and prolonging the life of your split-tail. The important issue here is the difference between placing your weight on a knot that is attached to a line running through a crotch and placing your weight on a knot attached to a static line. During an aerial rescue, it could make all the difference in the world.

When rigging wood into a block, once the steps listed above are properly completed, attach the rigging block directly below your choked-off climbing line. After the block is in place, carefully cut the notch just above your lanyard and cut out the corners if necessary. After you tie the piece off and...
get it safely to the ground, remove the block and release your friction knot so that you are able to spread the running bowline and walk down the trunk with the aid of your lanyard to your next working position. When you reach your destination, dress and advance the friction knot snug to the tree, and repeat the described steps again. What you will find is that the climbing line and figure eight serve only as a direct line to the ground and as a back up in the event of a failure in the lanyard. This inexpensive yet highly effective system has very few limitations and can easily be adapted to any split-tail system.

There's an old saying, "A little knowledge can be a dangerous thing." To be a successful practicing arborist and an educated professional climber, knowing "a little bit" about working high aloft in a tree top is like knowing nothing at all - what you don't know can hurt you, and often does. This system, as in any new operation, should first be performed and mastered safely on the ground before using it in a life supporting manner in the air. I also strongly urge all climbers, new or experienced, to attend as many seminars and get as much training as possible. Local chapter membership in organizations such as ISA can also be a great benefit, informing you of local or regional classes, seminars and competitions. Invest some time and effort into your most important asset - YOU. The more you know, the safer you'll be.

I would like to leave off with this to consider - every arborist makes mistakes. Those who have the habit of noting and then correcting the little mistakes they’ve just made live to perfect their skills. Those who regularly ignore their errors will sooner or later pay for their carelessness - maybe even with their lives.

Reprinted with permission from The Canopy. Mark Chisholm is an arborist with Aspen Tree Expert Company and a four-time NJ ISA Jamboree Champion.
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This is a call to arms, but before I draft you, please answer some tough questions.

- What is your commitment to your employees?
- Are you a contributor to the advancement of the green industry?
- When push comes to shove, where do you draw your ethical line?
- Do you train your employees in safety matters?
- Do you take the time and spend the money to make certain that everybody on your crews is practicing safety?

If you are in the majority of employer arborists, you probably do believe that you are a contributing member of the green industry. You are very committed to your employees, their safety and their training. You probably spend more time and money than you realize on safety training, simply because that is the way you do things. You know it makes good sense. In spite of all your efforts, though, the thought of OSHA inspectors showing up on your job site probably makes you break into a cold sweat.

Sound the bugles. Some solid OSHA reform legislation has been introduced in Congress by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX). Called the OSHA Reform Act of 1997, it makes sense. Included in the proposed reform are provisions that would eliminate or severely limit OSHA's ability to make site inspections and issue citations, and require that employees address hazard complaints with employers before turning to OSHA. Representative from the National Arborist Association recently met with staff from Hutchison's office to offer support for the bill and to outline very specific concerns that the commercial tree care industry faces when dealing with OSHA: Issues such as OSHA's targeting of the tree care industry as highly hazardous without specific industry data to support the claim; field inspectors' lack of education about the regulations they are enforcing; and the number of inappropriate citations issued to our industry were discussed.

If you are an employer doing your best to provide a safe work environment and comply with existing regulations, and if you believe that OSHA's rules and methods need some changes, please take a moment to write to your senator and tell him or her that you support Hutchison's OSHA Reform Act of 1997. Encourage your senator to do the same.

The NAA is collecting stories, both good and bad, about OSHA activity in the commercial tree care industry. The information you provide will help Congress connect real people with a "faceless" industry, one they do not know much about. The NAA will not use your name or story without your permission, but whether you'd like to grant permission or not, the NAA would still like to hear from you.

Remember, elected representatives work for you. They really do pay attention to communication from you, a member of the voting public. Your letter counts, and your letter, along with letters from your colleagues in the industry, do make a difference.

To share your OSHA experience, either good or bad, please call or write to Amelia Reinert, Deputy Executive Director, National Arborist Association, P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031. (800) 733-2622.

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By Amelia Reinert

Your letter does not have to be long. It can be a postcard or a fax. Simply include the following information in your own words:

Dear Senator ________________________________,


Sincerely, ________________________________

Also print your name and address. If you do not know who your senator is, or if you do not know his or her address, please call the NAA Hotline at (800) 733-2622. NAA staff can give you the name, address and phone number of your representative in Washington.

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Peavey Tree Pruning Poles & Supplies

By Amelia Reinert

Peavey Manufacturing Company is pleased to offer a complete line of top quality tree pruning poles and equipment for the professional as well as the amateur who wants a quality made tool.

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Spd Transfer; 35,000# GVW; Chassis &
Cabs $44,500

1987 Int'l. 2554; DT466; 13 spd.; With 8-
Ton National Crane 41-26; 38' Hook
Height $39,500

(2) 1986 Ford F8000; CAT 3208; Allison Auto.
33 GVW; 12' Utility Body, Onan Gen.; Set 22-
& 26 K Miles

1988 Mack Diesel, 5 X 2 sp., 14' steel flat
dump $12,500

1986 Ford F8000; CAT 3208; Allison Auto.
14' Bed w/ 11 Ton Effer Knuckleboom; 27
Side Reach w/ Remote Control $44,500

1983 Mack Diesel 5 Ton Hiab w/ Grapple.
12' Utility Body, Upfit $35,000

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The Other Worlds of Rope

By Robert Rouse

Do you know what a chicken loop is used for? What about the Texas system, or Inchworm? What do you do with a Whaletail or Hyperbar anyway? These are just a few of many ascending and belaying devices and techniques discussed in the latest edition of *On Rope, North American Vertical Rope Techniques* by Bruce Smith and Allen Padgett.

Techniques and equipment used by tree climbers have changed dramatically in recent years. While more and more cavers and mountaineers are finding employment as tree climbers, many traditional tree climbers are becoming interested in other rope-oriented activities. The hybridization of these closely related fields has resulted in the introduction of new techniques and devices into tree climbing. The figure eight device is a good example of an advancement in climbing equipment that was adopted by tree climbers from other vertical rope technicians.

The eight-page section on arborist climbing techniques that is new with this edition might be helpful to the beginning tree climber or student of arboriculture, but otherwise it is too basic for more experienced climbers. The real attraction of this book is its presentation of skills and techniques used by non-arborist rope-technicians. Although many of the climbing systems are not practical at an arborist’s work site, this book provides an excellent overview of the most important vertical rope techniques now in use.

Robert Rouse is staff arborist for the National Arborist Association.

*On Rope, North American Vertical Rope Techniques* is available for $32 by calling 423-344-4716.
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A Guide to the A300 Pruning Performance Standards

By Donald F. Blair

Foreword

In order to appreciate the role that A300 plays in helping to define contemporary professional standards, it is important to understand the ANSI process.

ANSI Standards are referred to as consensus standards. Approval of an ANSI Standard requires verification by ANSI that the requirements for due process, consensus and other criteria for approval have been met by the standards developer.

Consensus is established when, in the judgment of the ANSI Board of Standards Review, substantial agreement has been reached among directly and materially affected interests. The A300 Committee was carefully selected to include a broad cross section of arborists and green industry representatives.

Arboriculture has been using the ANSI process since the Accredited Standards Committee Z133 was organized in 1969. Since then, in accordance with ANSI requirements for accreditation, the standard has been reviewed and revised every five years.

The Pruning Guideline is the first of a series of standards to be developed. Future issues will address such practices as: cabling, fertilization and protection of trees in construction sites.

Why A300?

In the beginning, there was darkness and chaos. Men fell from trees and gnashed their teeth. Prior to Z133, there were no nationally recognized, uniform standards governing safety. In addition to the safety pamphlet the National Arborist Association had developed in the 1950s, numerous arborist groups, tree companies and other entities concerned with tree worker safety throughout the country had developed and adopted their own safety standards. In the past 25 years, Z133 has been accepted by the industry as the Uniform Code and has become the core of OSHA regulations, numerous state regulations and the basis of in-house safety policies.

Robert Felix, the late executive vice president of the National Arborist Association, recognized that although the NAA Pruning Standards were popular with many of its members, like the old safety pamphlet, they were a proprietary standard. Similar to the situation prior to Z133, numerous arborist groups, tree companies and entities involved in tree maintenance had adopted their own standards governing pruning and other maintenance practices. Darkness and chaos still reigned supreme, only now both men and women gnashed their teeth.

