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For Now, Keep Running Lean

As the negative economic indicators continue to roll in this summer, the tree care industry should start bracing itself for what could very well be a double dip recession and a slowdown in business in the coming months. There has been little positive economic news lately: the U.S. government’s credit rating was downgraded; job growth has been stagnant; real estate has not recovered; and more than one European country faced default on its debt – a fate America’s politicians barely finessed.

Those who remember the long, difficult winter at the start of this recession would do well to dust off the plans and tactics used to carry them through to today. Loaded with expanded payrolls and new, financed equipment, many company owners saw large profits in 2007 turn to slim margins in 2008 that turned into operating losses in 2009. Some tough choices were made then, and we may be facing similar ones this winter.

We can hope that the winter of 2011-12 will not be as difficult as the winter of 2008-09, which caught many businesses by surprise, but hope is no substitute for preparation. If the last two years has taught us anything, it is how to run lean.

Members I’ve spoken with over the past year report that while revenues are still below 2007 levels, profits in 2011 are holding at healthy levels. But that news is highly regional, with the areas hit hardest by the burst real estate bubble suffering the most. The news is also company specific, with accredited companies and those with well developed plant health care programs faring best.

Of course, a tough time for some means opportunities for others. A second recession could mean a flood of quality used equipment on the market at attractive prices for companies still growing. Interest rates remain low, so financing could add up to some real bargains. Stricter Tier 4 air pollution rules are coming soon, and no one knows how much that will add to the cost of new chipper engines. This fall may be a great time to add equipment – if the work exists to support it.

Tough economic times pose particular challenges for nonprofits such as TCIA. When business slows for a commercial tree care company, you have the option to cut expenses immediately. Personnel are your largest expense, followed by insurance, equipment payments, fuel and maintenance. You can lay off your least productive crew and perhaps sell off that now idle chipper. A tree crew won’t be missed by your customers if the rest of your employees can handle the workload.

If revenue drops 20 percent at a nonprofit like TCIA, however, the choices are more difficult. TCIA offers programs for the industry and provides services to members, so a drop in revenue doesn’t necessarily mean a drop in the demand for those services. This magazine needs to be produced, the world’s largest tree care trade show, TCI EXPO, must go on, and your association will continue to promote worker safety and lobby Washington for business friendly regulations. Tough times often mean an increased workload for TCIA’s staff, as more and more members call looking for marketing, finance and other business assistance.

Tax deductible nonprofits, such as the TCIA Foundation and the TREE Fund, face additional challenges. Less revenue translates directly into reduced ability to serve their missions. Some donors will remain wealthy enough and committed enough to continue to give. Yet fundraising drives are assisted by tax considerations, and a falling stock market can wipe out capital gains. Both organizations serve vital roles in helping your business thrive long term, so if you can, please keep them in mind when you draw up your list of nonprofits for contributions.

I wish I had a crystal ball that could tell me where the economy was headed, but people on Wall Street who are paid to know can’t seem to predict a clear direction. It’s clear that the expected turnaround hasn’t happened yet and may well be a long way off. We’ll continue to run lean here at TCIA, and we encourage our members to contact us for any reason. We’re here to help you advance your tree care businesses.

Mark Garvin
Publisher

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 Tree Care Industry 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.
When a chipper feeds better, it makes life easier for the operator. The new RC1824 was given a powerful feed system to pull in brush, limbs, and logs easier and with less trimming. The massive 24” diameter top feed wheel is powered by a planetary drive motor and will easily climb over large logs without operator assistance. The 38” drum is the biggest in its class and smoothly chips through logs up to 18” in diameter. Power options provided by Cummins, with Tier III turbo-diesel engines available up to 160hp. Make things easy on yourself. To learn more contact your authorized RAYCO Dealer or visit our newly redesigned website at www.raycomfg.com.
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The spectacular 400-tree grove at the September 11 Memorial will provide comfort and a contemplative space on the site of the former World Trade Center in New York City. It will also bring new life to Ground Zero.

By David Rattigan

This month, 10 years after one of the most horrific acts of terrorism in American history, the September 11 Memorial (also called the 9/11 Memorial) will open at the site of the former World Trade Center Complex in New York City.

Occupying half of the 16-acre site, the memorial is intended to honor those who were killed during the collapse of the World Trade Center’s twin towers, and serve as a “tribute to the past and a place of hope for the future.”

Designed by landscape architect Peter Walker and Partners, the memorial’s plaza is part of a breathtaking site, featuring two enormous waterfalls, reflecting pools, and – when complete – more than 400 trees to create a canopy of leaves. The plaza is a “green roof” for the structure housing the 9/11 Memorial Museum, a train station and other facilities, which drop 70 feet below street level.

The paving of the plaza sits on a series of concrete tables that suspend the plaza over troughs of nutrient-rich soil for the planted trees. The design allows for stable pavement on which people can walk, while providing a space for loose soil, for healthier tree growth.

For visitors to the site, the grove of trees will supply comfort and create a contemplative space within a bustling metropolis. As the memorial’s website explains, the grove will “bring green rebirth in the spring, provide cooling shade in the summer and show seasonal color in fall.”

For those involved in selecting, transporting, planting and caring for the trees planted in the grove, there were – and are – myriad challenges.

There is also tremendous pride.

“From a memorial standpoint, it’s the most important project in the country,” says Tom Cox, CEO and founder of Houston, Texas-based Environmental Design, Inc., which selected and installed the trees, an ongoing and technically challenging difficult project.

He notes that the list of attendees for the memorial’s dedication included only government officials at the highest level.

“I’ve said in the past and it’s a little corny, but it’s the way I feel about it: it is...
my magnum opus,” says Cox. In his company’s 34-year history, the portfolio includes moving the signature tree at Pebble Beach and work at the White House. “We’ve done some significant work in the past, but nothing as significant as this.”

At a previous event related to the memorial, Cox says, “We had people come up to us and say, ‘You guys provided the first life back to the plaza.’”

Working as a subcontractor for Environmental Design, Bartlett Tree Experts has maintained the trees in the holding area and will continue to maintain them on the site for two years.

“It’s an amazing honor to be associated with this project,” says Wayne Dubin, vice president at Bartlett. “I’ve heard Tom Cox say he would have done it for free. I’m not sure if I share that exact sentiment, but we’ve never hesitated along the way here to do extra things simply because they needed to be done, and never really worried about the money. You get a sense that you’re doing something that will mean something to a lot of people. That everyone who comes to the plaza will get to enjoy these trees, and the shade.

“It’s the only thing that’s green there. Everything else is stone and glass and hardscape. What we’re doing will help the visitors to enjoy the site.”

**Massive project**

Environment Design was involved from the early design phase, helping with the selection of trees, contributing initial thoughts on the project and the design criteria for the box sizes. They also helped determine the growing standards. After that, they went out in search of trees, and found them in six area states: New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Illinois.

“The original design mandate was for the trees to come from the three states (most impacted by 9/11), and that got expanded after we exhausted those states’ known supplies,” Cox says. “We had to go well beyond those states.”

The company transported the trees to a site in New Jersey, where they grew them from 4-5 inches in diameter to 12 inches in diameter, so they were ready and prepared for delivery to the site. They then delivered them to site and installed them on the plaza, which involved cranes and developing a machine for that unique transport.

The company has worked on projects in New York City before, and finding creative solutions to work in difficult environments is a company specialty.

“We’ve moved trees from the Pearl River Delta in China to Dubai,” Cox says, noting that his job generally gets involved when things get difficult. “People come to us when it’s beyond the typical capability of a landscaper.”

The ongoing challenges of the 9/11 Memorial project are many, starting with the degree of difficulty of getting anything done in New York City, a crowded, populous city that’s heavily regulated.

“When you plant a tree with a crane in Houston, Texas, you get a crane and take your tree and plant it,” Cox says. “Up there, you have a series of approvals and engineers that have to come out. There’s an order of magnitude or two more difficulty than an average planting.”

The company also had to navigate through union requirements that are imposed on anyone working in New York
“Lower Manhattan is, if not the most difficult, one of the most difficult in the country,” Cox says. “You’ve got union jurisdiction issues, the interloper issue, all kinds of things that you need to work through that are quite a challenge.”

There were also obstacles on the job site, including all of the other construction going on at the 16-acre site, with limited spots for entering and exiting, and extremely tight security. Every worker on the site is submitted to background checks, and as Cox says, “There are rules and requirements that are absolute. For instance, if somebody gets caught smoking on the job site, they are banned from the job site for life.”

Add to that, and the fact that there are thousands of people working on the site at any given time, that the only ones delivering a perishable product to the site are those working on the grove. Given the variables and difficulty of hoisting a tree up to the plaza, Cox estimates that the replacement of one tree would likely cost about $100,000.

Partly for that reason, he says, “They are the most cared-for trees in history.”

Having trees planted in above-ground planters is not something you see in the Northeast, Dubin says, “We had to get used to the fact that the trees were going to go through more water, we had to insulate the boxes in winter, to be sure that there was no risk of cold-temperature damage. We were constantly sampling the water to make sure there were no micro-elements in the water that would be toxic to the trees.”
Since the project started, Environmental Design has also been responsible for the maintenance of the trees, using Bartlett as a subcontractor.

Installation of the trees began in August 2010, and there will be 220, all swamp white oaks, on the site for the dedication this month, on September 11. More will be added in the coming year, as areas of ground zero continue to be built out.

Among the features of the state-of-the-art irrigation system at the holding yard are electronic ribbons installed in the root balls of 20 percent of the trees. Sensors in the ribbons connect to a computer and turn the irrigation system on and off based on the level of moisture detected in the root balls.

Dubin notes that the requirements for tree maintenance on the site fill a 4-inch thick document, and that regular reporting to an online data system lets all of those involved with the memorial have up-to-date information on every tree planted in the plaza, including pruning schedules and other data.

“We’ve been compelled to take a lot of detailed notes about observations that we’ve made,” Dubin says.

Despite the care, issues have come up – including minor mite damage to some foliage – all of which have been brought quickly under control.

“I tell people, ‘This is not an oil painting, these are live trees, and things are going to bubble up, no matter how spectacular the care,’” Dubin says.

Just as the average New York resident needs to adjust quickly to whatever variables the country’s biggest city throws its way, the plaza trees and their caretakers will be asked to do the same.

“Out at the holding yard, there’s not a lot of reflective heat,” Dubin says by way of example. “At this construction site, there are a lot of reflective surfaces.”

Pride from the project

While the project has been challenging on several fronts, both men say the work has brought them great pride in accomplishment.

“We’ve been involved in a lot of special tree projects,” Dubin says. “We care for the trees at Monticello, and we care for the trees at Sagamore Hill, Teddy Roosevelt’s place. We care for the trees at beautiful parks and gardens all over the country.”

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“This is far and away the most meaningful project with trees that I’ve ever been involved with, and I doubt I’ll have anything to compare it to going forward.”

Wayne Dubin
Bartlett Tree Experts

The country. A subsidiary company in the UK, Southern Tree Surgeons, has the Royal Seal, so we care for the trees at Buckingham Palace. But certainly in the almost 23 years that I’ve been at Bartlett, this stands by itself. This is far and away the most meaningful project with trees that I’ve ever been involved with, and I doubt I’ll have anything to compare it to going forward.

“Even at the holding yard, where we’ve been caring for these trees for the past four years, every time you go there, even though it doesn’t have anything to do with Ground Zero, just seeing those trees out in a field, your chest swells with pride.”

A self-professed news junkie who can recall watching the horrific events of September 11, 2001, for four hours, Cox says he’s proud to be part of the rebirth.

“My kids and grandkids will know forever that I contributed to that, it’s really valuable,” Cox says. “It’s made the intolerable tolerable.”

Several of the trees in place at Ground Zero in May 2011. Photo courtesy of Bartlett Tree Experts Inc.

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The tagline “We save trees!” says it all. “We’ve become recognized regionally as the company to call when it comes to saving a tree,” says Sam Adams, general manager of Cortese Tree Specialists, Inc., in Knoxville, Tennessee. “We’re usually the second call after cooperative extension.”

The company is one of the few in the Knoxville area that provide all levels of tree care, Adams says, from planting, pruning and fertilizing to diagnosing diseases, applying insecticides and fungicides with stem and soil injections, cabling and bracing to removals. They also do tree appraisals, tree management planning, pre-construction site assessments and risk assessments.

In 1977, Jim Cortese was a young university graduate with a degree in forestry and two summers of experience with the U.S. Forest Service, mostly distributing Mauget tree injection products, Adams says. He immediately saw the need for tree care in the Knoxville area, and founded Cortese Tree to help make ends meet. Under the influence of his mentor, Walt Money, formerly of Guardian Tree Experts, he joined the National Arborist Association, now TCIA, in the early ’80s, and subsequently became an ISA Certified Arborist, a Board Certified Master Arborist and a member of the American Society of Consulting Arborists. Some of his passions are educating the public and other tree services on proper tree care and ending the practice of topping trees in the Southeast.

Adams was still a student at Warren Wilson College, taking environmental studies and doing basic forestry work in the 1980s, when he started hearing about Cortese.

“His reputation was starting to spread in the region,” says Adams. He worked briefly as a tree climber for the company, and returned in 1998 to become general manager.

The company has 20 employees year round, 15 of them in the field. Six, including Adams, are Certified Arborists and five of the six are certified pesticide applicators. Two are Certified Tree Worker/Climbing Specialists. Some employees have been with the company for 30 years, and one has been there for 31 years.

“We’re proud that we have very low turnover in our employees,” he says. “Jim has established a stable company that provides meaningful work and consistent income for people in the community. I think that means a lot to him.”

Approximately 75 percent of the company’s customers are residential and 25 percent commercial. A large number of them are long term as well. Most of their business comes through word of mouth.

“Our goal is to really work with customers to help them have the healthiest trees possible,” Adams says. “We also think healthy trees make for a healthy community.”

Their marketing consists largely of supporting community organizations that promote proper arboricultural activities. “Because we believe we’re very connected to our com-
In our community, we feel there are organizations that can use our help, both financial and in-kind," he says. "For example, we do pruning in exchange for recognition in their next newsletter."

They’ve chosen several, a few of which are most important to them. One is the 44-acre Knoxville Botanical Garden and Arboretum, which Cortese helped found, on a historic nursery near downtown Knoxville. Another is the University of Tennessee Gardens in Knoxville, which is part of the university’s Institute of Agriculture and a State of Tennessee Certified Arboretum. The botanical garden and the university garden are both open to the public year round and have free admission.

**Accreditation**

The company was accredited in August 2007. It took about a year for Cortese, Adams and Kim Ellis, the office manager, to complete.

“Jim and I both agreed that Accreditation would be a good program to sign up for,” Adams says. “Jim believes strongly in TCIA’s programs, and being accredited is an extension of that.”

Much of their time was spent looking at their business practices. The company was already strong in this area and had a personnel policy manual, Adams says, but going through the Accreditation process showed them how each of the major components, such as job descriptions, hiring, pay increases and procedures, were connected. This can help companies not just get their affairs in order, for example, their overall personnel policies; it also can give them a much more systematic approach to organizing them.

Putting the safety manual together also took some time. There were changes in the field, as well. “We’d always had regular safety meetings, but on the field side, the guys got a lot more scrutiny than they were used to. When an outsider comes in and nails them on something, it really brings home the importance of safety.”

While he isn’t completely convinced that a large number of their customers and potential customers notice whether the company is accredited or not, he expects Accreditation to become much more of an advantage in the not-too-distant future, especially with commercial contractors.

“In five years, our residential side will have grown steadily, but we will have increased our commercial side of the business significantly,” he says. Although homeowners take a risk when they don’t hire a professional tree care company, they don’t have lawyers and actuaries warning them to be careful the way commercial customers do. Business organizations, universities and local governments have much more liability than homeowners do, and it’s becoming harder and harder to do business with them without having credentials.

