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very tree care company owner has horror stories of problem customers. I recall one member who recounted the tale of a client who refused to pay for a stump removal job. The member had arrived at the site, ground the stump down to 12 inches below ground level, cleaned the chips, and added soil and grass seed. In other words, he did everything he would normally do. The client refused to pay because the company had promised “removal,” and much of the tree’s root system remained underground!

This was obviously a one-time job and the member would never bid work for that client again. (He later heard stories of similar shabby treatment of other local contractors.) What about the tougher cases, where you have a long-time client who is suddenly slow to pay or now balks at paying bills that had always been routine? What about a customer who takes up too much of your time asking for clarification? Or the one who seems to be questioning your expertise or integrity by seeking details? Have you ever fired a customer in the middle of a job?

I ask because I was shocked recently when the contractor I hired to put an addition on my house essentially threatened to fire me in the middle of the project. It made me sit back and ask, “Am I suddenly that unreasonable, irrational client? Do I deserve to be fired?”

I then looked for the similarities between remodeling a house and contracting for tree work. Both are expensive to the point where the client wonders how such a seemingly simple job could possibly cost so much, not understanding the expenses that justify the prices. Both are specialized work, where the client probably has limited knowledge of exactly what it takes to finish the job. I know what scraping and painting a house should cost; I used to do it. But I have no idea how much framing and rebuilding rooflines should cost.

For your clients, the lack of knowledge can lead to misunderstandings and perhaps unreasonable conflict. Clients are faced with paying a lot of money for something they don’t fully understand. Knowing little and being at the mercy of a contractor is an uncomfortable feeling.

As our construction project has proceeded – and the list of extra items not in the original contract has grown – a little voice the back of my head has been whispering, “You’re getting ripped off.” Am I? Is the contractor making a respectable 10 percent or will he be laughing about how well he did on my job for the next decade? That’s part of the problem; I don’t know for sure.

I grew up and was trained to believe that the customer is always right. For the past decade or so, however, a growing movement of writers and business consultants have been telling us that the customer isn’t always right. They urge businesses to fire the unreasonable or even marginally profitable customer. Many companies rightly pre-qualify requests for bids, knowing that they don’t want to waste time pursuing low bid contracts they probably won’t get anyway. I suppose at some point firing an existing customer is the prudent course of action, too. But that small, marginally profitable job today may turn into a larger one tomorrow. Maybe the customer is testing you with a small job before trusting you with major work.

Before you leap on the “fire your customer” bandwagon, do a little homework and answer these questions: What is the long-term value of each customer? Who are your most profitable customers? Which customers are your loss leaders? Which customers offer the most profitable future for your company?

Consider the consequences of firing too many customers, even if you think it best. I’m going to be sitting on my new deck with friends and neighbors for the next three decades (hopefully). When they ask who did the work and would I recommend them, I can give one of two answers – great company or run away as fast as you can. I have a long memory and strong opinions. Those unhappy or marginally profitable customers you’re thinking of firing probably do, too.

Mark Garvin
Publisher
Dispose of waste wood without breaking the bank! Finally… there is a horizontal grinder within reach of the small contractor. The RAYCO RH1754 is the newest addition to RAYCO Manufacturing’s line of environmental equipment. It is designed to be both compact and affordable. Available as either towable or self propelled on a steel tracked undercarriage, the RH1754 allows easy transportation from job to job and can be maneuvered and operated on small jobsites, inaccessible to larger machines. This unit is highly productive and capable of grinding a wide variety of wood waste materials. Ideal for processing tree limbs and brush, saw-mill waste, dimensional lumber scraps, pallets, and for re-grinding wood chips. It offers an economical solution for reducing wood waste, lowering dumping costs, and creating high quality mulch. Contact your authorized RAYCO dealer for more information or call 800.392.2686 for a dealer near you.
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MAY

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When a regional trade expo draws more than 500 visitors from eight countries, 28 states, the U.S. Forest Service and a U.S. Congressman, something’s up. If the 2012 Northeast Biomass Heating Expo and Conference is any indication, one of the new opportunities to watch out for, especially in tree care, is “biomass.” Held in Saratoga Springs, New York, in late March, this trade and policy expo drew top experts from business, the nation’s campuses and local, state and national governments to discuss opportunities in biomass.

Biomass is plant, vegetation or agricultural material, once and often still considered waste, used for the purposes of creating energy – heat and electricity. Biomass includes wood, corn, certain cultivated weed crops, such as shrub willow, and woody grasses.

Given the fact that the spot price for home heating fuel is just over $4 a gallon and some of the biomass fuel equivalents are under $1 ($2 for processed pellets), it’s no wonder biomass is getting so much attention.

What the biomass movement means to the tree care industry may be quite significant; in fact, the tree care industry is poised to be one of the largest benefactors. For more than half a decade, TCI Magazine has been writing about the profit potential, not to mention the environmental benefits, to be had from chips and ground wood material, items not so long ago considered waste. All the material that at one time had to be disposed of, often at significant expense, now has monetary value. Even now, many smaller operators are still throwing money away by disposing of their wood waste, but that no longer need be the case. Mulch processors are now actively paying for this “product” and are looking for new sources of chip materials.