A300 is a logical and progressive extension of Z133. In 1991, Mr. Felix suggested that a new ANSI committee be convened to draft a set of performance guidelines. The purpose was to use the ANSI process to create a companion to the highly successful and widely adopted Z133.1 standards. Tree maintenance concerns for quality, safety and production are now covered under ANSI from A to Z!

One of the sidebar benefits to both A300 and Z133, in my opinion, are the definitions of terms. Practices can only begin to become standard when we all begin to agree on terminology. If we make sure that we only use terms in our work that agree with the A300 definitions, we will go a long way toward being able to understand just what it is that we are talking about—among ourselves and the public at large.

The Mind-Set of A300

The strength of A300 lies as much in what it is not as in what it is. A300 is not a "how-to" manual on pruning or on specification writing. A300 is not a shortcut to drafting specifications. A300 is not a substitute for experience.

A300 states up front that specifications for tree work should be written and administered by an arborist. I believe that every ASCA member should have a copy of A300 and Z133 as "basic consultation equipment." I personally recommend having one full set in the office and one set for the car or field kit, so they are always readily available for reference.

My view of A300 is similar to Z133. We have taken a huge step toward developing a national (international) standard for quality that will become the benchmark by which tree mainte-
Using the Modular Approach, you work your way through the degrees of pruning required to accomplish your objective. For example:

Site Number One involves a grove of Douglas firs in a recreation area. There are several broken limbs in each tree over trails and the picnic area. Hazard Reduction Pruning would be appropriate in this case. By specifying the removal of dead and/or broken limbs 3-inches in diameter and larger, you would ensure that the dangerous limbs were removed without doing more unnecessary work.

Tree Number Two is a 20-foot tall, young urban plane tree with its lowest limbs about 4 feet off the ground. Water sprouts, weak branches and some twiggy deadwood clutter up an otherwise relatively healthy tree. Crown cleaning will address those needs. Crown raising to 8 feet on the access side will provide the desired elevation. Specify reduce water sprouts by 50 percent.

Tree Number Three is an 80-foot tall white ash that has not been pruned in 10 years. The eastern side of the crown in laying on the roof of a church. A southern scaffold limb in growing into and through an adjacent spruce. The crown is so dense that the interior is very dark. As a result, there is a significant amount of twiggy deadwood less than 1 inch in diameter throughout the interior of the tree. Pruning this tree is as easy as A-B-C-D, but only if you clarify, specify, and identify.

A = Crown cleaning to remove the dead and dying limbs from the interior and crown.
B = Crown thinning will remove enough limbs to increase light penetration, improve air movement and reduce end-weight loading.
C = Crown raising will specifically address those limbs that are in conflict with the structure.
D = Crown reduction to reduce the spread will address the limb(s) that are growing into the spruce.

Once the types of pruning necessary have been selected, the degree of attention desired and/or necessary to accomplish the objective may be calibrated by establishing the size specifications for work.

A300 is neither a miracle cure nor is it a bottle of snake oil. A300 is a welcome, necessary and long overdue installment on our commitment to define our professionalism.

Donald F. Blair, owner of the M.F. Blair Institute of Arboriculture, is the former ASCA representative and a current advisor to A300 and California Arborist Association representative to Z133. Both the A300 and Z133 are available through the NAA, ISA and directly from ANSI.
When it comes to insurance, CNA looks at businesses from all perspectives. In fact, CNA has been designing customized programs for more than 25 years. We even have one that’s pruned to the exact needs of the tree care industry. It’s more than basic property protection; it offers coverages for underground storage tank pollution, transportation of designated pollutants, other limited pollution and pesticide/herbicide applicator.

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Effective Loss Management

By Peter Gerstenberger

Loss management consists of two parts, one proactive and the other reactive. The first is loss prevention and the second is loss control. It is only when the two parts of loss management are combined into essentially one effort that the maximum benefits be realized.

In the words of Don Blair, the most successful aerial rescue is the one that is never performed. This is another way of saying that the most effective strategy for reducing accidents and workers' comp costs is preventing accidents before they happen.

Why then should we place any emphasis on loss control? Despite our best efforts, accidents are probably going to occur. Therefore, the second part of a successful risk-management plan involves getting the injured employee back to work and/or managing the insurance claim and associated costs to your company.

Why not leave loss control to your insurer? Often the insurance company can provide very meaningful assistance, and should be part of the team helping your company control its costs and stay productive. But the bottom line is this: nobody knows your company and its employees as well as you, and nobody stands to lose as much if your firm doesn't control costs or loses valuable employees to injury.

This is an attempt to identify the steps necessary to establish an effective loss-management program and the benefits, from both a human resource and financial perspective. Of course, the decision to implement this sort of program rests solely with you and your management team. Only with your continued support will the overall program succeed.

Loss Prevention

An aggressive loss prevention safety program can:

- Protect workers from avoidable harm, and the associated loss of income and self-respect that can accompany an injury;
- cut occurrences of compensable injuries that cost your firm money;
- assure your compliance with federal and state safety regulations.

Here are some loss control measures you could take:

Review operations and equipment to determine potential accident-producing conditions and health hazards. After identifying hazardous conditions, develop a strategy for their removal or effective control. This approach is often referred to as job safety analysis, and it can be effective on a daily or even a job-by-job basis. The ANSI Z133 Standard as well as information from regional and national trade associations can provide guidance. Don't overlook your field people, who can be instrumental in uncovering potential hazards.

Establish a functioning Safety Committee at your firm. The committee should include individuals from work crews, su-
Supervision and senior management. The committee should be authorized to conduct activities necessary to reduce employee injuries. In essence, use your people to solve the operational problems that may directly affect them (and you). Be sure to include staff from all levels of the organization to provide perspective.

Investigate all accidents and "near-misses." Refine your investigative methods to determine the true cause of an incident. One safety director once said that this consists of asking, "Why?" until all the explanations and excuses are on the table. By doing this, each link in the chain of cause and effect is established.

Although the responsibility for controlling accidents is yours, your trade associations and colleagues with similar or larger businesses can be a great help. This is one area where the value of networking is most evident. Also, loss control personnel from your insurer should be able to assist you. Contact your agent, broker, or loss control manager with your insurance company for further information or assistance.

Return-to-Work Programs

As a part of your total risk-management program, Return to Work, or RTW, is synonymous with disability management. The program intervenes in the employee disability cycle and returns the employee to productive work in the shortest possible time. A well-integrated RTW program can shorten disability time and reduce related costs significantly.

Disability management, including a Return-to-Work program, is most effective when integrated into the overall loss-management program.

The cost savings associated with Return-to-Work programs vary, however, according to state compensation laws, the degree to which the program is implemented and the effective assignment of alternate work duties. Successful programs can reduce total workers' compensation indemnity costs significantly.

In addition, employers enjoy:
- Employees who are productive while they are recovering from their disabilities;
- Less employee attrition;
- Accelerated reintegration of the employee into full production;
- An enhanced ability to achieve quality and productivity goals.

Another benefit of an RTW program is that employees, while receiving continuous medical rehabilitation, feel positive about their contributions, even with limited capacity.

Implementing a RTW program requires specific initial financial considerations. While the ultimate intent of RTW is cost reduction, there will be immediate short-term expenses. Perhaps the most significant is payroll allocations for alternate duty assignments. In some instances, other full- or part-time positions can be created for this purpose. Another funding consideration is the cost of your existing personnel participating in the RTW Team.

Return-to-Work Team

The RTW concept described here uses a team of in-house personnel and outside consultants. The consultants might include insurance carrier representatives (loss control and claims), as well as production consultants, doctors and therapists. All team members must be fully alert of the elements of the program.

Experience shows that the cost of RTW team activities will be offset by savings achieved by the program. After initial training and orientation, the RTW team functions only when compensable injury or illness occurs. In many instances, the team will review cases only briefly to verify anticipated disability time.

Commitment to the program must be at all levels of management. Operations managers and field supervisors—the people who oversee the activities of field employees on a daily basis—play a critical role and need to make decisions that accomplish program goals. Thus, they must be given an appropriate level of authority and ability to provide input.