“We spend more time now giving commercial customers insurance reports,” he says, “and they want to see copies of our safety plan and personnel policies. I think Accreditation will give companies something to show clients to show they’re paying attention to all levels of their business.”

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Emissions regulations are a complex and dynamic subject for off-highway equipment users who find themselves operating within a rapidly changing regulatory environment. As we move forward in 2011, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires new non-road diesel engines, such as those in some brush chippers and stump grinders, to meet stringent Interim Tier 4 (IT4) emissions regulations. For diesel engines with 174 horsepower and above, these regulations require the following reductions from Tier 3 levels:

- A 90-percent reduction in particulate matter
- A 50-percent reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions

It is important to note that Tier-4 emissions requirements apply to new products only and do not apply retroactively to any existing machines or equipment. According to federal law and EPA regulations, manufacturers will typically only be able to produce the Tier-4 engines after the established deadlines. However, equipment dealers can sell inventories of engines and equipment from the previous generation technology (Tier-3) until the inventory is depleted. That means that in the short term, there will likely be Tier 3 machines still available as manufacturers use credits to transition to the IT4 standards on certain models. The usual brand comparisons will also require buyers to analyze their current and future local emissions requirements (both government regulations and green bid specifications), engine technology costs, plus operation and maintenance implications.

In the long-term, IT4 machines will be the only option across brands. So even if you don’t expect to have local emissions requirements to meet, planning for cost increases and maintenance changes associated with IT4 engines is necessary.

Tier-4 generation engines and equipment will require the use of ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel (ULSD), which has no more than 15 ppm sulfur. This fuel has been used since 2006 in on-highway vehicles. Older off-road machines and engines can continue to use the higher-sulfur fuels, which will be available in diminishing quantities nationwide until December 2011. Supplies of high-sulfur diesel fuel diminished rapidly since 2010.

While each manufacturer will pursue their own technology path and emissions compliance strategy, there are a number of new technologies coming on many Tier-4 engines and equipment. For the equipment, the changes likely to be most noticeable are in the packaging and placement of the after-treatment system and the increased size of the air intake system to accommodate the needs for increased airflow and cooling. New changes to the engine will likely mean that engine compartments may be reworked to manage the new systems. Some OEMs have indicated they will package any new exhaust system configuration inside reworked sheet metal skin while others will place the systems in their traditional locations with additional shielding and mounting hardware to accommodate the heavier exhaust system components.

Most Tier-4 engines will be electronically controlled, meaning that a computer will monitor and adjust the fuel and air mixture to optimize emissions and performance for the engine on a real-time basis. In addition, changes in the engine will include new and different systems to accommodate the increased heat rejection of the new engines. For the first time, most off-road equipment will likely incorporate emissions control technology in the exhaust system, such as a catalytic converter and/or particulate filter, typically in place of the existing muffler and exhaust system. Some of these new exhaust after-treatment systems mean that the pipes and placement of the muffler and exhaust may be different than previous generations of equipment, or potentially larger in size to accommodate the new functions and in some cases hotter temperatures of the exhaust. There are two primary technology pathways for meeting the Tier-4 requirements: exhaust gas recirculation and catalytic after-treatment.
of the emissions control system is restored. DEF supply has been growing for the on-highway vehicle market. It is generally expected to be more widely available as more engines and vehicles that require it are produced.

Tier-4 engines and machines may have other differences depending on manufacturer. These could include changes in horsepower ratings, smaller engine displacement, and differing power and torque performance, higher fuel economy and other factors.

EPA emission standards for non-road diesel engines are published in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40, Part 89.

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.
**Arborwear Cambium Jacket**

Arborwear’s new Cambium Jacket, which it is touting as the world’s first canvas soft-shell jacket, is rugged yet lightweight. The lightweight fabric is made from 10-ounce cotton bonded to polyester fleece, combining the fit and design of a soft-shell jacket with the durability of a canvas jacket. Under-arm stretch panels allow extra mobility and breathability, and there is plenty of storage with zippered hand-warmer pockets, chest pocket and arm stash pocket. With a durable water-repellant finish, it is available in chestnut, maple and black.

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**Echo Bear Cat CH9540H chipper**

Echo Bear Cat’s CH9540H PTO chipper features a three-point-PTO, hitch-mount hook up that allows for “go anywhere” usability. The CH9540H is equipped with hydraulic feed and features Echo’s Smart Feed System, which speeds up the job by automatically feeding and adjusting the feed rate without operator intervention. The four reversible chipping blades with a four-sided, adjustable anvil increase the durability of this machine by holding a sharper cutting edge longer, reducing maintenance costs and blade replacement. Other features include: up to 9-inch chipping capacity, easy-access hinged disc cover, integrated discharge blower, triple-banded belt drive, 8-inch discharge chute that rotates 360 degrees and a hydraulic feed roller jack.

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**Morbark gas-powered stump grinder**

Designed incorporating customer feedback, Morbark, Inc.’s new lightweight, affordable, self-propelled G42SP Stump Grinder is equipped with a gas engine, 42-inch-wide boom arc swing and utilizes all steel construction. The G42SP is an ideal unit for grinding smaller stumps. Equipped with either 27 hp or 38 hp, its compact size, power and affordability allow customers the ability to expand their business, or generate new business with a modest capital investment. Standard equipment on the G42SP includes five-up comfort grip fingertip controls, an electric clutch with cutting system brake, three cutting system options and high gloss Morthane paint.

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**Oregon PowerSharp chain sharpener**

Chain saw users now have the ability to sharpen dull chain in as few as three to five seconds with the new PowerSharp system developed by Blount, Inc., under its Oregon brand. Portable and easy-to-use, the system includes a chain, bar-mount sharpener and guide bar. The bar-mount sharpener is lightweight and durable. The PowerSharp chain is as durable and hard-working as other Oregon 3/8-inch pitch, low-profile chain (a .325-inch pitch saw chain is being developed). Working together, these components provide a fast, simple and portable method for sharpening saw chain with precision. Available in a variety of configurations, PowerSharp fits most consumer saws on the market, as well as models already in use. The saw chain can be sharpened 5 to 15 times, depending on conditions. All PowerSharp chain is low-kickback per ANSI B175.1 & CSA Z62.3.

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Terex buys Woodsman

Terex Corporation wholly-owned subsidiary Terex USA, LLC in July purchased Woodsman LLC, the Michigan-based manufacturer of wood chippers and a longtime TCIA associate member and TCI EXPO exhibitor. The Woodsman products, a comprehensive line of hand fed and biomass chippers, will be integrated into the Materials Processing segment of Terex, which is in the crushing and screening industry globally.

“The addition of Woodsman’s products provides a great opportunity to extend the capabilities of Terex Materials Processing into the adjacent businesses of wood processing and recycling,” said Kieran Hegarty, Materials Processing president.

Terex, also a TCIA member, will be using a number of well-developed distribution channels to make sure that the particular needs of customers for both hand fed and biomass chippers are met effectively. Terex will show its Terex Woodsman 730 compact, drum-style brush chipper at TCI EXPO in Hartford, Connecticut, in November.

“We are excited to be joining a company that shares our passion for delivering quality, productivity and value to our customers,” says Bob Engler, Woodsman founder. “In addition, we are pleased that our products are now poised to fully benefit from the business recovery with the solid backing of a global company.”

UAA welcomes new executive director Philip Charlton

The Utility Arborist Association Board of Directors appointed Philip Charlton as part-time executive director effective August 4, 2011. He is succeeding Derek Vannice, who served in this position since 1992.

Charlton has 26 years of experience in the utility vegetation management industry, having served at Electrical Contractors, Inc. (ECI) in various roles including president and COO. He received his Ph.D. in forest science from West Virginia University in 1983 after completing his Bachelor degree in forest science and master’s in forestry at West Virginia University in 1977 and 1978, respectively.

DuPont suspends Imprelis sale, begins returns/refunds

DuPont had already implemented a voluntary suspension of sale of Imprelis herbicide, and will soon be conducting a product return and refund program for the product, the company announced in early August. Then, on August 11, the EPA issued a stop sale order to DuPont on the sale and distribution of Imprelis. The order outlines specific conditions to ensure that the removal of Imprelis from the market meets legal requirements.

The actions come in the wake of widespread reports of the herbicide damaging Norway spruce and white pine trees.

“If you are a distributor or customer please do not take any action related to this product return and refund program until we contact you with additional information. We intend to start the product return and refund program in mid-August,” Du Pont said in its August release on its website.”

“We sincerely regret any tree injuries that Imprelis may have caused, and will work with you to promptly and fairly resolve problems associated with our product. We have created this website (www.imprelis-facts.com), and launched a hotline – (866) 796-4783 – to make it easier to report problems related to Imprelis and to answer questions.”

DuPont has or will engage 20 independent, certified arborist companies to help them in working with their turf management customers to evaluate and fairly resolve individual problems, the company says.

“If you are a lawn care professional, property owner or manager, or golf course manager or owner, we encourage you to call our hotline to report damage to trees that may be related to Imprelis,” the company said.
Events & Seminars

September 12-13, 2011
Urban Tree Growth Int’l Meeting & Research Symp.
Morton Arboretum, Lisle, IL
Contact: (630) 719-2468; registrar@mortonarb.org

September 15, 2011
Conifers: The Good, the Bad and the Not so Bad!
Bloomfield Hills, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

September 17, 2011
EHAP Workshop (in Spanish)
Holistic-Safety, Inc., Dallas, TX
Contact: (682) 551-9771 DrMartha@Holistic-Safety.com

September 20-21, 2011
L1 Precision Felling & Chain saw Handling
Longmont, Colorado
www.ArborMaster.com or call (860) 429-5028

September 22-24, 2011
L1 Tree Climbing Methods & Work Positioning
Longmont, Colorado
www.ArborMaster.com or call (860) 429-5028

September 23, 2011
Arizona Community Tree Council 2011 Annual Conf.
Prescott Resort and Conference Center, Prescott, AZ
Contact: (602) 354-3023; www.aztrees.org

Sept. 24 - ACTC Plant Problem Diagnosis Workshop
Prescott Resort and Conference Center, Prescott, AZ
Contact: (602) 354-3023; www.aztrees.org

September 24-25, 2011
3rd Annual Women’s Tree Climbing Workshop
Mary B. Wakefield Estate, Milton, MA
Contact: NE Chapter ISA, heather@newenglandisa.org

September 25-28, 2011
2011 SMA International Urban Forestry Conference
Hyatt Regency, Milwaukee, WI
Contact: www.urban-forestry.com

September 26-27, 2011
L1 Arborist Rigging Applications
Longmont, Colorado
www.ArborMaster.com or call (860) 429-5028

September 29-30, 2011
ISA-Rocky Mountain Chapter 2011 Annual Conference
Marriott Denver South/Park Meadows, Littleton, CO
Contact: (303) 756-1815; www.isarmc.org

October 1, 2011
2011 ISA-RMC Tree Climbing Championship
Denver, CO
Contact: (303) 756-1815; www.isarmc.org

October, 1, 2011
13th Annual Tennessee Tree Climbing Championship
Ellington Agricultural Center, Nashville, TN
Contact: www.urbanforestryconference.org; (615) 837-5436

October 2-5, 2011
PNW-ISA 2011 Annual Training Conference
Coeur d’Alene, ID
Contact: www.pnwisa.org

October 4, 2011
Diagnosing Urban Tree Decline: A Diagnostic Walkabout
Rochester Hills, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

October 5-7, 2011
2011 Texas Tree Conference & Trade Show*
Waco Convention Center, Waco, TX
Contact: www.isatexas.com

October 7, 2011
ISA Certified Arborist Examinations
Waco, TX
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com/certification/tests

October 13, 2011
Outdoor Power Equipment Safety, Application & Green Technology, Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

October 19, 2011
Clean Fleet Technologies Conf.: Fueling the Choice
Humble Civic Center, Humble, TX
Contact: www.h-gac.com/go/CFTC

October 21-22, 2011
NJ Shade Tree Federation 86th Annual Meeting
Crowne Plaza, Cherry Hill, NJ
Contact: Donna Massa (732) 246-3210; www.njstf.org

October 22, 2011
EHAP Workshop (in Spanish)
Holistic-Safety, Inc., Dallas, TX
Contact: (682) 551-9771 DrMartha@Holistic-Safety.com

October 22-25, 2011
New England Chapter ISA - Annual Conference
Maine Maritime Museum, Bath, ME
Contact: Heather Leff,

October 25-26, 2011
Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) Workshop
In conjunction with TCI EXPO, Hartford, CT
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; ctsp@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

November 1-2, 2011*
Illinois Arborist Assoc. Annual Conf. & Trade Show
Holiday Inn Select, Tinley Park, IL
Contact: www.illinoisarborist.org

November 3-5, 2011*
TCI EXPO 2011
Preconference workshops Nov. 1-2, Hartford, CT
Contact: cyr@tcia.org; 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

December 5-6, 2011
Certified Arborist Seminars and Exam
Fort Harrison NR Education Center, Indianapolis, IN
Contact: Lindsey Purcell www.indiana-arborist.org
Aerial lifts are a common sight at most tree company and municipal forestry yards. They may range from a single truck parked in a bay to a fleet lining a parking lot, but regardless of the number in a fleet, they have increased the capacity of arborists to perform their aerial tasks. They not only can improve efficiency, they can provide a safer platform upon which to conduct tree care and removal operations.

The statistics on job-site incidents among tree workers clearly show that ground workers and climbers carry a disproportional percentage of the fatal and non-fatal injury events in the tree care industry. Ground workers have a disproportionately high rate of incidents, since they are running the chippers, delimbing trunks and felling trees among many other high-risk tasks. Ground workers are also well aware of the fact that “gravity rules,” as they frequently are at the receiving end of falling limbs and branches cut by arborists aloft. The event or exposure category with one of the highest percentages of incidents is “contact with an object,” and within this category “struck-by’s” are a common source for these events. I am certain there are at least a few readers who have experienced a branch or limb plunging into the ground near them, the act of a climber or lift operator who neglected to communicate their intended actions.

Climbers also operate in a risky environment as they become part of the tree through their anchoring systems. What fate befalls the tree, may befall them as well and we are reaching the point where as many climbers fall with trees as fall from them. Climbers are riding trees and parts of trees to earth when the forces imposed on the wood exceed the tree’s capability to respond to these sudden changes in loading.

A common occurrence is the climber who snaps off a large portion of the canopy in the desire to finish the job quickly or because the dieback extends too far to safely proceed any further. A critical factor in these events is the failure to adequately inspect the tree before beginning the work and missing the decay at or near the base. When the load shifts, as the top breaks free and drops, the twisting at or near the trunk’s base results in the failure. Then 5- to 10-tons of wood arcs to the ground carrying with it the climber.

Similar to the trend seen with climber’s fall events, falls with aerial lifts are becoming more common than falls from an aerial lift. Ironically the last fatal incident to occur while I wrote this article was to a worker operating an aerial lift and it was a failure of the lift, not a fall from the bucket, that resulted in the incident. While, as a percentage of incidents, those involving aerial lifts are low, they still occur and operators should be aware of the unique hazards involving lifts and their operation. The two major hazard categories are 1) operations at the job site and 2) driving the lift to and from job sites.

The hazards for operations at the job site can be factors in incidents within three different event or exposure categories:

a) falls,
b) contact with an object, and
c) exposure to a harmful environment.

The first category, falls, is self explanatory as it involves falling from an aerial lift or with one, but the other two categories may require a little more explanation. Contact with an object can involve being struck by a
moving part of the lift, the boom for example, while the harmful environment includes electrical contact incidents. There are fatal and non-fatal incidents involving struck-by and electrical contact with aerial lift operators every year, but falls are the greatest hazard.

As mentioned earlier, falling with a failed aerial lift is becoming more common than falling from an aerial lift – more than a half-dozen of these events can occur in a single year. This hazard will be illustrated by two incident investigation reports.

A worker was raising the upper boom to reach a branch, approximately 25-feet from the ground, when a wire cable broke resulting in the rapid descent of the upper boom and bucket into the side of the truck. The worker was slammed against the truck and died shortly afterward from internal injuries.

A worker was rotating the boom while about 30-feet above the ground when the entire boom assembly separated from the truck. The worker suffered head and leg injuries but survived. An inspection reveals nine of the 24 bolts securing the boom to the truck mounting were rusty and had sheared off.

These are just two examples of the multitude of incidents involving aerial lift failures. I am often asked; “What are the common factors in these incidents?”, for example is there a single lift manufacturer that appears to have more failures than others? However, who built the aerial lift is not as critical a factor as who is maintaining and operating the lift.

There are, however, some common connecting links in many of these incidents. The units are often old, 15 years or more, and they are on their second or third owner. Some were bought at auction and were never inspected or serviced since the purchase. We often refer to operating an aerial lift as “flying” them, but it’s a poor analogy to the aviation profession. When was the last time you stepped on a commercial aircraft that has never been inspected or serviced, and would you dare step on board one if you knew that was the case? I’ll bet the answer is “no” to both questions. Commercial aircraft operate under a strict set of inspections and servicing requirements, which is one reason commercial air travel is a safe transportation option. Too often companies buy used lifts, ones without a history, and just start “flying” them, often for years before any thought is given to maintenance (and usually then only because something quit working).

Any time a company purchases a used lift they need to contact the manufacturer to notify them of the model they now own. I think tree workers would be impressed if they knew the effort that manufacturers of arboricultural equipment, particularly lifts and chippers, go through to maintain a data base of owners for their various units. This is critical for safety recalls and maintenance alerts, because if the manufacturer cannot find you, they cannot tell you what needs to be inspected or replaced. If you own any lifts or chippers, look up the manufacturer and send contact information and what you own – today. And finally don’t assume if you bought a new lift or it just returned from the maintenance shop that you can just ignore your own inspection and head off. We have had lifts, only weeks old, fail because of manufacturer defects, or because a worker installed a part wrong during routine maintenance.

I guess a good analogy of flying aircraft and lifts is that they are both complicated pieces of equipment in which the failure of a single part can result in the catastrophic failure of the entire unit. If you are standing in the airport terminal watching planes at a gate you’ll observe that the captain or first officer does a “walk around” of the aircraft prior to pulling away. Obviously they are looking at the big picture, but it is an essential part of the pre-flight inspection process. You could notice fluid leaks, dents or other damage, or pitot tubes or ports covered (On October 2, 1996, an Aeropuerto 757 crashed shortly after takeoff because tape had been placed over the ports during cleaning and were not removed; no one noticed the error before takeoff. The pilot was not able to receive correct flight data since the ports were covered and the aircraft crashed with the loss of all aboard). However, how often have you seen someone (or perhaps done this yourself) jump down into the bucket, clip the lanyard in and just take off. There is an inspection that should be followed before flying the lift. Sure it would not catch every defect or possible failure, but you might notice that there are nine very rusty bolts on the mount.

The other means of falling with an aerial lift is in a tip-over incident. Every year workers are killed when they neglect to set the outriggers or position the vehicle on too steep of a slope. A worker was killed when the aerial lift, stationed along a ditch, tipped when the worker in the almost fully extended lift was rotated toward the ditch. The worker, still in the bucket, fell more than 40-feet.

If you don’t crash with the collapsing booms you might fall out of (or with) the bucket. Every year aerial lift operators are killed or seriously injured from being ejected from the bucket or having the bucket break free of the boom. A recent incident investigation report was of a municipal tree worker who neglected to use a harness and lanyard since he was, “Just going up for a minute.” The 50-year-old worker had been operating a bucket for several decades. Unfortunately he overextended his reach to cut a branch and fell out of the bucket falling more than 30 feet, dying as a result of the internal injuries.

We have fall protection for operating aerial lifts, but it only works if it is on and attached. You usually have a choice of either fall arrest – the use of an anti-accel-
eration lanyard to slow the fall – or a fall restraint – a short lanyard to keep you physically from leaving the bucket. They each have their advantages and disadvantages and suitability to particular working environments. Fall arrest can keep you from hitting the ground but you might fall into something like a conductor or limb when the full lanyard deploys. One fatality occurred when the operator clipped in then lost his balance stepping into the bucket, fell off the headache rack and slammed into the cab.

Fall restraint will keep you from falling into something, since the lanyard is too short for you to leave the bucket, but if the bucket leaves the boom – and this happens every year – you’re going to get a nice jolt from the sudden stop and an unpleasant hang until someone uses the ground control to lower the boom.

The rare, but possible, separation of the bucket from the boom is another good argument for having two-person crews. In one instance, the worker hung in the air from his lanyard for 30 minutes until someone noticed a guy hanging from the boom (“say, that doesn’t look right”) and called fire and rescue to lower the boom. Obviously this is not normal for buckets to separate and points to improper use – i.e. driving the bucket into the ground before stepping out – and lack of inspection; I inspected one bucket where the bolts were almost sheared off.

While falling from or with the boom is the most common incident involving aerial lifts, we also have workers electrocuted when they make contact with a conductor and the tree, or killed when a limb or even the entire tree falls on the boom, collapsing the entire unit. Aerial lift operators must understand that they are susceptible to many of the risks that climbers face, including struck-by’s and electrocutions. Being in an isolated platform, separate from the tree, does not provide a “safety bubble.”

Finally the other major category of aerial lift hazards does not involve operating the lift but driving to and from the job site. Each year aerial lift trucks are involved in road incidents in which fatal or severe non-fatal injuries occur, and not only to the tree crew. These injuries often occur to drivers and passengers of cars that either strike or are struck by the aerial lift truck.

Aerial lifts are one of the bigger vehicles on the road, and in car-truck collisions the car usually loses (in an aerial lift-train incident the train was derailed). Every company or municipality operating aerial lifts must include defensive driver training as part of their safety program. Unfortunately this type of training is frequently absent from tree worker safety programs; we cover chain saws, chippers, felling, etc., but seem to forget this one.

Aerial lifts have increased the efficiencies and safety of tree care operations. However, the use of these aerial platforms is not without its risk and operators and drivers should be trained in their inspection and use. We don’t fly planes without extensive maintenance, inspection and crew training; we should not “fly” lifts without covering these basic steps as well.

John Ball is a professor of forestry and extension forestry specialist at South Dakota State University in Brookings, South Dakota. One of his research interests is tree worker safety. He is also an EMT and a CTSP. This article was based on part of his presentation, “Safety Update: What Accidents Occurred in 2009 and Why,” at TCI EXPO 2010 in Pittsburgh. He will be speaking on similar subjects at TCI EXPO 2011 in Hartford this November.

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Landscaper electrocuted trimming tree
The owner of a lawn services company was killed July 2, 2011, in Adams County, Colorado, when he came in contact with an electrical wire while trimming trees. Byron Sosa, 26, was trimming tree at a home. As he was coming down from the tree the trimming tool he was using apparently came into contact electrical cables, according to a report by WKDVR Fox 31 in Denver.

He leaves two children and his wife, Anna, who says she will try to keep his business going to support the family, according to the report.

Tree worker rescues pilot from trees
The owner of a local tree service climbed a tree to rescue the pilot of a plane that had crashed in Dodge County, Georgia, July 4, 2011.

Emergency personnel responded to the crash and found the pilot of a small airplane trapped inside the wreckage atop a pine tree about 50 feet off the ground in a pine thicket with heavy undergrowth. Emergency personnel were unsuccessful in reaching the pilot with ladders or bucket trucks due to the off-road location of the crash and the height at which the plane was lodge in the treetop.

Teron Allen, using his ropes and climbing gear, climbed the tree, secured the pilot in a harness and lowered the pilot to waiting paramedics.

The 84-year-old pilot and owner of the ultra light airplane was taken by helicopter directly from the scene and airlifted to a trauma center for evaluation of his injuries. The pilot was taking off from a private air strip on his property when he crashed, according to the DodgeCountyNews.com report.

Trimmer injured as bucket truck tips
A tree trimmer suffered injuries after a bucket truck tipped over July 5, 2011, at a Town of Boston property in Erie County, New York.

James Leatherbarrow, 45, of Concord, was trimming tree branches in the tree service truck about 40 feet in the air when the accident occurred. Leatherbarrow was harnessed to the bucket, so he did not plunge to the ground. He was treated at the scene by volunteer firefighters and taken to Erie County Medical Center. It was unclear what caused the truck to tip over, according to The Buffalo News report.

Trimmer killed by cut tree
A Richwood, Ohio, tree trimmer died July 7, 2011, after he was pinned by a falling tree during a job northeast of Marysville, Ohio. Charles R. Ellis, 64, died after the tree, about 4 feet in diameter, fell on him.

Ellis and one of his employees were trimming trees in a wooded area when the large tree gave them some trouble. The employee walked away to get some additional equipment and heard the tree fall. He found his boss beneath the tree. The employee called 911 from his cell phone, but it took crews several hours to free Ellis. He was pronounced dead at the scene, according to The Columbus Dispatch.

Girl, 4, killed by tree limb
A 4-year-old girl died July 8, 2011, after she was struck by a tree limb in her yard in Tiffin, Ohio, about 50 miles southeast of Toledo.

Aleigha Russell was approaching a tree where her father, Aaron Russell, was cutting a limb about 2 p.m. The father was cutting down a fairly large limb that apparently twisted and fell in a different direction than he’d planned. The limb, about 26 feet long, struck the girl. She was taken to Mercy Tiffin Hospital, where she was pronounced dead, according to a report in The Tiffin Blade.

Tree worker injured in struck-by
A worker using a chipper for a tree service company was injured in Westport, Connecticut, July 11, 2011, when a piece of wood struck the man in the face. The worker, described as in his 20s, was taken to Norwalk Hospital, according to a report.

Man killed by blown down tree
A 38-year-old man died after a tree was knocked over by high winds that accompanied severe thunderstorms in Cutlerville, Michigan, July 11, 2011. The Grand Rapids Press says the man was trapped by the tree, according to a report.

Submitted by Jon Stauffer, owner of Majestic Tree in Dewitt, Michigan.

(Continued on page 65)
CTSP CEU Quiz #2011-5: September 2011

1. One of the risks associated with a climber’s anchoring system in a tree is:
   a. it could quickly become outdated
   b. what happens to the tree might also happen to the climber
   c. anchoring components may become cost prohibitive
   d. both b and c

2. Hazard exposure categories in aerial lift operations can include:
   a. falls
   b. contact with an object
   c. exposure to a harmful environment

3. Who builds an aerial lift is not as critical as:
   a. one would think
   b. where the manufacturing materials come from
   c. who is buying the lift
   d. who is maintaining and operating the lift

4. Fall protection for aerial lift operators will only work if:
   a. the parking brake is set
   b. the boom is fully extended
   c. if it is worn and attached to the boom
   d. if it has high-visibility reflection on it

5. A type of training frequently absent from tree worker safety programs is:
   a. chain saw training
   b. chipper training
   c. felling trees training
   d. defensive driver training

6. There are fatal and non-fatal incidents involving struck-bys and electrical contact:
   a. but falls are the greatest hazard
   b. but vehicular accidents are the greatest hazard
   c. but chain saw cuts are the greatest hazard
   d. and all are investigated by OSHA

Your Full Name: ___________________________________________ CTSP#: __________________

To obtain CEU credit, you may copy this page, answer the questions and either fax the answer sheet to TCIA at (603) 314-5386, or mail to TCIA - CTSP, 136 Harvey Road - Ste 101, Londonderry, NH 03053.

1 Only current CTSPs in good standing who qualify for professional development CEUs may obtain CEUs for this quiz. Other readers are encouraged to use TCIA’s safety articles for training and may wish to use this quiz to test comprehension.
Growing Trees with Shigo and Thoreau

By Jack Phillips

The late Alex Shigo was my teacher and forest companion. He is known to many as the father of modern arboriculture, and everyone who cares about trees owes him a debt of gratitude. Even those who found his teachings difficult to embrace were moved to see their own positions in a new light. Shigo still has detractors, but many more admirers. Everyone who plants or prunes has been influenced by his work or that of his philosophical heirs.

One day in the woods near his New Hampshire cottage he proclaimed: “In nature there are no pathogens.” Like many of his koan-like teachings, it took me quite a bit of hiking and pondering to get my head around this idea. I finally came to understand that “pathogen” is a label that arborists and others might use to describe organisms that interfere with their clients’ expectations, and that many of these organisms are essential to native ecosystems.

The damage caused by these native organisms (or “pests”) is frequently the result of human activity (including tree “care”) that has either stressed the tree or hindered natural controls. The non-native insects and diseases that are often so devastating have been introduced by human activity, not to mention the rampant exotic plants that have damaged habitats across the continent. In this respect, the true tree pests have human faces and have brought with them invasive ideas as well as pests and infections.

Seeing the forest for the fish

I found large areas of Alaska’s Tongass rainforest to be relatively free of pestiferous humans and their rapacious machines. In the 1970s, I spent my college summers teaching native kids in remote Tlingit and Tsimshian villages. Many of the small islands in this archipelago were yet untouched by logging or development, and the virgin stands of spruce and Douglas-fir grew right up to the water’s edge. I loved my solitary morning walks, the “tonic of wildness” that Henry David Thoreau prescribed. Some mornings I had bears on my left, whales on my right and eagles overhead. But paradise is seldom perfect; by late July the mosquitos and deer flies loved me as much as I loved the plenteous wild berries I ate along the way. And the forest reeked of rotting fish.

To appreciate the Tongass, like any wild place, requires a broad understanding of symbiosis. This term is usually reserved for close and obviously beneficial relationships between two or more organisms such as the algae and fungi that compose lichens or the fungi that infect roots to form mycorrhizae. But symbiosis also pertains to relationships we might view as benign or harmful, or that are not very obvious. Symbiosis simply means “living together” and a good grasp of how nature works often means refraining from imposing our
agendas on the complex relationships that comprise ecosystems.

One might not immediately assume that trees and fish need each other, or that a key component of rainforest conservation is protecting bear populations. Yet, in the Tongass, the lives of trees, bears and salmon are woven together. Scientists have traced the movement of nitrogen from salmon to tree canopies, revealing a complex symbiotic web. In turn, salmon spawn in streams protected by forest watersheds; the lives of trees and fish are intimately linked. And every one of the creatures of land and sky that eats salmon seems to leave some rotting remains behind in the woods, providing nitrogen and other essential elements to roots and mycorrhizal fungi. As a result of their accidental arboriculture, the bears smelled as foul as their dispositions – making it easier to avoid them.

Despite the smell and bug bites, it was easy to love all creatures great and small in a place that looked like a photo from a Sierra Club calendar. In contrast, commercial tree care commonly comes down to deciding which creatures are beneficial and which ones should be exterminated, often with poor or incomplete information. Some products promise with great swagger to kill all the bugs in your yard!

When native trees are severely damaged by native insects, fungi and other creatures that feed on them, it is often because the natural predators and competitors of these “pests” and “pathogens” are absent or few. This is one reason why diversity of plant, fungus and animal populations are so critical in forest and landscape. Many frequently-used pesticides are toxic to both the “pests” and the creatures that could provide biological control, and continuous use can create resistant pest populations. In the long run, it is much more sensible, practical and environmentally responsible to cultivate diversity rather than to engage in chemical warfare.

Here be bagworms

Bagworms teach the importance of biodiversity. They can be serious defoliators throughout the Great Plains on various species of conifers and broadleaf trees. They are difficult to control chemically, especially after they are ensconced in their tough satchels of silk and vegetation. Timing is everything; they are most susceptible during the “crawler” stage of development. This is also when they are most likely to be eaten. A songbird can eat hundreds of naked larval crawlers in an hour. Flycatchers, vireos, warblers and other insectivores snatch the flying males. Chickadees and titmouses can even eat the adult females and larvae right out of the bag and love to do so in winter.