Working With the Medical Provider

The medical provider plays the dominant role in determining the employee’s medical condition, capacity to perform work and the restrictions to be observed. Physicians are required to provide the employer and insurer with a written post-injury response stating the employee’s exact restrictions. This response allows the employer and insurer to modify the employee’s duties to conform to the restrictions.
Close communication between the employer and medical provider is critical. Furnishing of job descriptions should not be left to employees, who tend to overstate their job requirements. The exact nature of a job should be communicated to the physician with a detailed job description. In more severe or complex injuries, videos or visits to the job site by the physician can improve the physician’s knowledge of the employee’s original position and any proposed alternate job.

As the employee progresses through the healing process and continues with medical treatment, communications must continue. Any restrictions on work activity must be resolved by immediately talking with the physician. The insurer must be fully informed of new developments. In less serious injury claims, the employer should be able to keep the employee working in an ordinary manner with little or no outside involvement. Obviously, more serious or complex injuries will require greater outside involvement.

Injuries that involve confinement or ongoing referrals to specialists require closer communications between the insurer and employer. The insurance representative should remain in touch with the attending physician to learn the earliest possible date the employee can return to alternate or modified work. The RTW Team will coordinate the job modification process. Team members will monitor treatment, therapy or work hardening in order to prepare the employee to return or to continue working.

Employee Communications

For the program to be successful, employees must be fully informed of management’s concern for their welfare before an injury occurs. They as well as their families or spouses should understand that, as a part of your firm’s employee benefits, a RTW program is in place.

Employees should be provided with instructions indicating that:
- they are expected to report immediately any injury;
- your company’s program is intended to provide modified or alternative work, when it is reasonable to do so, to quickly return them to a productive capacity; they are expected to cooperate in their recovery and return to work;
- your company must be kept fully informed of medical restrictions resulting from their injury;
- modified duty will be limited to the time for which it is medically necessary.

Communication between employee and management should be documented. Weekly meetings between the disabled employee and the RTW team should be held to review the employee’s progress and to resolve any difficulties that arise. With close communications, all parties will know what is expected of them to make the program work properly.

The policies and procedures that follow identify and describe key components of an effective Return-to-Work program. Of course, these descriptions are general. Implementation of the program will require individual tailoring to suit your company as well as to conform with applicable federal or state statutes or regulations.
Forming the RTW Team

The RTW concept described in this article uses a team of in-house personnel and outside consultants. The establishment of a RTW team is necessary for management of injury cases. The RTW team consists of the injured party and representatives of:

- Company owner or manager
- Company human resources dept.
- Employee supervisor(s)
- Medical services personnel
- Company safety committee or department
- Insurance provider

Consultants to the team participate on an as-needed basis, and might include any of the following:

- Claims representative
- Health services representative
- Physician
- Loss control representative
- Rehabilitation specialist

In all instances, a representative from the insurance carrier (loss control or claims) should be included as a team member. All consultants must be fully aware of—and agree to implement—program elements.

Medical Service Providers

A panel of medical providers is established by the RTW team, with input from the insurer's claim office. The list may include physicians and therapists.

Criteria for selection include:

- Prompt and appropriate service.
- Awareness of employee's and employer's obligations in the program.
- Knowledge of your company's operations.
- Willingness to work with the employer and claims office on treatment, length of disability and modification of work.

Employees should be made aware of medical providers' names, addresses, phone numbers and office hours through their employment orientation as well as with information posted or distributed at the office or in work vehicles. In some states, the employer has the legal right to specify acceptable treating physicians. In other states, the law allows for suggested providers. Your local workers' compensation claims office can advise you on this matter.

Task Assessment

Task assessment is the process of systematically assessing all elements of a given job, including job functions. During task assessment, problem jobs and the risk factors associated with them are identified and opportunities for alternate or modified work are listed.

Thorough job descriptions should be developed to identify the physical and other demands of the position. This can be done through review of available records, actual observation and supervisor or manager interview. This identifies key components of the job.

Key questions for identifying job components:

- What activities are involved?
- What are the physical functions required? How often are they performed, and for what duration?
- What is a typical daily schedule?
- What equipment and tools are required? How are tools used?
- What skills are required?

This kind of analysis provides a basis for matching job requirements with physical capabilities. A written summary of the task assessment can be used effectively by the treating physician in Return-to-Work planning. Such a breakdown of job factors is useful to the physician in determining work readiness and work restrictions.

The method in which a claim is handled can affect the progress and resolution of a disability case as well as the severity of dollar loss. Well-established and timely claim procedures are of prime importance in the RTW process. Also, your insurer must be informed of your intent to return the injured employee to alternative work.

Reporting among team members must be prompt as well. Each member has a specific responsibility; all must be informed in order to return the employee to productivity.

Actions which must be taken promptly include:

- medical determination of the employee's capabilities and restrictions;
- determining what physical accommodations may be necessary to comply with the medical diagnosis and prognosis;
- monitoring employee's condition to recommend workload increases if they are back at their regular jobs or changes in status if they are placed in alternative, temporary positions;
- documentation of all activities of both employee and employer in the event of controversy.

Sequence of Claims Procedures

Employee reports injury. Supervisor explains documentation procedures.

Claims are sent to insurer.

Employee is treated. The health care provider documents treatment and reports recommendations to the employee's supervisor.

If employee returns to work without lost time, immediate job assessment is made by trained personnel to avoid conditions that may cause safety hazards or additional injury.

If employee is out of work as prescribed by physician, the manager should contact the employee within 24 hours of the occurrence of injury to check on the employee's condition, the extent of injury, and work status. The intent of such a call is to show genuine concern for the employee's welfare. Indirectly, such attention often discourages abuse of the system.

Employee's return to work is determined by the RTW team based on recommendations made by the physician.

RTW Team meets on a regular basis to review claims and either take or recommend appropriate action. All open cases should be reviewed at least biweekly. The RTW team establishes follow-up plans on a case-by-case basis. Cases can be considered resolved after 4 weeks of symptom-free work activity at normal duty.

Strategies for Return-to-Work

An RTW program is intended to return employees to work as quickly as possible without risk to the employee's health. This
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Loss Management

may involve temporarily reassigning the employee to non-demeaning, productive, alternate duties.

The first priority should be to return the employee to the same job. If the same job isn't a possibility, then returning the employee to accustomed, but modified, work in the same department is preferred. Job modifications may include a temporarily reduced work schedule, light duty work on the crew or special duty elsewhere in the company.

First, try to capitalize on transferable employment skills or provide on-the-job training. In all instances, the RTW team should coordinate the reintroduction of an employee into the workforce with other department supervisors.

If there is anything positive that can be said of an accident, it is that it gives the unfortunate victim an experience that will hopefully prevent the same mistake from being made again. When properly guided, the injured worker may prove to be a valuable, if temporary, addition to your safety committee. Therefore, when there is an accident or near-miss, consider making the employee responsible for communicating what went wrong to fellow workers.

When necessary, refer to outside agencies for vocational rehabilitation.

Training Outline

The following training outline assumes that RTW is new to the participants. Basic training is specific to the role of the individual on the RTW team.

The health care provider or outside consultant:
♦ is informed of its role;
♦ is oriented to your operation;
♦ is made aware of tasks available for alternate or modified duty;
♦ meets regularly with the RTW team to discuss mutual concerns.

Employees:
♦ receive orientation to the program;
♦ comply with requirements of accident prevention and your return to work policy;
♦ receives regular updates provided by members of the RTW team.

Management:
♦ with the safety committee, performs job analysis to enable identification of potential hazards;
♦ identifies alternate tasks that can be assigned;
♦ compiles job descriptions for regular positions;
♦ takes responsibility for orientation of and communication with all involved parties;
♦ works with insurer, physicians and others to resolve claims quickly and fairly.

First, if any of this is to work, all parties must be committed to the process. Generally, company owners are committed to any and every activity that could further their businesses and benefit their employees. Yet owners need to find a way to install that 365-day-a-year commitment in their employees as well as vendors. Beyond commitment, good communication is essential to any highly effective loss management program.

Peter Gerstenherger has been the director of safety & education at the National Arborist Association since 1985.
Events & Seminars

June 9-10, 1997
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Licensed Tree Expert Training
Heritage Center, Annapolis, Maryland
Contact: 410-768-0830

June 11-13, 1997
Texas Urban Forestry Conference
Fort Worth, Texas
Contact: 409-845-2641

June 13, 1997
California Arborists Association/
Western Chapter, ISA
Regional Meeting
San Francisco, California
Contact: Phil Evans, 415-338-1845

June 14, 1997
ISA Texas Chapter Jamboree
Fort Worth, Texas
Contact: 972-442-1524

September 4-6, 1997
McCullough’s Tree Care /
Western Chapter, ISA
Sustainable Tree Care Conference
University of California, Los Angeles
Contact: John Phillips, 707-459-3015

September 10-11
Michigan Chapter, ISA
Educational Summer Conference 1997
Southfield, Michigan
Contact: 517-482-5530

September 16-17
Mendocino ReLeaf
“Tree Science for Better Tree Care”
Dr. Alex Shigo
Santa Rosa, California
Contact: Dave Krause, 717-766-6661

September 17-20
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It Pays to Hire Your Spouse

You are a self-employed arborist with a family health insurance plan that is so expensive it rivals your mortgage. Yet the government allows you to deduct only 40 percent of your health care costs. There is a way out. It is possible to deduct 100 percent of your health care costs. The secret is to hire your spouse.

A little-known wrinkle in the tax code, known as Section 105, allows self-employed workers to write off all medical costs as business expenses — including uninsured medical costs. Here is how you qualify.

First, hire your spouse. That part might be easy, since many tree care operations are already husband-wife teams. Next, find a company that creates and administers Section 105 benefits plans. These plans offer the opportunity for you to obtain fully deductible family medical coverage for both spouses and any dependent children. It isn't quite that simple — since IRS will require that you maintain receipts and documentation to qualify — but for $200 or less, companies will set up and administer a plan for your tree care business. Don't try to set things up yourself. There are precise steps to follow in order to pass IRS muster. Nevertheless, if you are sick of not being able to deduct all of your health care costs, ask your accountant or a tax lawyer how to qualify for a Section 105 benefits package.

Hiring on the Web

Looking for new employees? Ohio State has an easy way to find some. By calling up http://hortwww-2.ag.ohio-state.edu/faes/career/career.html you can view students' resumes or post positions that you have available. The service is free for all involved. You can post your job opportunities without access to the Internet by calling 614-292-3871.

I Can Do It All

The question is not whether you can do it all in running your tree care business; the question is whether you should be trying to do it all.

Many small business owners are unwilling or unable to delegate authority in their operations — even after the job has progressed beyond their ability to manage. Where once the administrative side occupied only an hour or so a day, as the business grows they find that office tasks, paperwork and administrative duties threaten to overwhelm them. As experienced arborists, many are reluctant to allow anyone else to supervise a crew, schedule work or estimate jobs. Some take flight from paperwork, finding refuge out in the field, while back in the office the pile of mail and potential problems mount. Others work longer and harder, trying to do everything in a 16-hour day. There is a solution: company owners must develop talented employees, then delegate decision-making authority (in the office and in the field) to those employees.

There is a difference, of course — between being unwilling to delegate duties and being unable to afford to hire people to perform some of the tasks involved in running a tree care business. Nevertheless, for businesses that have employees who could be accepting more responsibility, review and answer the following questions honestly.

1. As the highest-paid employee of your company, are you spending your day on routine tasks that could be performed by someone making a lot less per hour?
2. As the tree care expert in your company, are you short-changing training your employees because you just don't have the time?
3. Does it take more than a day for someone in your office to return the phone calls of regular customers?
4. Have you found yourself wishing that you could gain the time to attend conferences or trade shows that would help to upgrade your business or arboricultural skills?
5. Finally, are you frustrated because no one you hire is as skilled, fast, reliable or smart as you are?

If the word "yes" is still ringing in your ears, you need to assess how effectively you delegate authority within your business. Working harder is not the same as working smarter.
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SCSI, which invented the first plastic truck fender in the early 1980s, has issued a new "eye brow" styled fender called the Minimizer 151. The eye brow method of covering single or multi-axle wheels allows for complete wheel coverage, plus room to reach a fifth wheel or the truck or trailer's chassis. In the past decade SCSI developed fenders for nearly all trucks and trailer combinations. They never rust or need paint of any kind. Also, the polyethylene material lasts longer than steel, will not stress crack, is impervious to salt and reduces water and rock spray from tires. For more information contact: Craig Kruckeberg at 800-248-3855.

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Shindaiwa, Inc., introduces a new PowerBroom model—the PB230—a gasoline-powered sweeper attached to a splined solid-steel drive shaft, such as those found on a hand-held grass trimmer or brushcutter. The device consists of a drum with a series of rubber-like fins. In operation, the drum rests on the ground and rotates under variable throttle control, with the fins pushing debris ahead. The PB230 PowerBroom is for people who don't need all the power that the PB270 offers. It can be used for moving smaller debris such as pea gravel, bark chips, sand, snow or water. For more information, contract: Shindaiwa Inc., 11975 SW Herman Road, P.O. Box 1090, Tualatin, OR 97062. Phone: 503-692-3070; Fax: 503-692-6696.

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The STIHL 088 Magnum is a 21.8 pound, high-performance, heavy duty professional saw with a 7.4 cubic inch (121.6 cc) engine. It features a streamlined housing, angled front handle, flat chain sprocket cover, and anti-vibration system. Standard equipment are the Quickstop Inertia Chain Brake, single lever Master Control, EasyStart system with decompression valve and ElastoStart shock absorbing handle, side access chain adjustment, electronic ignition, and see-through fuel tank. The STIHL IntellieCarb cuts maintenance time and allows longer intervals between filter cleaning. It also keeps the fuel/air mixture constant, saves fuel and keeps exhaust emissions low. The Ematic system allows the user to reduce chain oil consumption by up to 50 percent. For more information or for the name of the closest STIHL retailer, call 800-GO STIHL (800-467-8445).

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Greenteeth, from Green Manufacturing, Inc., is designed so that you can turn your tooth instead of changing it. Just loosen the ½-inch locknut, turn the tooth 120 degrees and tighten the nut. To change the tooth, remove the locknut, pull the tooth out and replace with a new tooth. For more information, contact: Green Manufacturing, Inc., 36427 Sibley Road, PO Box 640, New Boston, MI 48164-0640. Phone: 313-753-5200; Fax: 313-753-5226.

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Doggett Corporation has developed a packback soil injector for concentrated soil applications to trees and shrubs. This unit is ideal for inoculating soil with mycorrhizae and for spot applications of minor elements and soil conditioners. It is capable of pressures up to 100 psi. Also available from Doggett is Kelzan S, a highly concentrated, water-soluble suspending agent for use in spray tanks that do not have mechanical agitation. This all-natural (derived from xanthan gum) product will suspend even the most insoluble particles and enable applicators to use products that settle to the bottom of the tank. For more information contact, The Doggett Corporation, 30 Cherry St., Lebanon, N.J. 08833. Phone: 800-448-1862; Fax: 908-236-7716.

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Unsurpassed reliability is why more forestry equipment manufacturers choose John Deere engines. They’re built to work long hours in rugged conditions where uptime is important. For hardworking, reliable engine power in your forestry equipment, ask for John Deere.

Three professional hovering trimmer models are now available from Husqvarna Forest & Garden Co. Each hovering trimmer maneuvers easily as it floats on a cushion of air. Lightweight and easy to use, the three models feature a maximum cutting height of two inches. Cutting widths range from 12 inches to 21 inches. Because there are no blades to sharpen or wheels to fix, they require little maintenance. The concave triangle-shaped monofilament line produces a clean cut, which helps reduce browning of grass tips and results in a more professional appearance. For more information, contact: Husqvarna Forest & Garden Co., 9006 Perimeter Woods Drive, Charlotte, N.C. 28216. Telephone: 1-800-GET-SAWS. To locate the Husqvarna dealer nearest you, call 1-800-HUSKY 62.

TruckCraft Corporation is a manufacturer of commercial-quality dump bodies to convert a pickup truck into a dump truck in less than two hours. They make the only all aluminum and stainless-steel dump insert for pickup trucks to make use of T-6 extrusions welded to bent sheets. The TC-120 Ultra Aluminum dump insert adds just 400 pounds to the weight of a pickup and dumps 5,000 pounds. It come with a 2-year warranty, two bolt, one battery cable installation, and fits all full-sized pickup trucks. For more information, contact: Roy O’Neal, TruckCraft Corporation, 5751 Molly Pitcher Hwy. S., Chambersburg, PA 17201. Phone: 800-755-3867.

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Quantify the Benefits of Trees

With the help of the latest in customized computer software available on the World Wide Web, city foresters and municipalities now have figures with which to justify the benefits of an urban forest. The program, called QuantiTree, provides the benefit/cost ratios of an urban forest.