Bagworms also fall prey to parasitic ichneumonid wasps. These non-stinging wasps lay their eggs in bagworm bags, where the hatchling larva feed on the living contents. The adult wasps feed on pollen and nectar, particularly of plants in the aster family. Studies have shown that planting daisies and other types of asters near host plants can reduce bagworm populations by attracting these wasps. Asters also bring the added benefit of attracting birds that feed on their seeds, and many of these – including chickadees, feed on adult and larval bagworms as well.

On our small acreage in midtown Omaha, Nebraska, bagworms are worth more alive than dead. We’ve planted lots of native habitat over the years, and on the rare occasion that I find more than a few bagworms, I just leave them alone. My family enjoys the rich avian display in...

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every season. I wouldn’t mind a few more bagworms. What some consider pests we count on for bird food.

Heavy bagworm infestations are most common on isolated host trees growing in turf grass lawns, but are rare in the wild, where natural controls are present. Some of the most commonly-used pesticides labeled for bagworm control are toxic to a wide variety of insects and birds. Does it make sense to spray trees with chickadee-killer? Instead of bug spray, landscape trees would benefit from a good measure of Thoreau’s wild tonic. Humans need it, too.

On Walden lawn

As with many nascent tree huggers, I grooved on the writings of Henry David Thoreau when I was required to read Walden in eighth-grade English class. I continue to be moved by his work, but was shocked to learn that for all of his teaching about the value of wilderness, he actually spent a relatively small amount of time in anything that resembled one. The Walden woods, about a mile from his family home, served as public park for picnics and cutting firewood. It was on a major rail line. Even while living at Walden pond, Thoreau routinely walked into town to dine with family and friends. He had lots of visitors and threw large parties in his little cabin by the pond. His actual “wilderness” lifestyle was so civilized that nature writer David Quammen has identified Thoreau as the first in a long line of Thoreau impersonators.

My first impulse was to announce to my fellow naturalists that Thoreau was a fraud. But after some reflection, I realized that the historical facts about his life actually gave him more credibility. I was easily inspired on my early morning walks in the remote Tongass. It might be obvious in such a place that “in wildness is the preservation of the world,” but to come to this understanding in a frequently-visited park like Walden, just outside a growing population center in mid-nineteenth century Massachusetts, takes a little more insight. In fact, I think it makes Thoreau’s philosophy much more relevant and practical.

Thoreau found wilderness right in the middle of human settlement. His final literary work, unfinished at the time of his death in 1862, celebrates the “rich and fertile mystery” of nature. Wild Fruits was edited and published by Thoreau scholar Bradley Dean, and begins: “Most of us are still related to our native fields as the navigator to undiscovered islands in the sea.” He laments the fact that the citizens of Concord cultivate exotic and foreign shrubs in their yards, while the wild plants growing in the uncultivated fields and woods escape their notice. This recently rediscovered manuscript describes and praises the native and naturalized plants around his suburban home, including everything from wild oaks to imported dandelions. Thoreau ends his final work with the admonition that “each town should have a park, or rather a primitive forest, … for instruction and recreation.”

Trees gone wild

Humans have a long-standing ambivalence toward the kind of “primitive forests” that Thoreau recommended. I saw evidence of this in the forest surrounding New Skete Monastery, perched half-way up a mountain in New York’s Taconic range. My friend Br. Stavros showed me two giant red oaks that towered over the beeches, birches, maples and younger oaks that grew around them. As we pondered these trees, we discovered decayed stumps from other huge oaks and realized that
these were “boundary oaks” that had been planted more than a century earlier to mark a property line.

The other trees in these woods were second- or third-growth, having sprouted after the logging and pasturing on this mountainside had been abandoned. This is the story of human settlement: forests were seen as sinister and savage places that hosted evil forces, or at least stood in the way of divinely ordained progress. For the New England colonists, to clear the land was to do God’s will. Thankfully, the monks of New Skete regard the preservation of the forest as sacred work.

But here lies the irony. After forests were cleared for New England farms, native oaks were replanted to delineate property and to shelter human dwellings. Obviously this schizoid imperative continues all across North America; land is stripped of topsoil and vegetation to create landscapes of concrete, exotic turf and grafted designer trees. It seems that for many Americans, the only good tree is a dead tree replaced by new-and-improved tree, destined to languish in a wasteland of fertilized and sanitized lawn. But what is the alternative? What would the neighbors say?

Fortunately, growing healthy trees doesn’t always require smelly bears and rotting fish heads. Nutrients in nature are recycled by roots and soil fungi, and countless creatures that pass organic material through their digestive systems. The variety of plant species in a community each has different needs and grow roots in various densities and depths in soil – drawing essential elements into their tissues and depositing them on the surface when these tissues are shed or when the plant dies. These plants also capture energy from the sun and exude sugars directly into soil at varying depths, thus feeding vast numbers of soil organisms behaving wildly.

Trees did not evolve in landscapes dominated by lawn and are ill-equipped for suburban life. Progressive tree care requires a movement away from green sterility and toward a wilderness in soil. One can begin the process by planting native plant communities, returning leaves, clippings and other dead vegetation to plants and soil to which they belong, and by avoiding chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. Growing wildness provides habitat and food for the birds that delight us and for the worms, bugs and microbes that make plants green and flowers colorful. All of these creatures will help to create the kind of symbiosis that will turn pests and pathogens into partners. This is the “rich and fertile mystery” embraced by Thoreau and Shigo and woodsy mountain monks. Make it grow outside your door.

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Jack Phillips is a registered consulting arborist and teaches on the faculty of Arboriculture Canada Training and Education. He is also principal of New Tree School, an educational organization dedicated to teaching sustainable tree planting and care to green professionals, planners, and anyone who plants and cares for trees.
For many tree care companies, storm work constitutes an important source of annual revenue. However, storm work has many inherent risks including financial risks. Tree care companies, in many instances, perform work in good faith only to find that the costs for their services are challenged after the fact by an insurance adjuster. The result can be a delay in payment or, in some cases, no payment at all; and while it is generally the homeowner who has contracted for the work, it is the insurance company that pays for it.

Providing sufficient detail in a proposal or invoice will significantly diminish the risk of nonpayment and generally expedites payment by insurance companies to either the property owner or directly to the tree care company that provided the services. Furthermore, good documentation will aid in any legal or collection activity should the work not be paid for. Experienced adjusters note that good documentation will “open the wallets of the insurance company.” The current economic situation has made documenting storm work even that more important and it is necessary for tree care companies to adapt their processes accordingly in order to work efficiently with adjusters.

The proposal is the critical document submitted for insurance purposes and while writing “remove large tree from home with crane” may have been sufficient in the past, that is no longer the case. Listed below are some general categories of information that should appear in your proposal. The proposal, ideally, should be accompanied by photographs of the damage submitted to the property owner’s adjuster. The combination of a good summary of the work performed and photo evidence of the damage will almost always result in expeditious payment.

**Description of loss**

This should include:
- description of tree(s) that have fallen and/or caused damage including type, height, DBH, location on property, cause of loss (e.g., wind, lightning) and whether the tree originated on another property
- description of damage to structures/property; in the event that you are installing a temporary tarp on the roof, provide some detail about the roof damage as well as the type of roof (e.g., asphalt, shingle, slate, etc.)
- photograph all of the damage including the tree, structural damage to the home, roof, etc. as well as a picture of the front of the home
- If possible, sketching the footprint of the damaged structure and diagramming where the tree loss occurred is useful. This is not usually required if the description and photographs provided are sufficient, but can be an effective way of efficiently conveying the damage to an adjuster

**Labor/size of crew required**

Size of crew, including any special machine operators, can be included. If in addition to the crew a certified arborist or other qualified person is involved in the supervision, planning and/or execution, then that person should be highlighted. General time proposal to complete the work can also be included. We do not suggest that you change the manner in which you quote, so you should not include an hourly rate if you do not quote hourly, but keep two things in mind: 1) you must be prepared to break down your quote should an adjuster challenge it, and 2) the more detail you provide up front the fewer issues you will have later.

**Special circumstances**

Any and all special circumstances that impact the difficulty of the job should be described. Such circumstances may include (but are not limited to):
- lack of access to tree
- power lines
- tree has broken through roof
- tree is on multiple properties
- mud or problematic ground/soil
- damage is in or near a body of water

**Type of equipment to be used**

Provide details about all heavy and/or specialized equipment used on the job. This is particularly important if you are leasing any equipment, such as a crane, log loader, etc. In the event that riggings and other supports are being used, you should also describe this equipment.

**Collateral damage**

Listing of potential collateral damage resulting from tree removal and damage waiver: In the event that additional damage to the property may occur during the removal, (e.g., sod, trees or shrubs may be destroyed, driveway may crack if heavy equipment is used, etc.), this should all be noted and specific damage waivers procured from the property owner. Better to raise this up front in order to allow the property owner and insurance company to...
make an educated decision about moving forward with your proposal. Up front and full-disclosure is a good way to diminish liability and claims in the event of damage.

**Breakdown of proposal**

It is important to breakdown the proposal into components since certain aspects of the tree work may not be covered by insurance. It is very important that the property owner understands what part of the work is covered and what is not in order to avoid collection issues after the work is completed. A detailed proposal that is itemized can assist a property owner in getting accurate coverage information from their adjuster. Be aware that there may be limited coverage for certain items. For example, generally there is a $500 limit on debris removal and any work classified as debris removal that costs in excess of $500 will be the responsibility of the property owner.

General components of the cost proposal may include:

- removal of tree from structure
- debris removal/haul away; usually limited to $500 but in some cases not covered by insurance
- removal of stump/stump grinding; usually not covered by insurance
- pruning of storm damaged trees; usually not covered by insurance
- removal of a hazard tree – it is important to differentiate between trees that have fallen and trees that remain standing, but which are a hazard. Usually hazard tree removal is not covered by insurance even if it threatens to do damage to an insured structure. When describing a hazard tree it is important to add whether the tree is threatening to damage a structure or fall in a managed area (e.g., driveway, play area, etc.)

Remember, during major storm events you may not be able to haul away debris. If you decide, or are required, to stack the wood at the curb, you should clearly state in your proposal that the wood is being stacked at the curb. Property owners’ commonly accuse tree care companies of not completing the work when the wood is stacked by the curb; including this in your work proposal will avoid issues after the work is completed.

Make sure you familiarize yourself with the relevant rules (FEMA, municipal, local) regarding wood stacking – by not being compliant with the relevant rules you risk delaying payment; also it may not be possible to rectify this situation if you are an out-of-state company. Make sure you include an itemized cost for stacking wood at the curb as this is different than removing the tree from a structure. You should also make sure you mention that wood that is stacked may destroy sod or cause divots and you should include a damage waiver for these circumstances.

**Photographs**

It is expected today that service providers carry digital cameras and that they provide photographs of the damage. The following is a list of the photographs insurance adjusters generally like to see when presented with a proposal:

- A view of the front of the home/primary structure with street number if possible (this is for confirmation that the property is indeed covered by the policy)
- Four-five good photographs of the tree damage that shows both the damaged tree as well as the damage to the property, i.e. tree on roof, tree on fence
- If possible, provide a photo after work has been completed documenting the condition of the property when your crews left
- If you are tarping, then photos of the damage to the roof and the tarp are also recommended

Providing good supporting documentation may add some administrative burden, but is a required effort for those companies that perform storm work, which by definition involves an insurance claim. Insurance companies are becoming more demanding of vendors and only those vendors that learn the rules of engagement with the insurance industry will be able to efficiently work and collect payment. Additional documentation such as a certificate of satisfaction completed by the property owner stating that your work was completed as promised, as well as a direct pay authorization, will further assist a tree care company in collecting payment.

Doug Malawsky, executive VP and COO for HMI, is responsible for the insurance claims and emergency response division, including managing a national network of 2,500 tree crews and approximately 1,600 arborists that provide services to the insurance industry. This is a preview of his talk on the same subject at TCI EXPO 2011 in Hartford, Connecticut, this November. Visit http://expo.tcia.org for more info.
Bandit Thrives on Success of Its Customers

By Tamsin Venn

Associate Member Interview: Jerry Morey, president

Company Profile in Brief
Bandit Industries, Inc.
Founded: 1983 by Mike Morey Sr. Privately held.
Products/Services: Makes hand-fed and whole tree chippers, stump grinders, waste reduction Beast recycler units and high-powered forestry mowers.

What image does your company look to portray?

We are known for building high quality innovative products, for listening to our customers, and working with our dealers to support them. Our focus is on the tree care industry; we work closely with our customers to provide them with machines to help make them successful. We employ highly trained personnel to teach our dealers and customers how to service our products. We have support personnel in all the U.S., Canada and many parts of the world to ensure our dealers are up to speed on how to sell, repair and properly service the equipment, and to provide parts support. That kind of service has helped us develop a great relationship with our dealers and customers.

Does your company have a Mission Statement or Statement of Values?

Our focus here is to treat our employees fairly and have them be a part of our growth and success. We work to instill in everyone a mind-set of servicing customers and dealers alike, while building and standing behind our products.

What is the greatest challenge your business is currently facing?

Since the financial crisis, financing for our dealers and customers has been among our biggest challenges. The next challenge will likely be coping with new emission standards from the Clean Air Act for Tier 4 engines. The government implemented regulations in steps, and we’re now into Tier 4, the most stringent. Engines will be significantly more expensive and some machines will need to be redesigned to accommodate them, which will add expense to our equipment. My advice to customers is to buy new equipment this year because prices on all equipment will go up by the end of 2012, and there is much uncertainty related to the new engines that all manufacturers will face.

What most defines your corporate culture?

We try to provide employees with a good living, an enjoyable work experience, and an opportunity for growth. Many of the people we hired in 1983 are still with us. Once you’ve hired somebody and trained them, it sure is costly to lose them. We want our people to take pride in what they do and what they contribute, and we also try to have fun. We’re always looking forward, developing new and better products and that presents new and exciting challenges for our employees. My partner, Mike Morey Sr., always blames me for pushing product development, but he is the major driving force behind the products we develop. Mike’s wife, Dianne, is also very involved in the business, especially on the HR end of things, and she also tries to keep Mike and I focused, which sometimes can be a big challenge! Ultimately, we have a good management team – including Mike and Dianne’s children – to carry the torch.

Does your company use social media?

The Internet is a huge thing for us. We have a young, progressive marketing group that is really into what they are doing. We’re active on Facebook and Twitter, and you can visit us at YouTube to see how our machines work; all of our promotional DVDs are on YouTube. A lot of our sales people also use iPads for pop-up videos or to do quotes in the field.

What is your newest tree care product?

We are in the testing stage with a smaller, entry-level, self-propelled stump grinder. We’re also making improvements to our medium-size, 90-120 hp stump grinder, and we’ll offer some new enhancements for our mid-range drum chippers that will be ready for TCI EXPO this fall. In addition, we’re designing screens into some of our chippers to meet European chip requirements, and we’ll introduce them for the European biomass energy market this fall. We’ve also come out with a new line of forestry mowers for land clearing, including a smaller 125-hp version. We now have four models to choose from, with up to 600 hp available.

With all our chippers, we have improved the chip throwing mechanics to add more velocity while using less power and fuel. We’re also testing a hybrid chipper that uses some unique technology, and we’re testing a totally electric chipper as well. Mike Morey Sr. is personally experimenting with some new wood burning technologies to more efficiently burn chips.

If we asked, what would your customers say about you?

That they like us and, more importantly, that they trust us and the products we supply to them. We have good, long-term relationships with the key companies in this industry. Most of the TCIA Board of Directors – both past and present – and many other TCIA members are Bandit customers, some for more than 20 years. We value the chance to get together with our customers and renew our ties to the industry at TCI EXPO and the Winter Management Conference.