By inserting readily available characteristics about a community, like rainfall, location and pollution factors, QuantiTree relates costs to the environmental and economic benefits of an urban forest. These numbers then can justify budget requests.

In addition to the free software, the QuantiTree web page also includes opinions and attitudes from 75 surveyed decision makers throughout the United States involved in the funding and directing of urban forestry programs. Furthermore, this site provides statistical data on urban forest benefits and costs as well as media and community relations plans.

Funded by a National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council grant, the program was developed by the Davey Resource Group (a division of The Davey Tree Expert Company), The International Society of Arboriculture Research Trust, Communication Research Associates and The Society of Municipal Arborists.

QuantiTree is available free at http://www.quantitree.com. For more information, please call Polly Wade at The Davey Tree Expert Company. Phone: 800-445-TREE; E-mail: info@davey.com.

National Pesticide Network

Have you ever wanted a source of objective pesticide information or a place to refer your clients? Have you ever been asked the following questions: Is it dangerous to use pesticides for insect control if I am pregnant or have small children? What is the persistence of the chemicals used on my lawn for weed control? Will they contaminate my well? If you have had these questions and longed for a place to call, the National Pesticide Telecommunications Network (NPTN) may be a useful resource for you.

A toll-free information service sponsored by Oregon State University and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, it provides information about a wide variety of pesticide-related subjects including: pesticide products, pesticide poisonings, toxicology and environmental chemistry.

NPTN is staffed by pesticide specialists who have the toxicology and environmental chemistry training needed to provide answers to questions about pesticides. Pesticide specialists can help callers interpret and understand toxicology and environmental chemistry information about pesticides.

NPTN uses a variety of information sources such as EPA documents, USDA Cooperative Extension publications, the scientific literature, and a pesticide product database. Information is available at no cost over the phone and non-copyrighted materials can be mailed or faxed for a nominal fee. Information is also available by calling 800-858-7378; Fax: 1-541-737-0761; E-mail: nptn@ace.orst.edu; http://ace.orst.edu/info/nptn/

They've Moved!

The Associated Landscape Contractor of America (ALCA) moved to a new location on May 1. ALCA's new address is 150 Elden Street, Suite 270, Herndon, VA 20170. The new phone number is 703-736-9666; The new fax number is 703-736-9668. ALCA's 800 number (800-395-ALCA) is unchanged.

“Call-Backs”

The phone number listed in the article "How to Grow a Chair" in the May issue was incorrect. To contact Richard Reames at Arborsmith Studios, call 541-846-7188. We regret any inconvenience.

Send press releases and news notes to: Editor, Tree Care Industry, PO Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031-1094. Fax: 603-672-2613.
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In Love and in Business: The Pluses and Pitfalls of Couples in Tree Care

Married couples in business are a reality—even though many owners are not aware that their business may be operating in this manner. Early planning is essential for a good and profitable working relationship—and a low tax bill.

By Mark E. Battersby

Many tree care and landscape professionals are already in business with their spouses—whether they are aware of it or not. In fact, a married couple in business may not be aware that our laws and tax rules could hold them jointly liable for the income and debts of the tree care operation. Even in those situations where the married couple is aware of their liability and has formalized the relationship by incorporating the business or forming a legal partnership, there are still quite a few potential pitfalls.

Much has been said and written about nepotism, especially in government and business. However, there is no written rule that would prevent any business owner from hiring a spouse, children or other family member. There may even be tax advantages associated with that nepotism.

With our complex and often confusing tax rules, there is no one “right” way to structure ownership of a tree care operation. The choices range from sole proprietorships, to partnerships and even two choices of corporations—regular and the small business or ‘S’ corporation, which is treated much in the same manner as a partnership for tax purposes.

The legal question of liability of a spouse involved or not involved in the other spouse’s business is one best left to local legal experts. However, in the tax arena, the subject of spouses and family members has been argued in the courts time and time again.

Spouses and Family Members

Every business owner has different priorities. One may be concerned with estate taxes somewhere down the road and decide that an incorporated tree care business will reduce that eventual estate tax bite. A contractor and his or her spouse could be concerned with acquiring the required number of Social Security “quarters” for a spouse employed in the business. Still another owner may want to attempt to split the business’ income among family members in order to reduce the total tax bite.

Mere ownership, or joint ownership of business property, does not automatically qualify any spouse for self-employment tax purposes. Accordingly, if an owner and spouse are personally operating a tree care business or other property that they hold as joint tenants, the net profits are, generally, all treated as one partner’s net earnings from self-employment.

Most contractors operating as sole proprietorships are familiar with the general rule that services performed by an individual in the employ of his or her spouse are not considered “employment” for Social Security (FICA) or unemployment (FUTA) tax purposes. Consequently, the self-employed contractor or business owner who hires his or her spouse generally need not pay or withhold Social Security taxes on spousal wages.

If proof is required that the hiring of a wife or husband is a smart move for income tax purposes, one quick look at the tax withholding rates should be enough to convince anyone. After all, the 1997 Social Security tax rate is 7.65 percent each for the employee and the employer (a total of 15.3 percent).

Ordinarily, any individual who owns a tree care business may create a “working family” by employing his or her spouse and paying the spouse a salary. Employing one’s spouse can be an extremely attractive method for splitting the family’s income in such a manner as to take full advantage of our tax system.

If handled properly, the employer gets a tax deduction for compensation paid while the spouse receives taxable cash
income and, in some cases, other economic benefits such as insurance coverage, pension plans, etc., with no or a low tax price to the business.

Obviously, the employer cannot take a legitimate tax deduction if the spouse does not actually perform services, or if the services rendered bear no reasonable relationship to the compensation paid. If the compensation is to be deductible in full by the employer, it must be reasonable.

To be considered as "reasonable" under our tax rules, the spouse’s compensation must be in accord with the prevailing rate of compensation for comparable positions with comparable employers in the area. In the event that the salary is eventually determined by the IRS to be excessive, the employer’s deduction will be lost to the extent that the amounts paid exceed reasonable compensation.

Another tax consequence of "spreading" the tree care operation’s income between a husband and wife is to reduce the self-employment tax the owner must pay on self-employment income. Such income-dividing is subject to the reasonable compensation rules but—assuming the operation’s burden of proof can be met—the reduction of combined family employment tax liability is, once again, substantial.

Remember, however, the employee-spouse who is not covered under the Social Security Act will not be earning credits for the normal Social Security benefits as do other compensated employees. In addition, the self-employed spouse with reduced earnings will be compiling proportionately fewer Social Security retirement benefits—unless she is earning enough to pay the maximum in Social Security taxes for the year ($65,400 maximum earnings base for 1997).

Partners

Where the spouse is a partner, the partnership entity is not legally required to withhold income tax from any distributions made to that partner. However, that partner may be subject to self-employment tax on any distributions. Of course, under our tax rules, a partnership does not exist where a spouse who assists in the tree care business does not participate in, or have a right to participate in, the management of the business—even when profits from the operation are treated as family funds.

As a rule, any person working as an employee for a partnership in which his or her spouse is a partner is considered to be an employee of the partnership, not of the spouse. Thus, Social Security taxes must generally be paid on the employee’s wages.

However, an exception exists where each member of the partnership is related to the spouse-employee in a manner that would ordinarily allow that partner to avoid withholding on the employee’s wages if the partner were self-employed. In other words, a person employed by a tree care partnership that consisted solely of his or her spouse and children (e.g., a mother-daughter partnership that employed the husband/father) is not required to have income...
tax withheld from his or her wages.

Even though there is no income tax advantage in forming a husband/wife partnership in order to shift income from one spouse to another, such a partnership may be desirable for another reason. A husband/wife partnership entitles the "non-working" spouse to Social Security retirement benefits due to the self-employment tax on partnership income. The IRS has agreed that such partnerships are valid for this purpose.

Although shareholders of a so-called "S" corporation are treated much in the same manner as partners, they are not subject to the self-employment tax on their share of the S corporations ordinary income attributable to the operation of the tree care business.

Similarly, when it comes to determining the applicability of Social Security taxes to employment, a person working for a regular corporation in which his or her spouse owns stock is considered to be an employee of the corporation—not of the spouse. After all, a corporation is a separate entity for tax purposes. In fact, this is true even where the spouse is the sole shareholder of the corporation. Although the question of qualifying for Social Security benefits at some future date is one of the long-range factors that must be considered, even further down the line (hopefully), is the estate tax question.

Estate Taxes

Although wills, trusts and estates are also better handled by legal experts, our tax laws maintain their control over the tree care entity by dictating how it must be handled upon the death of one or both spouses. Those tax laws have placed a ceiling on the amount which one spouse may receive tax-free upon the death of the other spouse.

Thus, a business owned solely by one spouse would be passed tax-free to the other spouse (ignoring wills, insurance and many other factors). The full value of that business would become part of the new owner's estate and taxed accordingly. However, if the spouse were a joint partner or joint shareholder in the tree care operation, only part of the business would be included in the spouses' estate and subject to estate taxes.

Married couples in business are a reality—even though many owners are not aware that their business may be operating in this manner. In order to both profit and to avoid the potential pitfalls, planning, early and often as things change or the business grows, is essential for a good and profitable working relationship—and a low tax bill.

Mark E. Battersby is a tax and financial advisor to small businesses. His syndicated weekly column appears in newspapers nationwide.
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Communicating Is Job 1

By Dr. Daniel J. Canary

If we were all identical to each other, then there would be no conflict. But we have different values and ideas, and we conflict over them naturally. Theorists have different definitions or types of conflict. One definition is that conflict involves some episode, blow-up, argument or confrontation. You can identify this type of conflict because it has a very definite beginning, middle and end. You are in an argument, and then you get out of it.

Another type of conflict occurs as a sequence of behaviors. For example, whenever there is an interruption, it could be called a conflict. When one person wants to do one thing and one another, you have conflict.

I would like to focus on conflict as an episode with a beginning, middle and end. People go through certain processes when experiencing conflict. Think about the events that might trigger anger or give rise to a confrontation. People who have studied conflicts largely agree that two things have to occur for someone to get mad at someone else.

First is some sort of blameworthy event: A customer confronts you; an employee shows up late or doesn't perform his job the way you think he should; a supplier or subcontractor doesn't deliver a product on time. It's a blameworthy event.

Second is that not only does a person's actions have to be blameworthy, those actions must have negative consequences for you personally. If someone shows up for work late, it's not a big deal unless it puts you behind schedule. You may not like that person showing up late, but—absent consequences—it should not logically compel you to engage in a conflict with the individual.

Those are the two factors that must be present for someone logically to get mad. But people are not logical. Evidence suggests very strongly that people get into conflict not because of logical reasons but because of other negative events.

Our emotions are not broken up into little compartments: They bleed together. What happens is that when you feel emotions like pain or stress or depression, you have a similar type of negative arousal as you do when you get angry.

For example, a researcher by the name of Leonard Berkowitz had two groups of women describe their boyfriends. One group held their hands in ice water, and the other group held their hands in lukewarm water. The ones whose hands were in cold water complained about their boyfriends, recalled conflicts and described how they were treated unfairly. The women whose hands were in lukewarm water were very positive about their boyfriends.

What Berkowitz demonstrated is that when people are in pain or are sad, very often they will respond in an “anger-like” fashion, even though there may not be a logical reason for that anger. That’s why we see so many acts of violence in hot summer months in overcrowded areas.

Likewise, when people are stressed they tend to react negatively to neutral situations. When I’m running late or if I’m behind schedule, I feel some of those same physiological responses as when I’m angry. I might get mad at the person in front of me who is only driving the speed limit. There might be no negative behavior on that person’s part. I may be frustrated, but that’s my fault.

Nevertheless, people will behave in an anger-like fashion even though there’s no logical reason for them to be angry. Research has found similar results for environmental factors. Hot weather and cigarette smoke have been found to make people relatively angry.

How People Respond

Let’s say that for whatever reason, you are angry or someone is angry at you. Maybe someone acted in a blameworthy fashion or maybe you’re stressed. What are some of the common physiological responses?

According to the researchers, people respond to conflict according to the classic fight versus flight syndrome. Our bodies are equipped to handle danger, and anger is a primary emotion that helps us cope with our environment. Our bodies respond naturally to it. It is an important point to understand that there are some very specific physiological processes that
John Gottman, a psychologist at the University of Washington, says that within the autonomic nervous system, the classic fight/flight pattern is well-known, consisting of such changes as increases in the cardiac rate, sweating, deepened breathing, redirection of blood flow toward the large skeletal muscles and release of various hormones. In other words, you respond to anger or stress by feeling your heart pound. You sweat, and you might even feel some heart palpitations. There will be an instinctual focus on the situation at hand. You might be taken aback at first, but within the first 30 seconds you start focusing on the event. In other words, you're pumped, you're primed, you're ready to act.

For many people, these physiological reactions are a negative feeling. It's not fun when someone confronts you or you feel stress.

Research indicates that men have a harder time dealing with physiological changes brought on by anger than women. Men react in a more dramatic fashion to becoming angry. As such, they peak quicker and take a longer time to recover than women. This is one explanation for the classic confrontation/withdrawal episodes that many married couples experience. The woman wants to talk about the problem and the man doesn't. The reason for the difference is that woman is more focused on dealing with relationship issues, while the man is more aware of the negative physiological feelings.

So the next time someone wants to confront you, you can say “Not now, I'm experiencing aversive negative physiological arousal.”

An additional problem is that every new confrontation acts as a stimulus to boost that negative arousal. According to researcher Dolf Zillman, if someone makes another negative comment before your body returns to normal, it increases your excitement level past the point where it was before. In other words, there is a cascade effect where conflict escalates. You have seen it before: Two people stand nose to nose getting angrier and angrier until one reaches the point where it's either fight or flight.

In addition to the physiological reactions, we each have daily, and perhaps even hourly, response tendencies. Some of us get up in the morning and feel alive. Some need a couple of cups of coffee. People carry these response tendencies with them, and they can vary from day to day. Some days you want to work with people, and some days you want to confront them. On Monday mornings, stay out of my way!

Our natural reactions to conflict play a role in how we respond to other people, but our response tendencies for a given day vary, too. Sometimes we want to work with people, sometimes against them or away from them.

Conflict is a fairly complex process that can involve irrational motivations for people's behavior. But people are rational. People do think, and that is how our purely physiological processes are changed.

For example, I recently finished a house in a development. We had a landscaper come in to put some trees in the back. The landscaper had a hard time because it was raining, but he promised me he would finish by a particular day. It was very important to me that he meet this deadline. He didn't. Not only that, he brought the wrong trees.

Now, we had a problem, a conflict, and I thought “How do I explain this?” Well, it was raining that week. That doesn't explain a lot of his other problems, but it really wasn't his fault that it was raining. He wanted to get the trees in. He wanted to finish the job, because he wanted to get paid.

On the other hand, if I didn't like and trust this guy, I would have concluded that the reason he didn't get the trees in was because he is irresponsible. That would also explain why he brought the wrong trees and why he didn't call and tell me why he wasn't going to be there as promised.

If I'm dissatisfied with a person—or I am in a dissatisfied mood in general—I see the cause as coming from inside of the individual. I see irresponsibility as selfishly motivated. The action is motivated by this person's desire to do me in. If you choose to regard a person's actions in a negative light, that person's irresponsibility explains why he doesn't call when he's going late for dinner. And being irresponsible also explains why he never sends cards or flowers.

You could be generous in your explanations for conflict or you can hold the other person responsible for the conflict and explain the conflict in terms of something that's internal to the individual.

What happens when you have two parties dissatisfied with each other? It escalates. Notice the irony here. Each person thinks that the other person is causing the conflict. Each person thinks that the other person is selfish. Just as you don't trust someone and think that he's being selfish, that other person is thinking the same thing about you.

Secondly and importantly, it may not matter what you believe about the cause of the conflict as much as the behavior that you enact. Research indicates that people who see the other person as responsible and selfishly motivated are more likely to reciprocate negative behavior. Since both people feel this way, that negative behavior reinforces their belief: "You're selfish: look at the way you're yelling at me. Look at that grimace."

When you have just one field of vision, you don't see your own grimaces and you don't hear the sarcasm in your own voice. You don't see some of those things that indicate that you're not that attractive either during conflict.
Three Primary Goals

I think of myself as this warm fuzzy teddy bear kind of person. Yet, I once saw videotape of one of my lectures, and I looked like I was mad. I looked upset, and I was very curt with an individual who asked a reasonable question. We don’t see our own non-verbal signals, and we don’t see how our behavior might be regarded by others. All we see is the other person yelling at us. We don’t see ourselves yelling at the other person.