What does your company do to promote social and environmental responsibility?

We are designing our machines to be more energy efficient, and we’re very involved with the green energy movement through the biomass industry. Most people do not realize how big a roll biomass plays in the U.S. renewable energy market. In 2010, renewables accounted for 11 percent of our total energy supply. Of that, 51 percent is biomass...
– more than hydro, wind, solar and geothermal combined. Europe is still a bit ahead of the U.S. with biomass energy; we’ve developed technologies to better process the hay and grass being used to fire their plants. Our machines are very good at sizing the material they’re using, whether for direct combustion or the making of pellets, and that really enhances the process. Beyond that, many wood-burning power plants are being built in the worldwide biomass arena. That’s going to make wood waste more valuable, and that will have a positive impact on the tree care industry.

Why does your company support TCIA as the industry’s trade association?

TCIA does, by far, the best job of serving the tree care companies in this industry. It’s done a great job of promoting and raising the level of professionalism and safety within this industry, and that is something important to all of us.

What TCIA programs is your company involved with?

We’re a PACT (Partners Advancing Commercial Treecare) partner at the Crown level, a sponsor of Student Career Days, and we’re involved with TCI EXPO, Winter Management Conference and with safety initiatives.

I was on the board of the National Arborist Foundation and eventually became chair of the Foundation. I had a hand in merging the NAF with the International Society of Arboriculture Research Trust to form the TREE Fund, of which I served as a director and treasurer for several years. Bandit raised approximately $250,000 for the Robert Felix Memorial Fund, which provides money for scholarships for students interested in a career in arboriculture.

I was honored to receive TCIA’s 2004 Chairman’s Award for my service to the association. It was presented to me at the TCIA Winter Management Conference by Greg Daniels of The Bartlett Tree Expert Company, who was chair of the association at that time.

Conclusion

The tree care market provides more than 60 percent of our revenue, so everyone at Bandit knows how important it is to do whatever we can to meet the needs of tree care companies. We honestly listen to our customers, and I believe we’ve developed more products and features for tree care organizations than any other manufacturer. We want to supply these companies with equipment that will help them be successful, and we’re here to support them as well. There are more than 45,000 pieces of our equipment in the industry; we are known for building rugged, reliable, productive machines that will provide years of dependable service. Many Bandit chippers are more than 20 years old, and many of these units have more than 10,000 hours on them. They’re still running strong for our customers, and we’ll continue to build the machines they need – for as long as they need them.

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• Assistance with business practices that will distinguish your company from the competition
• Training programs to improve worker safety and increase profits

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You’d think that a reeling economy would be dampening interest in purchasing new chippers, but the reverse is actually true. The buying trend is aided by, ironically of all things, the federal government’s new engine emissions requirements. This is it in a nutshell: Buy now or pay (significantly) more later.

Manufacturers are responding to prevailing economic pressures such as fuel prices and the true life-long cost of running machines. To meet that head-on, they are introducing initiatives such as smaller and more efficient-engines in chippers. This has the added benefit of addressing some of those indirect and hidden costs such as operator licensing requirements for higher gross vehicle weight (gvw) vehicles.

To achieve all of that, there seems to be a consistent refrain among manufacturers: pack as much punch as possible into each machine, keep them as compact as possible and also offer more units with smaller – not larger – power plants.

First, the emissions issue. The government’s desire to reduce emissions beyond what has been achieved in the last 40 years has resulted in the phasing-in of ever-more-efficient, cleaner engines ending (for now) with further enforcement of the Tier 4 technology next year. This year, Tier 4 engines are required on 175 to 750-horsepower non-road/off-road machines. In 2012, Tier 4 engines apply to 74-hp to 174-hp units.

Equipment with the new and prevailing Tier 3 engines can be sold legally into the early part of 2012 (as late as the fourth quarter, depending on engine availability.) The length of time they can remain in use, right now, at least, is up to the individual states. California has a complex and aggressive policy aimed at getting old diesel engines out of service or out of state within a matter of years. Check locally!

You’d think that the “clean-and-efficient” concept would be an economic benefit to users, such as was true with automobiles and the introduction of cleaner, higher-tech engines and fuels, which actually resulted in higher performance characteristics with less fuel consumption. However, because these new Tier 4 diesel non-road/off-road engines have to meet such stringent requirements, they’ve had to be re-engineered. Now these engines are typically larger, often with new and different configurations that make them difficult to fit into existing chipper architecture.

The cost of these engines, according to the chipper makers interviewed for this article, will likely add up to 30 percent to the cost of a new diesel-engine-equipped machine. (This applies to virtually all off-road/non-road machines, not just chippers.) Furthermore, the 30 percent uptick in engine cost does not include their costs to retrofit or re-engineer these otherwise perfectly good machines.

Why the added construction cost? A few things mentioned were the added build costs to accommodate the sometimes massive exhaust system, plus added weight (which now becomes a factor as the manufacturers’ strive to keep chippers under the federal commercial driver’s licensing (CDL) requirements of 10,000 pounds gvw. (This also may vary slightly state-to-state.) CDL licensing adds to training and licensing costs and sometimes to added equipment costs for larger tow vehicles, not to mention fuel and maintenance costs, all of which manufacturers are trying to control for customers.
So, it comes down to time and, ultimately, money. The combination of a Tier 3 engine in a lightweight (under CDL) machine with low fuel consumption could go a long way to holding down a tree care company’s operating costs for several years in the future. It’s no wonder now may be a good time to buy a chipper.

“Right now the 12- and 15-inch drum chippers are holding their own,” says Jason Morey, marketing manager at Bandit Industries, which for now continues to sell its chippers and other machines with Tier 3-engine units, as the company works to incorporate the Tier 4 engine designs with Bandit configurations.

“This is an extremely busy segment, and we are busy focusing our marketing effort on the 990 and 1390 models (12- and 15-inch, respectively).”

“What’s unique about 1390 is that this 15-inch machine features a 37-inch diameter drum utilizing four knives. That’s compared with most competitors’ models, which use a 22-inch-diameter drum with two knives. What this allows us to do is turn the drum slower with less horsepower and still chip larger diameter material,” he says. “The advantage to all this is that we can offer lower horsepower engine options and still be able to achieve comparable production output as we save our customers on fuel costs and other operating costs.”

To illustrate, he points to the 97-hp Caterpillar or Perkins diesel engines, each with what he says is good fuel economy and a high level of torque. “In fact, the torque approaches that of some higher horsepower types,” Morey adds. “And that amounts to a substantial machine cost savings (at the time of purchase) and fuel savings.”

Morey says this was proven recently in a series of successful side-by-side tests including one involving a municipality bid that Bandit ultimately was awarded. “We have proven that the same capacity machine with a lower horsepower engine can save fuel and perform just as well as one with a higher horsepower engine. As a manufacturer, we are proving what we are promoting.”

How efficient can this strategic move be for the commercial tree care user? Morey says, “On paper, we compared engine data from all manufacturers and found that we achieved about 32 percent more fuel efficiency under max load than a 125-horsepower engine, and the chipper with the smaller engine still gets the same work done.”

Additionally, Bandit, has a couple of new machines in development. Regarding Tier 4 engines, Morey says that they are larger, and because of that, chipper designs will have to change. “Until that, we will focus on selling Tier 3.” Added cost is about a third more for the Tier 4 engines, Morey says. (Bandit will feature the model 1390 chipper with the 97-hp engine at TCI EXPO 2011 in Hartford this November, along with the 1590, a 17-inch, drum-type chipper with a broad selection of hp ratings, and a new, self-propelled, tracked model.)

Morbark mirrors many of the same trends. “What we see is a trend to smaller, lighter units because of cost and financing,” says Jason Showers, product manager. “So, there is a lot of activity in the 12- and 15-inch chipper range.”

“We are seeing one of two trends. Among some of our larger fleet buyers of larger chippers, we see them going to smaller chippers. This has to do with fuel economy. The other trend is to take advan-
tage of economies of scale, where a guy with a couple of 12-inchers is going with one 18-incher,” Showers explains.

“As far as new chippers go, we have the redesigned 12-inch disk unit. We made the infeed wider, from 15 to 18 inches.” He cites the launch of the Beever M18RX, which has 18-inch capacity yet remains under the all-important 10,000-pound gvw configuration, which does not require CDL or any other special licensing to tow.

“One of the biggest concerns a company has in this area is with employment,” says Showers. “We all know it can be hard to train and maintain employees. With the CDL licensing especially, employers do not want to have to pay to get their employees licensed then see them move along.”

“Another thing we did with this machine is to redesign the infeed wheel system for far better pull and crush power. We launched the Beever M18RX early this summer, and it culminates two years of realignment of our chipper line. (Morbark will feature this unit at TCI EXPO.)

J.R. Bowling, vice president of sales for Rayco, says, “Right now, people are renewing their equipment. It is not the market that it was in 2006, but it is steady. They are looking for as much value as they can get. That’s the key.” For example, they may want the most for a basic machine, but not a lot of other extras.

“The smart money is looking to renew now ahead of the next emission tier,” he says. “When that happens, prices will go up considerably. For a machine like a chipper to function with cleaner emissions, the engine likely will be considerably more expensive. Buyers have all of this year and into 2012 to still purchase machines with the Tier 3 engines.”

“We are still selling 12-inch chippers and gaining traction with the model RC1220. This is a higher-end, premium 12-inch chipper designed not just to put big pieces in one end and get little ones out the other, but it also offers a variety of features and functionality.

“The reason machines like these are gaining momentum is that buyers are seeking more features,” Bowling says. Some of those include a 2-inch x 6-inch box tubing frame, 12-inch-high, 20-inch-wide infeed opening and a feed wheel that accommodates up to 20-inch material without operator assistance, plus a planetary drive motor for the infeed wheel that needs virtually no maintenance.

“We are very excited about the new 18-inch model RC1824, which is at the higher end for an 18-inch chipper,” Bowling says. “The engine is rubber insulated, so the machine runs extremely smooth. The 24-inch throat is straight-through, so there is no neck down or tapers in the throat for wood to get caught in. The chipper drum is actually 24 inches wide, which (together with the 24-inch infeed) delivers the full benefit of a drum machine. It can be
equipped with a 160-horsepower engine and still come in at about 9,000 pounds. For a chipper, this is big performance, yet it’s lightweight,” he adds.

“The best thing that our customers are liking is the perfected discharge. This is exceptional, actually better than any other in the 18-inch class due to its throwing distance and ability to discharge wet and challenging materials like palm. This is because we have the new X-Charge discharge system featuring a large-diameter blower fan mounted outboard (outside) of the drum. The puts tremendous air velocity trough the chutes,” Bowling says.

This RC 1824 model has a 24-inch diameter feed wheel designed to “climb” or adjust to the size of material it is feeding, thus eliminating the need for two-person operation. This is the company’s newest machine, with delivery beginning in June. (Rayco plans to feature the 18-inch chipper at EXPO along with what Bowling says are, “some other things that are new in other categories.”)

Vermeer’s Todd Roorda agrees with many of the points discussed here so far, and adds a bit of a different take based on what he is seeing on the international market.

“One thing we are seeing across the board from utility line clearing to contractors is increasing attention to safety and to safety features. This is becoming an increasingly important aspect in buying decisions. Potential buyers are breaking down their assessments of machines (chippers and other equipment) as to what they will do for a crew from a safety aspect day to day,” says Roorda.

“One thing we are seeing across the board from utility line clearing to contractors is increasing attention to safety and to safety features. This is becoming an increasingly important aspect in buying decisions. Potential buyers are breaking down their assessments of machines (chippers and other equipment) as to what they will do for a crew from a safety aspect day to day,” says Roorda.

“Some companies are starting to implement safety coordinators whose job is not only weekly training, but also to run around to check crews to see that they are felling and processing trees according to safety codes,” he notes. (Exactly what TCIA’s Certified Treecare Safety Professional, CTSP, credential promotes.)

One of the biggest additions to the Vermeer chipper line is the feed stop bar. Roorda says, “This is one of the few devised that does not require an operator reaction. It is an automatic function. When the feed stop bar is tripped, the feed roller stops pulling material instantaneously and will not re-engage until the override button is activated.”

As Roorda explains it, the bar is on the infeed table and it can be tripped by the operator or debris.

“Certainly other trends we see are toward lower horsepower options to help with fuel economy,” he says. “There’s no relief in fuel pricing in sight. Overall costs to run machines are being scrutinized all the time.”

For example, he says, “A utility line clearing company might be looking at smaller machines and occasionally get an 8-to-10-inch type, but mostly they are getting 6-inch and under.” The objective is to
match the majority of the work with the machine and leave the rare larger pieces for other processing.

That also may mean going small with the engine, favoring the 49-horsepower BC1000XL, rather than the 85 hp version that has been in service for several years.

(As for EXPO, Roorda says to look for a new stump grinder and hinted at some new chipper options.)

Kathy Milne is market manager for tree care for Altec Industries, which makes disk and drum chippers, with units from 6 to 18 inches. Customers can choose from a variety of sizes of chippers, which allows them to match the right size chipper to type of trimming they do for the highest productivity at all times, Milne says. Altec can supply a chipper for a customer’s preference, 6 to 18 inch, drum or disc, self feed or control feed, with additional options to enhance their chipper and work experience.

“I feel selection of disc or drum is largely personal preference,” says Milne. “Altec offers an option (Feedsense) that will actually monitor the RPMs of the cutting disc. This control system will stop the hydraulic feed system if the RPMs drop below a certain level, to prevent stalling of the machine.”

“Tree care professionals are going to see a new 6-inch chipper from Altec at TCI EXPO. It is the DC610, a 6-inch capacity, control feed disc chipper. The opening is 6 x 10, which allows for a forked branch to be chipped, which means less cutting by crews. Another nice feature is a standard 22-horsepower Honda engine, with options of Briggs 23 or 35 hp – but we will work with customers to accommodate their engine preferences. This unit has the control feed feature along with Altec Panic Bar, which provides operators a dedicated stop mechanism for the feed system independent of the feed control bar.” Controls to manipulate the chute rotation and chute deflector are easily accessible from the ground.

“The DC610 will provide one more option to our customers,” says Milne.

John Bird at J. P. Carlton says there are three relatively new chippers from his company which have been released over the 12 months or so, all self-propelled.

“What makes these popular is that self-propelled chippers allow operators to take a machine to the material versus dragging material to the machine. One reason for the demand for this application has to do with changes in the marketplace. For example, we see established companies reluctant to add people to their crews in this economy. Self-propelled chippers are better suited in this environment because they allow crews to be more productive. Material gets chipped with less labor and it’s easier to get a self-propelled chipper into position, especially when it is advantageous to leave green waste on-site and not add it to the waste stream,” Bird adds.

The self-propelled machines he refers to are the SP1260TRX, a 6-inch chipper and SP 2012 12-inch capacity units, both available as either 4-wheel drive or tracked machines, and the SP 2518, an 18-incher available as tracked chipper only. Bird says the company plans to bring the SP1260 to EXPO. “It’s the most popular, smaller, economical to run and easy to get into tight spaces,” he says.

Buying a chipper these days is like buying anything in this market. It pays to think about what you actually need and weighing, sometimes literally, the options. When it comes to investing in profitability, sometimes less is more.
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Single rope techniques (SRT) are becoming an increasingly common method employed by arborists to access and work in trees. The main purposes of this article are to present preliminary measurements of the load dynamics at the tie in point (TIP) in an SRT system under various anchor methods as well as to address concerns regarding the use of mechanical ascenders in SRT systems.

It is assumed that the reader is familiar with the fundamental differences between SRT and traditional doubled rope techniques (DdRT). If this is not the case, a review of the previous articles “SRT Climbing Tools and Techniques” (TCI April, 2011) and “The Single Rope Technique” (TCI September, 2002) will provide the necessary introductory information.

First, a test was performed to determine the load experienced by the TIP and anchor in an SRT system. The test was performed in April of 2011 in a northern red oak (Q. rubra) in Amherst, Massachusetts. An SRT system was installed in the tree and TIP loads were measured for three different anchoring methods.

The first method involved isolating both sides of the climbing line around the TIP and anchoring one end to the base of the tree. The second method involved isolating one end of the climbing line around the TIP for the climber to ascend and anchoring the non-isolated end to the base of the tree. The third method involved isolating one end of the climbing line for the climber to ascend and wrapping the non-isolated end around the trunk four full times before anchoring it to the base of the tree (See Figure 1). In each anchor scenario as well as the DdRT system, dynamometers accurate to 2 pounds measured the overall force at the TIP (See Figure 2). The TIP load measurements for each anchor scenario and the DdRT system are in Table 1.

Repeated tests showed that the SRT system, regardless of the anchor configuration, placed close to twice the load on the TIP as the DdRT system. SRT loads at the TIP averaged 1.75 (standard deviation .022) times the TIP load of the DdRT system for both climbers. This occurs in an SRT system because the full force of the climber’s weight is present, as tension, in both ends of the climbing line around the TIP, unlike a DdRT system. In a DdRT only half the force of the climber’s weight is present as tension in both ends of the climbing line around the TIP.

The reason for this difference is that in a traditional DdRT system, both ends of the climbing line are anchored to the climber in the termination knot and the friction hitch. This causes the force of the climber’s weight to be distributed between both ends of the climbing line. As a result, each end of the climbing line experiences roughly half of the climber’s weight. In an SRT system, only one end of the climbing line is anchored to the climber while the other end is anchored directly to the tree, often at the base. This causes the full force of the climber’s weight to be present in both ends of the climbing line around the TIP.

In both systems, the total force experienced by the TIP is equal to the sum of the forces in both ends of the climbing line around the TIP. For a DdRT system the sum of the forces at the TIP is equal to the climber’s weight, while in an SRT system the sum of forces at the TIP is equal to twice the weight of the climber. This was reflected in our test regardless of the anchor system employed in the SRT system.

The different anchoring systems did have an effect on the overall force experi-
enced by the anchor at the base of the tree.
The introduction of multiple trunk wraps decreased the overall force experienced at the anchor point. The trunk wraps are analogous to the role of a port-a-wrap or rope bollard in a rigging system. The block and sling in the rigging system can be considered the TIP of the system, while the ground worker running the rigging line can be considered the anchor of the system. The more wraps the ground worker places on the port-a-wrap, the less overall force he must exert to hold up the piece of wood being rigged down.

It is important to understand that in each situation, trunk wraps in an SRT system and wraps on a port-a-wrap in a rigging situation, the TIP is subjected to a force equal to twice the weight of the climber or piece of wood being rigged down. A comprehensive explanation of the physical principles involved in determining load at the TIP and anchor is available in the statics section of any engineering mechanics text book.

The results of the preliminary load analysis are important because they empirically demonstrate that an SRT system anchored at the base of the tree places approximately twice the load on the TIP as a DdRT system, regardless of anchoring method. This is a characteristic of SRT that needs to be taken into account when assessing the condition of the tree to be climbed as well as when considering a TIP.

**Mechanical ascenders**

A second concern with the use of SRT systems involves the use of mechanical ascenders on the arborist’s climbing line. Many of the ascenders being utilized in tree care today were not designed for arboricultural purposes and may not be compatible with arborist climbing lines, as they were adopted from other professional and recreational arenas such as rock climbing, caving and high angle construction and maintenance. Ascenders must meet certain testing standards before they can be sold. Among those standards are the EN international standards (EN 892, EN 1891, EN 12841), which are not entirely compatible with arboricultural practices. There are

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**Figure 2: Dynamometer Attachment – Dynamometers were attached to the rope using eye-to-eye Prusik cords in order to measure tensile force in the climber and anchor sides of the rope.**

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**TREE CARE INDUSTRY – SEPTEMBER 2011**

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two major discrepancies between the EN standards and the way in which ascenders are utilized in the arboricultural field.

The EN 12841 standard defines a Type B rope adjustment device as a “manually operated rope adjustment device which, when attached to a working line, locks under load in one direction and slides freely in the opposite direction.” The ascenders most common in arboricultural applications are considered Type B rope adjustment devices as defined above. The standard also notes that “Type B rope adjustment devices are intended always to be used in conjunction with a Type A rope adjustment device connected to a safety line.” This means that in order to be compliant, an arborist would have to employ a second line as a safety while working in the tree.

Secondary safety lines are rarely, if ever, employed in the day-to-day climbing operations of production arborists, but ascenders are increasingly being used. Many arborists do routinely employ a second point of attachment to the climbing line other than the ascender. This is highly recommended as it protects against mechanical failure during the ascent and movement within the tree. There is currently debate about whether it is appropriate to back up an ascender with another ascender, or if a Prusik knot should be used, but this topic is outside the scope of this article.

The discrepancy about the method of the second attachment point notwithstanding, there is still a clear discrepancy between the EN standards and the common method of application in arboricultural operations. This becomes potentially problematic when you consider that the testing procedures for mechanical ascenders are based on the EN standards. An acceptable amount of ascender slippage and rope loading under the EN specifications may prove catastrophic in an arboricultural setting where no safety line is employed.

The EN standards concerning ascender applications also stipulate their use with kernmantle ropes. This is also reflected in the manufacturer’s literature that accompanies many commonly employed ascenders (Petzl, Kong, CMI). Traditional ½-inch tree climbing ropes are 16-strand constructions, where the outer sheath provides a disproportionate amount of the rope’s strength when compared to the core. The core is present in 16-strand lines to maintain a round cross section under load. Recently, many arborists, including the authors, have begun using...
smaller diameter, double-braid ropes for climbing. The distribution of strength is more even in a double-braid rope, with the sheath and core providing substantial amounts of the strength to the rope.

Though a double braid mimics kernmantle rope construction more closely than a 16-strand rope, there are still significant differences in their behavior and applications. Recent research performed on the compatibility of 16-strand and double-braid arborist climbing lines with ascenders employed the EN testing procedures that ascenders must meet. All four arborist ropes that were tested failed to meet the requirements for use with ascenders outlined in the EN standards. This was attributed to the differences in rope construction of arborist lines when compared to kernmantle rope construction.

In many of the tests, the sheath of the arborist line was completely severed leaving the core as the only load-bearing component in the system. Additionally, a static kernmantle line designed for use with ascenders was also tested and met the requirements of the EN standards for use with ascenders. The use of a static line may offer one alternative to production arborists; however, the static line tested did not conform to ANSI standards because it was made entirely of nylon.

The developments and advances in arboricultural techniques over the past decades have been fueled largely by the innovation and creativity of production arborists. It seems logical to continue to develop such innovations with SRT systems. A point of caution: as is the case surrounding many innovations, the scientific research and testing lags considerably behind the development and application.

In the absence of understanding gained through scientific research and robust empirical data, extreme caution should be observed in the adoption of new techniques. This is especially important in the arboricultural industry where many of the innovations involve using gear designed for other purposes in new and innovative ways. Innovations should be incorporated only if they meet two criteria: they are as safe as (or safer than) existing techniques, and they meaningfully improve efficiency or ease of completing a task. The authors do not discourage arborists from experimenting with new climbing systems and gear, but just urge great care with respect to safety.

Brian Kane is an associate professor of commercial arboriculture at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Mass., and a member of the Massachusetts Arborist Association. This article was based in part on his presentation, “Applied Research for Climbing and Rigging,” at TCI EXPO 2010 in Pittsburgh. For information or to register for TCI EXPO 2011 in Hartford, Connecticut, this November, visit http://expo.tcia.org/.

Mark Reiland is a graduate student studying commercial arboriculture at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Mass.
By Gary L. Lieber, Esq. and Jaclyn West, Esq.

On May 18, 2011, the National Labor Relations Board announced that it was issuing a complaint against Hispanics United of Buffalo, Inc., a non-profit, for firing five employees who complained about working conditions on Facebook. Just five days later, on May 23, 2011, another NLRB office filed a complaint against Karl Knauz Motors, Inc., a luxury car dealer in Chicago, for discharging an employee who posted a comment on Facebook about employees’ compensation concerns. These complaints are the NLRB’s latest effort to apply federal labor law to the online community.

In recent years, the NLRB has also filed a complaint against American Medical Response, Inc., an ambulance company that fired an employee for complaining about her boss on Facebook, and found merit in another case against Thompson Reuters for firing an employee in response to her critical comments on Twitter.

Facebook… Twitter… Blogs… Message boards… It’s a brave new world of social media and employers and employees alike are still learning how to live in it. Only a few years ago, most employers would not have considered their employees’ Internet presence to be a workplace issue. However, with more and more employees maintaining an online voice, employers are turning their attention to how to use social media to promote the positives about their companies – without opening the door to problems. As with any new advancement, there have been some growing pains. Still, social media isn’t going away. We can expect to see plenty of litigation as companies try to discover the boundaries of this new territory.

Social media use as protected concerted activity under the NLRA

The National Labor Relations Act provides that it is an unfair labor practice for employers to discharge or otherwise interfere with employees in their exercise of their right to engage in “concerted activity.” Traditional definitions of concerted activity include not just union activity but also extend to any “concerted” activity regarding working conditions that is not so unreasonable as to be beyond protection. Thus, “protected concerted activity” may occur in a non-union setting as well as a union setting. The question presented by these cases relates to how these statutory principles apply in a social media setting.

The short answer is – we are still waiting to find out. Although the Hispanics United and Knauz Motors cases mark the third and fourth times the NLRB’s General Counsel office has either filed a complaint or threatened to file a complaint in response to an employer’s action against employees for their social media gaffes, the full NLRB has yet to issue any opinions about whether online activity is protected conduct. Previous cases have settled before the rest of the employment community received any guidance on the NLRB’s interpretation of the law.

Can we make any educated guesses about what might be protected concerted activity in employees’ online commentary? Of course we can. For instance, in the American Medical Response case, an employee posted a critical comment about her supervisor on Facebook. Some of her co-workers chimed in with comments of their own, to which she responded. If the conversation was happening around the water cooler, it would almost certainly fall under the definition of protected concerted activity. Based on the General Counsel’s regional office’s complaint, we can infer that the current NLRB might take the position that online conversations are concerted activity in the same way that in-person conversations are.

In the Thompson Reuters case, the employee made a comment on Twitter in response to her employer’s query about how it could be the best workplace possible. The employee urged the employer to “deal honestly” with union members. While, again, we do not have the benefit of a formal ruling from the NLRB – because the case settled before a formal complaint was brought – we can infer that one of the primary reasons the NLRB’s General Counsel considered the employee’s Twitter comment to be protected activity was that the comment was specifically about work.
The lesson to be taken from examination of the American Medical Response, Thompson Reuters, Hispanics United and Knauz Motors cases is that, when employees are using social media to vent about working conditions specifically, employers should tread very carefully when administering discipline.

When employees push limits online

But what can an employer do when an employee’s online antics have nothing to do with work? Or when an employee complains about a customer, but not about working conditions?

Blogs and other online commentary were far from anyone’s radar screen until the mid 2000s. In 2004 Jessica Cutler, a.k.a. “the Washingtonienne,” caused a short-lived scandal in our nation’s capitol when her employer discovered that she had been writing a racy blog detailing her liaisons with various D.C. movers and shakers (whose identities she did not hide particularly well). She lost her Capitol Hill job with a U.S. Senator, but gained a book deal.

Blogs are not the only online outlet in which employees are speaking their minds. Employees have, as discussed above, lost their jobs as a result of venting on Facebook or Twitter about their bosses or their customers.

Within the past several weeks, the NLRB’s General Counsel has decided not to issue complaints in a number of cases where the activity was not deemed to be concerted – the activity was viewed as individually based and not group based. In one case, an employee of Wal-Mart criticized the company to his “Facebook Friends” only. The comments were laced with profanity and continued with “I swear if this tyranny doesn’t end in the store they are about to get a wake-up call because lots are about to quit.”

In the second case, a bartender made a comment on Facebook to a relative that he hadn’t had a raise in five years and that he was doing the waitresses’ work without tips. He also called the customers “rednecks” and said he hoped they choked on glass as they drove home drunk. While this posting was only sent to one person who was his relative, the restaurant owner found out and the bartender was terminated.

In the third case, an employee at a residential facility for homeless and mentally ill persons made disparaging comments about the personal behavior of the residents on her Facebook wall while working on the overnight shift. The employer was advised of these comments and the next day the employee was terminated.

In all three of these cases, the NLRB’s Division of Advice, an arm of the General Counsel, decided not to pursue the cases to complaint. In each case, the Division of Advice concluded that the conduct was individually grounded and, therefore, not concerted. What was troubling was the General Counsel’s refusal to accept management’s position that in each case the conduct was unreasonable, if not outrageous. The General Counsel could have concluded that the employee had exceeded the bounds of protection as an alternative basis for dismissal. This is troubling because it implies that the General Counsel is reluctant to broadly define the type of conduct that would not be legally protected.

A good policy

While we may not be able to predict what the ultimate positions of the NLRB
and the courts will be on cases where employees criticize their bosses or customers, or where they post content that, while personal, may be embarrassing for the company, employers should have a social media policy. It may be challenging, to say the least, for employers to come up with a policy that complies with the law on social media and employment, when we do not yet know exactly what the law is. But that does not mean it is impossible to write a good policy.

Two of the hallmarks of any good employment policy are clarity and fairness. A good policy must make very clear what is expected of employees, and what behavior will not be tolerated. There should be no question about what the policy says, and no room for debate. For example, if a social media policy prohibits employees from disparaging customers, co-workers or the company itself on websites and blogs, the policy should define what it means to “disparage.” With a clear definition, employees will know what behavior to avoid.

A good policy must also be fair in both drafting and application. It should be restricted to prohibiting conduct that the employer truly finds harmful to its business, and to promoting employee productivity. Perhaps more importantly, employers must be vigilant about applying the policy. Unless there are truly extenuating circumstances, if one employee is disciplined for violating a social media policy, other employees who commit the same infraction should be disciplined in a similar way, as would be the case with any employee.

Aside from clarity and fairness, what other characteristics does a good social media policy have?

Confidentiality – Of course, companies should have employees sign a separate confidentiality policy, or include such a policy in the employee handbook, but it never hurts to remind employees that they must keep all proprietary business information confidential. This includes trade secrets, customer information, sales and marketing strategies, and any other information the company deems confidential.

Disclaimers – The policy should require that to the extent that the company’s business is fair game, employees should include a disclaimer with any information they post about the company on social media sites. The disclaimer should note that the person is an employee of the company and state that the opinions expressed are theirs alone and do not necessarily reflect the company’s views.

Copyright Laws – The employee should respect copyright and intellectual property laws when posting material on the Internet.

Privacy – Employees should respect the privacy of the company’s customers and other employees. They should not divulge private information about clients or their co-workers.

Non-Disparagement – Employees should refrain from disparaging the company, its customers, or their co-workers and supervisors.

Common Sense – This may be the most important part of any good social media policy. Employees should be reminded that what they post on the Internet is not private, and they should have no expectation of it remaining private. A good rule of thumb for employees to follow would be to refrain from posting anything they would not want to appear on the front page of a major newspaper.

The law of social media in the workplace is still very much a developing area. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing for sure whether a particular social media policy would be upheld by a court. However, a good policy will protect both employers and employees, will clarify to employees exactly what the company expects of them, and will provide room for employees to express themselves without harming the company or their colleagues.

Gary L. Lieber is a partner at Ford & Harrison LLP, a nationwide labor and employment law firm, in the firm’s Washington, D.C., office. He has had a long term relationship with TCIA, and Ford & Harrison is a preferred vendor providing labor and employment services to TCIA members. Jaclyn West is an associate in the Washington, D.C., office.
Where is that tree? And how big is that saw?