The heart of the issue really is behaving in conflict with a sense of dignity that will allow your working relationships to continue. We know now that in conflict, as well as in just about every other situation, people have three different goals operating simultaneously. Some of these are more important than others.

1. The first goal is instrumental, which means you want to obtain some type of personal gain. Usually it’s a resource, like money, or it’s a favor, such as asking someone to work overtime.

2. At the same time, you have relationship goals when you talk to individuals. You want to establish and maintain a good working relationship. Sometimes you want to escalate the relationship into a friendship. But while we’re seeking our goals, we are also trying to indicate to the person how we want to define our association. I’m sure you’ve experienced this when you’ve met someone on a plane. You strike up a conversation and find out you have some mutual interest. It’s a very enjoyable conversation, and then comes the moment of decision. How do I want to define this relationship? Do I give this person my name? Most of the time you don’t.

3. The final goal is one of self-presentation, which describes how you want other people to see you. It’s your preferred public image. You have an identity, a theory of yourself that you want other people to believe. Most of us like to be seen as competent, knowledgeable on the job and likable. Others of us like to be seen as morally worthy. And we’ll cite past actions as evidence of our moral worthiness.

Some want to appear dangerous in order to get people to do what we want. So they might use sarcasm or intimidation. You have probably have seen this in social situations, say a bar, where a couple of guys get in each other’s face. They may have forgotten what they’re arguing about. Instead, they’re more concerned with their self-presentation style. As a matter of fact, some researchers believe that when we escalate conflicts, it’s not because of the task or the issue that got us into conflict in the first place. It’s because we are questioning the other person’s identity of public image.

What happens is that two people are trying to reassert their confidence and they often do so at the expense of the other person’s competence. At one time when people would ask me tough questions, I used to say things like “Well, who are you to ask that.” I would reassert my competence at the other person’s expense.

Finally some people want to be seen as helpless. “I do not know how to assemble anything that comes in a box, so please don’t ask me.” People like to be...
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seen as helpless so they can get help. For example, being helpless is one of the primary reason that men use for not cooking. “I just don’t know where the pans are, dear.”

In other words, self-presentation goals can become the most important thing during conflict. It doesn’t matter what you’re talking about. The thing to remember is that most of the time most people want to be seen as confident and likable.

Decisions Regarding Conflict

When you have two dissatisfied parties making negative attributions, what do you do? You have choices, which I like to call decisions. The first decision is “Do I confront or do I avoid?”

Then if you decide to encounter the individual, you must decide whether you’re going to do it in a cooperative way by trying to try to solve the problem or in a competitive way. Are you going to show this person who’s boss and win or work with the person and seek areas of commonality?

Are you going to call this person irresponsible or talk about how much you like working together if you can get past this problem? Working together is an integrative strategy that, not surprisingly, is probably your best bet when it comes to managing conflict in the workplace and at home. Work with the person, pool resources, recognize you have a problem work on it together.

One thing that we found in communication studies is that people tend to reciprocate behavior. So if you’re positive to someone, he will be positive back. Have you ever gone down the street or the freeway and just waved to people and smiled. They wave back and smile, and they don’t know who you are. People have a tendency to reciprocate behavior, so when you engage in a positive behavior by working with someone and focusing on the problem—not on the personality—that will be reciprocated.

On the other hand, you could choose to engage in confronting the individual in a competitive way. When you maximize your own reward, you minimize the other person’s reward. You do this by:

• Shouting. My favorite question is “Who do you think you are?”
• Intimidation. You might engage in a lot of staring and glaring, maybe even invade his space.
• Ask hostile questions. “Why didn’t you plan ahead?”
• Presumptive comments. Telling the person his motivation for the conflict.

People can avoid the conflict by:

• Denying a problem exists. “No, no, honey nothing is wrong!”

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1. You can't minimize or anticipate the initial physiological responses, but you can recognize them as natural and try to deal with them. Count to 10. Take a walk and bring your heart rate down. People are surprised by how their bodies respond.

2. You can decide to believe a particular attribution that will probably make you madder than if you were more generous toward others.

3. If you can anticipate conflict, you are able to plan how you will respond and how you will react to the negative physiological arousal. It might be helpful to plan what you will say and how you will say it.

4. People communicate through verbal and non-verbal means, and our non-verbal signals are what indicate the other party our emotional state.

Remember that people reciprocate negative behavior. The number one predictor of relationship dissatisfaction both in the workplace and in marriage is the ongoing reciprocation of negative behavior. Negative behavior will occur, but if you can stop it instead of reciprocating it, then that will do a lot to save your work and personal relationships.

There are three rules to live by.

1. Be as happy as you can possibly be.
2. Try not to make others unhappy.
3. There are no other rules.

This article was adapted from a seminar presented at TCI EXPO. Dr. Daniel J. Canary is a professor at Penn State University and a consultant with Communication Research Associates. For more information on this topic, see Competence in Interpersonal Conflict by William R. Cupach and Daniel J. Canary. McGraw-Hill (1997).
It is common sense that electric wires can be hazardous to anyone doing tree work. OSHA Standard 1910.331 states that only qualified employees can come within ten feet of an overhead energized electrical conductor. Plus, OSHA Standard 1910.269 clearly defines who is legally permitted to work within the ten foot boundary. Finally, ANSI Z133.1 dictates very specific training and operational requirements that all tree care personnel need to follow for safety's sake.

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ISA or College?

Your article “Arboriculture on Campus” shows how colleges are supplying the educational needs for the employees of tomorrow and demonstrates that there is no substitute for college education.

However, a standard is a set of criteria on a range of subjects within a profession that denotes more than typical education, skill and abilities. The ISA certified arborist program educational portion is a one day test with no prerequisite educational requirement.

This shows that certification isn’t a level to achieve, but is at best an entrance level exam for the industry. The ISA seems to be diluting its membership credibility. The current certification program is destroying the symbiotic relationship between the academic community and the industry. The ISA is not a college and the testing is not at a college graduate level. The message the ISA is telling potential college students and the schools they pay to attend is that their degrees aren’t any better than reading books at home and taking a one day test.

The best and brightest people go to college in other majors that reap income and recognition for their academic efforts and investment. No wonder Williamsport couldn’t get five students for the arboriculture course to survive.

My college degree in horticulture is a better advertising tool and a far greater daily asset than the fact that I passed the certified arborist test.

Jeffery S. MacNair
Garden State Tree & Lawn
Pittstown, N.J.

Bad Choice of Photos

I enjoy your publication in its entirety. Additionally, I appreciated the TCI EXPO held in Charlotte last year. However, from time to time there have been, well, politically incorrect (from a purist’s view) statements, illustrations and pictures in your publication.

What is very alarming is the March issue’s cover story picture on page six. The picture relating to teaching future arborists is an oxymoron. There are six students climbers pictured, all with new equipment (ropes and saddles), all crotched and tied into this live wonderful specimen of a tree, but something is missing. There are no rope savers/cambium savers being incorporated.

The rope damage to this tree is not from a single crotch burn from the usual lone climber, but from six novices. And is one to assume this campus tree receives many similar burns every semester?

What is being taught? If we are to be surgeons, we must take a Hippocratic oath as do other surgeons, “First do no harm.”

Medical surgery has come a long way due to the use of new equipment. The arborist too has new equipment, let us all go a long way, use proper equipment!

Fred Faragalla
Creedmoor, NC

We agree with you that if there is a technique or piece of equipment that can reasonably be incorporated into the arborist’s repertoire to improve tree health, worker safety, or equipment longevity, TCI magazine should be bringing it to you, the reader. Please read our Mission Statement on page 2.

The college program in the photo you reference is in the hands of some very capable and highly respected arborists, and we feel confident that they are sensitive to the health of this tree. -ed.-

More on Campus

Thank you for the generous space you gave to the program at Naugatuck Valley College in your article on “Arboriculture on Campus.” I found some great ideas from the article and am so glad you did it. The April edition of TCI is riveting. Every article was significant and Phil Nilsson’s piece was inspiring as always. Thank you for articles that are so concise and cogent.

Anthony C. Bleach, Coordinator
Landscaping & Horticulture Program
Naugatuck Valley College
Waterbury, Conn.

More Artists

Great magazine and getting better. I would like to see more good diagrams when you do articles on climbing kits or techniques.