In regard to the April 2011 (TCI Magazine) cover picture, I was wondering where the picture was taken?

I also wanted to bring to someone’s attention the fact that the man in the picture has a large saw hanging from his saddle, which in ANSI standards should be supported by its own lanyard. I believe ISA tells us this also.

Thank you – love the magazine.

Tom Johnson
ISA Certified Arborist
Johnson Tree, Lawn & Landscape
Creighton, MO

Editor’s response: On page 6 in that issue it explains the cover shot, which was taken in Belmont, California.

Here are two responses to the writer’s other comments regarding the photo (which can be viewed at http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/0e73a069#/0e73a069/1):

Tchukki Andersen, BCMA, TCIA staff arborist, responds: Z133.1 6.3.3: “When an arborist or other worker is working in a tree other than from an aerial device, chain saws weighing more than 15 pounds (6.8 kg) service weight shall be made safe against falling (i.e. supported by a separate line or tool lanyard).”

Peter Gerstenberger, senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for TCIA, also chimes in: The reader might be thinking of the requirement in older Z133 Standards, where it said that power saws weighing more than 15 pounds had to be supported from a separate line except when used out of the bucket. That’s different than “… made safe against falling.” Under the current standard you can attach any size saw to your saddle.

And, yes, a chain saw lanyard is the most common “tool lanyard” you’ll run into.

I can’t tell what model Stihl that is. Their two biggest “pro” saws both trigger the requirement. The powerheads alone are more than 15 pounds. The saw pictured looks like it has a 36-inch bar.

Don’t want to miss an issue!

This is my new address please send my subscription there. Thank you. (Your magazine is awsome, tons of useful info. every month). Thanks again.

Michael Murphy
Needham, Massachusetts

Please renew my subscription

I’ve been in tree service for 18 years. I’ve learned a lot from reading the magazine and picked equipment that can be used for my business. Thank you.

Tom Weigner, owner

Tuffy’s Tree Service
Monroeville, Pennsylvania

Kudos tweet

@bentleytreecare TCIA Magazine has gone digital. Really enjoying the digital copy. Check out the bottom of the page http://t.co/PGF6EuO @VoiceOfTreeCare.
What type of vehicle and equipment maintenance program does your company have? Do you find you are spending more time on breakdowns than you are following a maintenance schedule? Are you postponing scheduled maintenance because other repairs are needed to keep the crews working? Are you waiting for an influx of cash or an improved P&L statement to have maintenance done?

If you answered yes to any of these questions you are like many organizations stuck in a “reactive” approach of managing maintenance. It is easy to get into that mode and not so easy to get out, even when we know being proactive would be so much better.

The value of maintenance

There are many reasons to perform preventive maintenance with a proactive approach over simply reacting to current needs. Reliability, performance, safety and controlling costs are generally the drivers resulting in higher levels of customer service, employee morale, public perception, regulatory compliance, professional work environment, workplace safety and, of course, profit.

Some fleet studies have identified as much as a 70 percent savings in overall maintenance and repair costs when a proactive program is executed when changing from a reactive culture. These substantial savings are achieved from increased shop efficiencies, elimination of redundant processes, reduction in base payroll and overtime pay, reduction in parts cost, minimization of shipping/overnight charges, fewer towing and road service calls, improved warranty recovery, better equipment utilization (less spares) and increased productivity/revenue.

The less time we spend putting out fires (e.g. emergency repairs) the more time we have to focus on our business and pleasing our customers, which, at the end of the day is what it’s all about – right? Customer service, as it relates to equipment maintenance, is often forgotten, and that includes both our internal and external customers. If an employee is frustrated because he/she is broken down on the side of the road or sent home because their truck is in the shop, how does that affect different areas of our business? Will they speak to the customer with a good attitude? Maybe not, so what are the short and long-term affects? How does our customer look at us when we aren’t on the job because of equipment failures? Although these can be difficult to quantify, we must ask ourselves these questions when considering the importance of a quality maintenance program.

Regulatory compliance

If our business operates commercial motor vehicles (>10,000 pounds gross vehicle combination weight, or GVCW), and most in the tree industry do, having a preventive maintenance program in place (and following it) is required by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and monitored by the Department of Transportation (DOT). It is up to the individual company (carrier/operator) to assemble a maintenance program that allows for the safe operation of vehicles operating on public roads. As a regulated carrier/operator, we are then required to comply with that program.

Since the introduction of CSA 2010 last year, the new scoring method used to rate commercial motor carriers, it is more important today to comply with these regulations. This new method of scoring now includes drivers (employees) as well as the carrier (company). Equipment defects found during a roadside inspection now appear on the carrier’s record and the driver’s record, negatively affecting him/her personally and professionally. It is an employer’s responsibility to provide well-maintained equipment, a means of
repairing defects and adequate training so regulations and driver responsibilities are well understood. This includes performing a pre/post trip vehicle inspection and reporting any found defects.

Create a plan and work the plan

So, we are ready to put a proactive maintenance program in place. The key to success with a change this substantial is being committed. If we truly want to make the change from reactive to proactive, full support from the top down within the organization is crucial. The whole team must understand the program and its long-term advantages as well as the need to stay the course to achieve the desired results.

Equipment must be managed with a long-term plan utilizing a “total cost of ownership” approach in order to maximize the results. That long-term approach can be difficult for those used to managing their business or job performance on a short-term basis. If your business allows for the separation of managing field operations and equipment maintenance, I would strongly recommend it. Managing labor and assets have two distinctly different theories that must be understood to be successful.

We have made the commitment. The owner or president is on board and will support the initiative. The field managers and supervisors have been briefed and are on board. Now it’s time to create the plan. A successful plan is a realistic plan, so don’t try to make changes too quickly. Prepare a plan with goals and timelines. Include your internal customers, company managers and the fleet staff. When creating the maintenance plan, determine the intervals at which equipment will be serviced. Determine which components will be inspected and serviced at each visit and produce a checklist.

When implementing a proactive program, the biggest hurdle is often sticking to the schedule. But it is so important. Make this a priority and you will soon see the number of defects and in-service failures diminish. Keep good records, pay attention to any pending repairs and schedule enough time to complete those repairs. These all play an important role in managing a quality maintenance program. If your in-house resources can’t keep up with the demand, utilize your outside resources. There are many good repair shops out there...
that are more than happy to work with you, especially if you include them when assembling your plan. Good communication is essential.

Whether you operate a small or large company, maintenance and repair cost as a percentage of revenue is similar for a comparable service, therefore, it is equally important to control costs to be competitive.

You can’t improve what you don’t measure. Any successful maintenance program includes some level of data to manage the program. It is important to have performance indicators for various aspects of the program to allow for the necessary changes to be made. “You can’t improve what you don’t measure.” Some of my favorite indicators are: equipment uptime percentage, scheduled vs. unscheduled repairs, maintenance cost per mile or hour, fully burdened shop labor rate and mechanic productivity (e.g. time spent performing maintenance and repairs, travel time, parts ordering/time in stock room, training, technical information review, shop clean-up, administrative duties).

Armed with this information, good decisions can be made to follow a continuous improvement process. These indicators will vary based on your business, fleet size and the data available. You won’t go from a reactive culture to a world class fleet overnight, but if you and your team are committed, have a realistic plan, manage the plan and monitor the performance, you are sure to enjoy significant improvements.

**Benchmarking**

Having data on your own performance is important and whether you are implementing a new “computerized maintenance management system” (CMMS) or using a simple spreadsheet, it will take some time to accumulate enough data that provides value. In the early stages of implementing a new program, it would be useful to identify the industry norms as a starting point to compare your program performance. As data accumulates, drawing comparisons against industry peers and trending your own performance are recommended. Top performing fleets continuously benchmark against their peers. That can be both inside and outside of the tree industry, providing you are making accurate comparisons (e.g. equipment type, in-house vs. outsourced, fleet size, static vs. mobile service, etc.).

**Outsource or in-house?**

When we are assembling our maintenance program, we should determine what will be completed by our in-house mechanics, and what will be outsourced to service vendors. It is common to want to do it all ourselves. After all, we can do it better and at a lower cost than sending it to a dealer or another shop, right? Maybe. If you stop and think about it, the best approach is to utilize our resources to their strengths. If my area of expertise is not electronics, should I spend hours or even days trying to diagnose an electrical problem? Would we send a ground person up in a bucket their first day on the job? No, because they aren’t qualified to do that. It wouldn’t be efficient or safe, and they would surely make mistakes. We would be setting them up for failure.

It is no different for a vehicle or equipment mechanic. So when we dispatch our mechanic to perform a repair in an area he/she isn’t trained in, we are setting them up to fail. Sure, they may eventually get it repaired, but only after multiple failed attempts. The result is an extended repair time, unnecessarily running for parts, buying more parts than needed and having to make additional repairs in the future because the procedure wasn’t performed properly. Maybe we didn’t have the repair manual or diagnostic software for that particular vehicle, so we guessed. This happens every day out in the field, and it is costing businesses a lot of money. Use your resources wisely.

Why do we do this? More than likely because we are too busy with other responsibilities. This is the path of least resistance – send the mechanic, and he/she now has the problem – it’s off my plate. Or maybe maintenance management isn’t our area of expertise. We don’t know what we don’t know, right? If nobody is managing our maintenance program, it isn’t going to manage itself. It is that simple. And like utilizing only qualified mechanics, having a qualified fleet manager is money well spent. There is quality training available for those who choose the fleet management profession.
World class (predictive) maintenance

The best managed fleets go beyond proactive preventive maintenance by utilizing a (predictive) process. Airlines use a predictive method for obvious reasons beyond reducing cost. High production manufacturing facilities utilizing mechanical assembly lines to produce their goods will have sophisticated maintenance programs in place to minimize the risk of the assembly line equipment failing during production. Each minute of downtime cost thousands of dollars in lost revenue. If your business relies on equipment to produce revenue, the importance of having your equipment operating all revenue producing opportunities is just as important.

Progressive organizations have learned that by being proactive, they spend considerably less time maintaining their equipment. Less time equates to less money. Labor is the largest expense when maintaining equipment, so focusing on labor efficiencies is the key to driving out cost. The most successful maintenance programs perform scheduled maintenance during non-production hours; they stay on task and closely following the plan.

To use this theory and achieve world class status, having quality data is essential. Operating a “predictive” maintenance program isn’t easy, and it isn’t for all fleets, but for those where it is beneficial, the results can be substantial. I am talking about the ability to predict the life of a component and replace it prior to failure. In order to do this with mobile assets (e.g. tree equipment), a fleet would need data from enough “like vehicles” to be able to identify patterns. Sharing information within the industry can be a good tool, especially for organizations with small or mixed fleets.

Is a predictive maintenance program realistic for your organization? That is for you to evaluate and decide. It is beneficial, however, for those responsible for the maintenance and repair of your assets to at least understand the theory so it can be
applied where appropriate.

Minimizing labor time and the number of repair visits should be the primary focus when assembling your maintenance program. Target an expected life for each asset type and build the PM program around it. For example, if you anticipate changing an alternator twice over the life of a vehicle (because your data shows a consistent failure interval), schedule the replacement prior to failure and; at the same time as servicing other components in the area on the vehicle (e.g. belts, tensioners, EGR, etc.). This will require less labor than performing the services separately and will reduce the chance of a failure causing an unscheduled repair. This example may sound like a small savings, but magnify it by the number of assets in your fleet and think about all the advantages mentioned earlier and you will see how this can be significant. So, what is the downside of being more proactive? I suppose for some, it is making the commitment to change. Change is difficult for most of us, but for those willing to take it on (they) will reap the rewards – big time.

**Choose the right person**

Choose the right person to perform preventive maintenance inspections. As mentioned earlier, in order to maximize efficiencies in your operation it is important to have qualified people perform each task. When performing a preventive maintenance inspection (PMI), the objective is to identify defects. Think of it as an inspection to identify all items necessary to be lubricated, adjusted, rebuilt or replaced in order for the vehicle to operate trouble-free until the next scheduled maintenance service. Obviously it won’t always happen, but that should be the goal. Far too often, I see an inexperienced person performing the PMI because the procedure is thought of as an oil change. It is not an oil change. It is a “preventive maintenance inspection.”

Sure, we also change the oil and perform other maintenance procedures while it is in the shop because it is efficient. But the primary purpose of the service is to perform a very high quality inspection. The best preventive maintenance programs assign their most experienced mechanics to performing the PMI. Sure, they are also performing what many feel are tasks the rookies should do, but it is for efficiency reasons, not qualifications. The senior person in the shop should be performing the PMI services first, then making needed repairs and coaching others with any remaining time.

The inspector should be held accountable for failures not found during the previous inspection (providing it clearly should have been recognized). Their main responsible is identifying and documenting all defects along with the severity. This is accomplished by precisely following a checklist and job plan. I would also consider separating the responsibilities for the inspection and the (large) repairs identified during an inspection to remove a conflict of interest, which sometimes occurs when a mechanic resists performing a repair for one reason or another. For example, if he/she wants to get out of work on time, maybe a defect goes undocumented? I’m just saying. I realize that separating these duties aren’t always practical or even possible, but it is important to understand the sacrifice of quality and/or efficiencies when assembling your plan.

**Getting over the hump**

It isn’t easy to move from a reactive culture to a more proactive one. What I have seen with many fleets is they feel stuck from a budgetary standpoint. In other words, if it is costing X to operate the fleet today, it will cost X+ to begin doing more than we are currently. That is true, but the alternative is to do nothing and continue with the excessive costs. If a new proactive program is administered strategically and then well managed, this additional initial cost can be minimized and overcome within a few months. As they say, short-term pain for long-term gain.

**Summary**

So, are you ready to make improvements to your maintenance program? Remember, it won’t happen overnight. Pace yourself and have realistic timelines. Assemble your plan with both short and long-term goals and work them each day. Determine your performance indicators and monitor them religiously. Stay on schedule with your PMI’s and reschedule or outsource repairs of those defects you can’t perform during the scheduled visit. Manage the program well and assign only qualified mechanics or service vendors to each job. Follow these general guidelines, and you will be well on your way to a more professional fleet operation and substantially reducing your maintenance and repair expense.

Remember, everyone wins when equipment is efficiently maintained. The customer is happy when we are on the job, employee morale is higher, productivity is maximized, regulatory compliance increases, utilization improves, safe working conditions are achieved and our accountant will appreciate it. Why wouldn’t we?

Mike Moser is founder and president of MyFleetDept.com, a full service fleet management and consulting company. He is also founder and chairman of the Utility Line Clearance Fleet Committee (ULCFC) and has 25 years of vehicle, equipment and fleet management experience with 10 years as director of fleet & purchasing for a major utility line clearance contractor.
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TREE CARE INDUSTRY – SEPTEMBER 2011 57
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Tree Climber

Thrive Inc., Plant Health Care Solutions, is a TCIA-Accredited company offering year-round employment. We focus on high-end residential properties where clients recognize and appreciate great quality workmanship. Thrive specializes in general tree work, plant health care and horticultural solutions. Thrive offers a safe, drug-free environment, competitive pay, health insurance, retirement plan, vacation, holiday and personal days. Temporary housing available, professional advancement. Continuing education/seminar, associated memberships and relocation reimbursement. Thrive is currently hiring experienced tree climbers with a minimum of 1 year of climbing experience, Certified Arborist or can Acquire Certification with Valid Driver’s License. Email: thrive@thrivinglandscape.com or call Joe Estrada at (703) 709-0007. For more information please visit our website at thrivinglandscapes.com.

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7:00-8:30 a.m. .......... Registration at the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center (VAMSC)
9:00 a.m. .................. Ride departs from VAMSC
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REVISION ADDS NEW SECTION TO A300 PART 6
- Planting and Transplanting

Public review period for three A300 standards (Parts 5, 6 & 8) in effect; Part 7 winding down

The public review periods for revisions to three A300 standards and one new standard are currently in effect: (Part 5)-2005 Management of Trees and Shrubs during Site Planning, Site Development, and Construction and (Part 6)-2005 Planting and Transplanting are under public review through September 19, 2011; (Part 8) Root and Root Zone Management through October 3, 2011; and (Part 7)-2006 Integrated Vegetation Management’s review period comes to an end September 5, 2011.

To download the public review drafts and learn more about A300, go to www.treecareindustry.org/standards/CurrentProjects.htm.

Excerpt of Revised Part 6

TCIA and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited standards committee (ASC) 300 have placed a call for public review on revision of the national tree care standard for ANSI A300 (Part 6)-2006 Planting and Transplanting of trees and woody shrubs.

This is the first, and intended final, revision draft of the Transplanting standard. This part of the A300 standards applies to planting and transplanting of trees, woody shrubs, and woody vines.

This revision of Part 6 includes a new, section solely dedicated to Planting. Items addressed include:

- Plant and site inspections
- Timing of transplanting
- Root ball size (includes palms)
- Digging the tree or shrub
- Protection
- Methods
- Lifting
- Transporting and storage
- Digging the hole
- Installing woody plants

64 Planting practices

64.1 Planting objectives

Planting objectives shall be established prior to beginning operations.

64.1.1 Potential conflict with utilities, lines of sight, buildings, and other infrastructure should be avoided. Tall-growing trees shall not be planted directly under overhead primary distribution and transmission electric lines.

64.1.2 Bare root trees should be planted at the optimal time of the year for the plant species, see Annex A.

64.2 Plant and site inspections for planting

64.2.1 Trees shall meet the planting objective.

64.2.2 Tree condition, quality, and acceptance criteria for planting should be specified in writing.

64.2.2.1 Tree condition, quality, and acceptance criteria should include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

- a. general health;
- b. general structural condition;
- c. root collar/trunk flare condition and location;
- d. crown shape;
- e. size of root ball/quality of root system;
- f. foliage color or density; and,
- g. any other related issue that will impact the estimated rate of success.

64.2.3 Trees that do not meet the condition, quality, and acceptance criteria should be rejected for planting.

64.2.4 A soil nutrient analysis, density, texture and percolation test should be performed at the planting site.

64.2.5 Drainage should be adequate for the species being planted.

64.2.6 If a condition is observed while the work is being performed requiring attention beyond the original scope of work, the condition shall be reported to an immediate supervisor, the owner, or person responsible for authorizing the work.

64.3 Tools and equipment

64.3.1 Equipment and work practices that cause damage to the plant, beyond the scope of the work, should be avoided.

64.3.2 Digging and root pruning tools shall be sharp in order to cut without breaking, crushing, or tearing roots.

64.3.3 Mechanical digging and root pruning equipment shall be maintained according to manufacturers’ recommendations to minimize root damage.

64.3.4 Lifting cables, chains, straps, and/or slings shall be inspected and certified, see Annex C.

64.3.5 Lifting cables, chains, straps, and slings shall be used according to manufacturers’ instructions and specifications.

64.4 Digging the hole

64.4.1 The final depth of the planting hole is determined by the depth and firmness of the root ball and other characteristics of the site and shall not exceed the depth of the root ball.

64.4.2 The depth of the root ball shall be measured from the bottom of the trunk flare to the bottom of the ball.

Figure 64.4.2 A discernable trunk flare (zone and bottom).

64.4.3 The soil directly beneath the root ball should be undisturbed or prepared to prevent settling.

64.4.4 The planting hole width should be a minimum of 1.5 times the diameter of the root ball or soil surrounding the upper 1/3 of the planting hole.
should be loosened to a width of 1.5 times the root ball diameter.

New figure 64.4.4 to show both options with option 2 diagram to show tree spade.

64.4.5 The sides of the planting hole should be loose. Figure 64.4.5 A properly prepared planting hole.

64.5 Installing woody plants
64.5.1 Circling and kinked roots should be straightened or severed.

64.5.2 Trees or shrubs should be placed in the same compass orientation from which they originated, if known.

64.5.3 Bare root plants should be installed so that their root system is evenly distributed in the planting hole.

64.5.4 The bottom of the trunk flare shall be at or above the finished grade.

64.5.5 All root ball supporting materials should be cut-off from the top third of the root ball and removed from the planting hole prior to final back filling.

64.5.6 Installing container stock
64.5.6.1 The container shall not be removed by pulling or leveraging the trunk of the tree. Appropriate removal methods include, but are not limited to, bending, wiggling, and/or cutting the container.

64.5.6.2 Fabric grow bags must be removed from the sides. Bags should be cut away after setting the tree in place.

64.5.6.3 Paper/pulp type containers should be removed. Pulp containers that do not slide off readily should be cut.

64.5.6.4 Container cutting method
64.5.6.4.1 If it is possible to cut the container, the bottom should be cut and removed first, then the tree should be set in place, and finally the side walls should be cut and removed.

64.5.6.5 Prior to planting, the container root ball should be managed, methods include, but are not limited to, slicing the root ball, shaving the root ball, and redirecting roots, see Annex A.

64.5.7 Backfill
64.5.7.1 Backfill should be similar to the soil at the planting site or amended to meet a specific objective.

64.5.7.2 Organic amendments incorporated into backfill and/or surrounding soil should not exceed 10 percent by volume.

64.5.7.3 The back-fill soil shall be installed and settled in layered sections to limit future settling and prevent air pockets.

64.5.7.4 Backfill shall not be compacted to a density that inhibits root growth.

64.5.8 Water should be added to the root ball and surrounding soil to bring the root ball to field capacity.

64.5.9 Mulch should be applied near, but not touching, the trunk out to the perimeter of the planting. Initial depth of organic mulch should be between 2 and 4 inches (5 and 10 cm).

64.5.10 Mulch type shall be specified to meet an objective.

64.5.11 Trunks should be protected when damage from sunlight, animals, or other causes is likely.

64.6 Support systems
64.6.1 Support systems shall not be specified or installed except when needed.

64.6.1.1 When needed, support systems shall be installed according to ANSI A300 Part 3 – Supplemental Support Systems.

64.7 Post-planting care practices
64.7.1 Post-planting care shall be specified for an appropriate period of time based on the region, site conditions, and species.

64.7.2 Post-planting care for a minimum of one year should be considered.

64.7.3 Specifications for post-planting care should consist of, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

a. soil moisture management;

b. mulching;

c. integrated pest management;

d. prunings (see ANSI A300 Part 1 – Pruning standard);

e. monitoring;

f. nutrient management (see ANSI A300 Part 2 – Soil Management standard); and,

g. maintenance/removal of tree support systems (see ANSI A300 Part 3 – Supplemental Support Systems standard).

For the full revised standard, with annexes, go to go to www.treecareindustry.org/standards/CurrentProjects.htm.
Giant hogweed can burn, blind – invading Northeast

“Should you be walking along a damp abandoned railroad right-of-way, a wet roadside ditch or a stream bank and stumble upon a plant that looks like Queen Anne’s lace with an attitude — more than 10 feet tall with two-inch thick stems, flowers two or more feet across and leaf clusters as wide as you can stretch your arms — stay clear,” says Charles R. O’Neill, Jr. in his New York Sea Grant report on the giant hogweed (Heracleum mantegazzianum) [www.nyis.info/plants/PDF/Giant_Hogweed_FS_Print_Rev081009.pdf].

“Giant hogweed can make a case of poison ivy seem like a mild itch,” O’Neill says. “It’s one of the few invasive species that has such a severe human health impact, and people should really know about it,” O’Neill, coordinator of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Invasive Species Program in Ithaca, N.Y., told DiscoveryNews (news.discovery.com).

“Amember of the carrot and parsley family of plants (Apiaceae), giant hogweed is native to the Caucasus region of Eurasia. Because of its unique size and impressive flower head, the plant was originally introduced to Great Britain as an ornamental curiosity in the 19th century. The plant is named after the mythological god, Hercules (he of robust size and strength). It was later transported to the United States and Canada as a showpiece in arboreta and Victorian gardens. It was also a favorite of beekeepers because of the size its flower heads (the amount of food for bees is substantial). A powder made from the dried seeds is also used as a spice in Iranian cooking. Unfortunately, as with so many invasive plants, giant hogweed escaped cultivation and has now become naturalized in a number of areas in New York and other parts of the Northeast U.S.

The plant’s stems die in the fall and remain standing through the winter, topped with the huge, brown dead flower heads. Seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to 10 years.

For more on how to identify giant hogweed and other facts about it, download the fact sheet noted at the beginning of this article.
Douglas A. Young, 62, was removing stumps on his property. Witnesses said they
heard an engine revving and then a crash. The 20-inch-diameter tree wound up
entirely inside the 2001 Chevrolet pickup’s engine compartment. Rope was tied around
the trailer hitch. The driver wasn’t wearing a seat belt. He was pronounced dead at the
scene, according to the Kitsap Sun report.

Submitted by Doug Cleland of Cleland’s Tree Removal in Port Orchard, Wash.

Man dies while trimming tree

A Carson City, Nevada, man died July 11, 2011, while trimming trees for his lawn care
business. Dan Horrigan, 58, was pronounced dead as his body hung from the
tree. Horrigan had secured himself 20 feet in the air to trim a tree.

According to a witness, he asked for some Gatorade, complained of thirst and dizzi-

ness, then collapsed. When emergency crews arrived, they found Horrigan dead,
according to www.nevadaappeal.com.

Man killed pulling stump with truck

An Olalla, Washington, man died July
12, 2011, when the pickup he was using to
pull stumps crashed into a big fir tree.

Douglas A. Young, 62, was removing stumps on his property. Witnesses said they
heard an engine revving and then a crash. The 20-inch-diameter tree wound up
entirely inside the 2001 Chevrolet pickup’s engine compartment. Rope was tied around
the trailer hitch. The driver wasn’t wearing a seat belt. He was pronounced dead at the
scene, according to the Kitsap Sun report.

A tree climber survived a 50- to 60-foot fall from a pine tree July 15, 2011, in
Gulfport, Mississippi. Billy Brown, 41, was helping a crew remove the large pine with a
precarious lean from a derelict property for the city. Brown shimmied up the tree in
spiked boots and a safety harness. He was cutting limbs from the top of the old tree and
planned to lop it off in sections. He was roping pieces down when his harness
apparently failed and he fell to the ground.

Brown lay at the tree’s base, a bone protruding from his left ankle, talking, but
apparently in a lot of pain, according to a witness. Emergency responders took him to
Memorial Hospital. He had fractured his pelvis and was airlifted to the University of
South Alabama Medical Center in Mobile, according to a Sun Herald report.

Climber survives 50 foot fall

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Climber survives 50 foot fall
Redwood Trees — Seen One, Seen ’Em All

By Peter Deahl

O nce upon a time there was a President ... of the United States. He was loved by many and even now is referred to by some as one of our great Presidents. I never gave much thought to his texture until he said something that caught my attention like green briar on a silk skirt. He simply said, and I quote. “If you’ve seen one redwood tree you’ve seen them all.”

My wife, Bonnie, took me to Eureka, California, to see the redwoods for my 60th birthday, which gives me license to respond to our late President’s comment. I disagree, Mr. President, and will therefore assume you were our only visually impaired President, or never saw a redwood or have never been to Northern California.

I have seen the redwoods and therefore beg your leave that I might present my case.

First, let’s consult an expert who has been thoroughly immersed in the life history of the coastal redwoods. Let’s ask arborist and entrepreneur Donald Blair. In my opinion, Blair has more experience recreationally and professionally with coastal redwoods than any arborist I have had the pleasure of knowing. He is a true American tree loving character, as was his dad, and all you’ll need to do is flip Don’s starter switch to the “on” position and he’ll take it from there. Just for grins, ask him when all other “tree save” measures have failed, how to take one of these Pacific giants apart.

Next, go to Northern California and take a stroll through Jedidiah Smith State Park and take one of these Pacific giants apart. He simply said, and I agree. “If you’ve seen them all.”

Years ago, I was with a blind man in Washington state looking at America’s largest spruce tree. As he and I looked in awe at this marvelous creature he suddenly and boisterously announced to everyone that this was – the most beautiful tree he “had ever seen.” In a mere moment, my blind friend had suddenly taught me that just because a person is sightless does not mean they cannot see. I had only known my blind friend for three minutes; three minutes that will live with me forever, and it was all because of one tree.

As a preface to your trip, before you go to Jedidiah Smith, read the book Wild Trees by Richard Preston and follow the Sillett brothers, Michael Taylor and friends as they discovered America’s tallest trees. Then, upon your return from the forest tell me if all the trees looked the same to you. Color, texture, feel, smell, taste, sound, the connected forest, the connected flora and animals, the turquoise streaks of the varied thrush, the ferns that tower above your head, the ground cover sorrel as big as silver dollars and the fallen 15-foot diameter log that has 100 annual rings squeezed into an inch of space.

I find it difficult to explain how the redwoods made me feel, that is what trees seem to do best – they have ethereal talents that make us feel the way we do. We don’t often remember what someone said but we rarely forget how they made us feel. I believe the natural world possesses this same attribute.

I am fortunate to have worked as an arborist and have spent almost 40 years learning as much as I can about trees and their peripheral associations. I can thank TCIA and the ISA for that and will never forget my friend and mentor, Dr. Alex Shigo. I am also glad that I have spent time learning taxonomy of the flora and fauna that surround me as I meander through forests and meadows. I think I appreciate the redwoods because I have learned so much about the smaller trees that are so wonderfully synonymous with their larger cousins. Learning about trees has helped me understand how this giant woody organism functions while leaving me with myriad questions yet unanswered.

How can anyone say, “Seen one seen ’em all” when it comes to a tree? Even staplers, garbage trucks, mail boxes and tuna fish cans are different. Snow flakes, white oaks, light bulbs and even piles of camel dung are different from each other. How can the largest, heaviest, tallest and most complex organism on earth be the same as all the rest of its kind?

What I’m trying to tell you is this: If you have not been to Northern California to see the redwoods, tell your boss that you just need four days – a short sabbatical – and that you promise to come back (your return home is likely, but not a guarantee). You’ll find out what I mean as soon as you arrive.

When we first arrived we stopped the car on an isolated dirt road in the middle of the forest and stepped into the giant’s land. In front of me stood literally thousands of trees cascading into a ravine 200 feet below while still 100 feet over my head, and most were at least 15 to 20 feet in diameter. At that moment I lost contact with planet earth and had no idea where I was. All the stories of how cool this trip would be disappeared because none of them mattered or measured up. I was in nirvana, the hallowed earth, time had stopped and allowed me to step in and share the unimaginable. I had to be there to know it, never, ever to be the same person I had been before my arrival – but we had to move. We drove further; to another part of the forest where somehow the trees were even bigger! Northern California too far for you to go? Allow me to help you with your journey west.

John Muir, remember him? He’s the guy that started all this tree nonsense, sort of a father naturalist. He was into trees, birds, rocks, dirt, weather – all the stuff we take for granted. He lived in Washington, D.C., as a younger man and one day heard of a place in the savage American west called Yosemite. Yosemite and Yellowstone were our first National Parks, thanks to Mr. Muir. Hearing what he had about Yosemite, he decided to find this place and see it for himself first-hand which he did. Muir was in Washington, D.C., which is obviously a great distance from Yosemite in California, but that didn’t stop him – he walked!

Read Wild Trees and go to Northern California. You’ll never be the same, you’ll be better. And then you can do what Dr. Shigo asked all of us do in the first place. “Touch trees” – great big trees!

Next, King’s Canyon and Sequoiadendron giganteum!


And one more thing ... for all you arborists who live in Northern California, do yourselves a favor and come east, and we’ll show you the biggest, dawn redwood bald cypress trees you’ve ever seen!

Peter Deahl is an ISA Certified Arborist, and founder of FinePruning, L.L.C. and Arbor Artist, Inc., both of Sterling, Virginia.

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