Derek Beavis
Arboretum Supervisor
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Valuing Real Estate

Excellent article in the May TCI by William Steigerwaldt [Can Foresters Help CTLA?] regarding real estate valuations. I have run into this numerous times. Maybe the whole “formula” should be a factor based on county assessed value which has a base year of zero and varies as per the Consumer Price Index. For years Bartlett Tree Experts used the Felt-Spicer evaluation method which did use assessed land value—assessed—so guys like me, who are not real estate appraisers, can say in court: “I just used the county’s figure.”

Keep up the good work.

Steve Sandfort
City Forester
Cincinnati, Ohio

Keeping up With Arboriculture

My story begins by congratulating F. A. Bartlett’s crew with an excellent job in moving that beautiful Red Japanese Maple. I once worked for Bartlett in Cohasset, Mass., and one winter when things were slow we went to the Osterville, Mass., Bartlett office and baled and burlapped 300 cedars. Rather than cut and chip, we moved every tree with the utmost care back to the shop. We stocked them out back where they could be sold and planted somewhere else.

I learned a lot from a retired Bartlett man, John Foreman, who always emphasized the importance of saving trees. I can’t see any other way.

I’ve been a climber for the past 15 years, and I can’t think of a more enjoyable profession. I recently became an inmate of the State Department of Correction due to alcohol abuse. My previous boss got me a subscription to TCI because he realizes how much I miss doing tree work. Reading your magazine keeps my thoughts with all of you arborists out there caring for our trees. Be safe all.

Mark Whittle
S.E.C.C. Bridgewater, Mass.
**Good People Cost**

I would like to respond to your February article "How to Find the Right Person for the Job." I have been to more seminars than I can count pertaining to this issue. I've heard every theory possible on what I need to do when looking for good people: How we should offer this and that; how we should be better managers if we want good people.

I don’t wish to burst anyone’s bubble, but let me throw this reality at you. **PAY MORE AND CHARGE MORE.** Good people cost good money and bad people you get rid of. It takes more to be an arborist these days. Therefore, it should cost more to hire one.

If the price of cement goes up and labor costs go up, guess what? The price of your new driveway also goes up. The contractor doesn’t see how he can make you a better deal; it’s either take it or not. And you know, the next estimate you get will be the same way, and so will the third. The truth is many other skilled trades have learned to walk away from the low-ball jobs. They know what their fixed costs are, and they go upward from that point.

It is only in the past few years have we found that we too are in a skilled trade. We are no longer thought of as tree cutters. It takes hard work and training to become a qualified arborist. It costs a lot of money to be in the tree care business.

Young people are key to our industry and young people live for today with little concern about tomorrow. They want a big paycheck today, not 20 years from now. So if you need good people, PAY FOR THE BEST AND GET RID OF THE REST. You may have fewer people on staff, but think about those profits you’ll be making. Think about how you will reduce your headaches, think about how well your staff will represent your company to the public, and think about all those peaceful weekends you now can enjoy.

Yes, increasing awareness and appreciation for the environment has really opened the doors of opportunity for our industry so why do we continue to close them? **DON’T BE AFRAID TO PAY MORE, DON’T HESITATE TO PUT UP WITH LESS THEN THEIR BEST AND ABSOLUTELY BE WILLING TO CHARGE ACCORDINGLY.**

George R. Lee, President & Gen. Mgr.
Branch Tree Service, Inc.
Royal Oak, Michigan

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**TREE CARE INDUSTRY - JUNE 1997**
There Is Always Room for New Ideas

By Robert W. Phillips

Sponsored by The Bishop Company for the advancement of our industry.

The creative mind of Don Blair has helped develop the equipment that has made our job safer, easier and more efficient. People who climb rope for a living should try his recently released product, the “Footlocker.”

This device is capable of accomplishing several different rope climbing methods. It works well as a self belay when climbing a doubled, static climbing rope with the footlock climbing method. It provides the security that has been missing in less-than-perfect use of the Prusik hitch. The Footlocker can also be used with the body-thrust climbing method. To be able to climb using the body-thrust method, tie a knot or clip in a carabiner on one of the ropes running through the locking cams. The knot will run up under one cam and get locked into place.

When you pull on the other end of the line, it runs freely through the cam. When you let go of it, it stops you from going down. You can come down on the rope with the one cam jammed up by using your feet to help feed the rope and control your descent. When you take a bight on the rope with your feet, step up and depress the locking cam up to allow the rope to run through it. The method of climbing can be changed in mid climb without a great deal of trouble.

When you want to change over from a body thrust to a static, two-rope footlock climb, start by beginning your footlock climb with both of the ropes that are hanging below the footlocker. After you take the first bight on the line, untie the knot or the carabiner and proceed with your climb. If in the middle of your footlock climb you decide to change over to the body thrust method, remember to tie the knot or carabiner beneath the Footlocker, and tie it close. The reason for this is that when you pull on the free line, there will be slippage that may cause a little surprise.

Many times I have left the Footlocker on my lines even after I have tied in with my Blake hitch. When I come back in on a long limb I have the choice of using a dynamic running line that I control with a Blake hitch or coming back to the center of the tree with the rope static by pushing back the Footlocker and pulling my slack rope out when I get back to a comfortable and safe position.

If you need to descend while footlocking, you will need to use both of your feet. Take a bight with your feet on the rope, then stand up and release the two cams on the Footlocker. Allow the rope to run through your feet and regulate the pressure of the bight to help slow down or speed up your descent. Go slowly to reduce the wear on the sole of your shoes.

If you have questions, either tape them or write them down and send them (with a S.A.S.E.) to: Robert W. Phillips, 500 Los Trancos Rd., Portola Valley, CA 94028.

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Anatomy of a Fall

I’ve been in the tree care industry for 11 years and climbing for 10. I have been in climbing competitions and other events sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of ISA. In other words, I consider myself a good climber with a fair amount of experience, yet last summer I made a mistake that caused me to fall 38 feet. I hope telling my story will help other climbers avoid serious injury.

My crew was sent out to remove a fairly large red oak. The dying tree was close to a house and the working area was small. This was a job for a porta-wrap and lowering block for sure. Once the power company finally arrived to drop the power line, we got started.

We brushed the tree out without a problem and were down to about a 90 foot spar by noon. I was able to take the first few chunks with my climbing saw, but then had to go to a big saw with a 24-inch bar for the rest. After getting the oak down to about 40 feet, we figured we could take the rest from the ground. I called for the tag line back and that’s the last thing I remember doing.

Upon reflection, I have concluded that this is what happened. Although the spar was fairly straight, I felt that—due to its size—a little advantage pulling it over wouldn’t hurt. Instead of whipping the rope around the top of the tree (about 3 feet in diameter at this point) and tying a bowline in the front, I put the bowline around the back and standing end of the line over the top of the truck. I secured myself to the tag line with a figure eight, untied the Blake hitch in my climbing line and undid my safety. The tag line slipped over the top and down I went.

Falling backwards, with a death grip on the tag line, the back of my head hit the top of the last chunk of wood I had taken, just missing the groundsman cutting it up. Although my hard hat collapsed the way it’s supposed to, my head still took some of the blow. With me bleeding from the head, unconscious and foaming at the mouth, my crew decided to call for help. When my wife got to the hospital, the first thing I asked her was, “Where are my boots?”

Three days and two nights in the hospital, a real bad haircut so they could stitch me up, and two CAT scans later, I was home. I don’t remember much about the first week after the accident, but I do know I wouldn’t have made it through without my loving wife at my side.

The company has since purchased two rope come-alongs. I thank God I was wearing a hard hat and I still wonder how I wasn’t more seriously injured. I’ve learned that always thinking things through and perhaps even discussing techniques with other people can save a lot of anguish. I will never descend on a rope that is tied, “around the back and over the top” again.

Tim Bushnell is an arborist with Growing Earth Tree Care in Centreville, Virginia.

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<td>AL-50-E14</td>
<td>70' 0&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL-52-E14</td>
<td>72' 3&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL-60/50-E14</td>
<td>75' 0&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL-65-C</td>
<td>50' 6&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL-60-C</td>
<td>55' 6&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also available Aerial Lifts built in Hydro-Chippers 12" Chipper Head

All parts on an Aerial Lift are available for overnight delivery.

Aerial Lift Inc. is an authorized dealer and distributor of Greenlee Fairmont Textron-Fairmont "Limbin' Logger" tools. For tools, parts or service call us on our 800 numbers.

Aerial Lift, Inc.
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