As the cost of traditional fuels climbs and the rush is on to find alternative sources of energy that are relatively clean, wood for fuel is making a comeback. Firewood certainly fits the bill, but to an ever growing extent, so do wood chips, which can be used either in their raw form in many electricity and heat generating applications or further processed into wood pellets or other products such as “bricks,” which like pellets, “densify” wood products for stoves and furnaces built to burn them. They are larger than pellets, easier to handle and store, and present an alternative to pellets; both are forms of processed wood biomass fiber.

To give you an idea of the rising value of biomass as a fuel, consider the following from the Massachusetts Department of Energy’s report, “Renewable Heating and Cooling: Opportunities and Impacts Study,” released in coordination with the...
state’s clean energy center. The study, which evaluates commercially available renewable thermal energy technology such as biomass heating and related opportunities, is on-point when it comes to the potential of biomass.

Some of the report’s findings include the fact that “given the right market conditions, “...expansion of the biomass thermal market will help reduce greenhouse gasses by a half million tons a year and create more than 2,000 jobs in the Massachusetts region.” Moreover, the report continues, despite the lack of incentives, “commercial biomass thermal systems are estimated to achieve payback within two to five years if replacing fuel oil or electric heat,” a fact that should drive rapid adoption and expansion of biomass as a heating and power-generating fuel.

The Massachusetts report and others like it across the nation are but a few illustrations of the growing intrigue with biomass. And it is illustrative of why the Northeast Biomass Heating Expo and other shows like it are getting so much attention.

Over the course of the three-day expo, speakers and seminars largely addressed the issue of implementing strategies to accelerate the adoption and growth of biomass heating in the Northeast. (There is also the twin issue of using biomass as fuel for power generation, which furthers the interest in this renewable energy source.)

The potential demand for wood products is staggering. According to one speaker, Guillermo Metz of the Cornell University Cooperative Extension Service, U.S. census statistics show that in New York alone, more than 127,000 households already heat with wood as either a primary or secondary source. Metz is deeply involved in educating wood burning consumers about the best burn practices, which include using EPA-approved stoves and furnaces, which burn cleaner and more efficiently. And that involves getting the most money out of every cubic foot of wood product burned, further driving down the cost of heating.

**Value of wood vs. fuel oil**

Jeff Forward is a renewable energy consultant with Yellow Wood Associates, a consulting firm with experience in rural community economic development. He talked about his involvement in Vermont exploring the feasibility of biomass projects for institutional and commercial users. (Forward reports that the Vermont state capitol and 45 schools already are heated with wood products.)

He says that about 85 cents in biomass products does the same job as a $4-plus-a-gallon oil (based on wood chips and other
biomass materials now fetching about $55 a ton nationally). He also points out that biomass, that is, processed chip material, actually costs about a quarter of the cost of firewood, which even makes biomass competitive with natural gas. “Even pellets made from wood chips are half the cost of oil. That’s economically feasible.”

“Another thing that makes wood an attractive energy source is that, based on Vermont statistics, wood’s cost has remained stable over the last decade, whereas oil has risen eight-fold,” Forward says. It’s not necessarily the low cost of wood and other biomass products, but the stability of its cost, as opposed to the volatility of oil prices, that makes biomass heating so attractive to large, budget-minded organizations such as schools, he says.

“A major concern, of course, is that of resource depletion,” Forward says. One question that arises regularly during the planning stages comes from users and taxpayers eager to be assured that there is sufficient material to feed the boilers. He and other speakers repeated the refrain that biomass users need only partner with sources such as foresters, sawmills and tree care companies to fill the need.

He also cites a slew of other compelling arguments that make the case for biomass fuel: In addition to being clean, biomass furnaces tend to last longer and require less maintenance than traditional oil, gas and coal units; wood ash is not hazardous and can be used as a soil amendment; wood and other biomass is a stable, all-American commodity; compare that with imported oil.

Regarding chip quality, Forward says moisture content matters. Boiler manufacturers do not encourage the use of fuel that’s too dry since their units are designed to run with high moisture content, at about 2,000 degrees for a moist chip versus 3,000 degrees for dryer, faster burning material. There’s also a built-in safety feature with fresh chips, according to Forward: “They are not likely to ignite easily or by accident.”

Most boilers can burn either hard or soft wood, but generally not on the same day, he adds.

All of that is good news to tree care professionals, who are usually working with green materials, because that means that as soon as tree waste is processed it becomes a product that can be sold immediately.

Forward was followed on the last day of the expo by Jonathan Kays, a professional forester affiliated with the University of Maryland Extension Service. Kays’ mission is to build a statewide wood energy coalition to see biomass become part of Maryland’s energy policy. His take is that, “Even slight changes (in state policy) would foster significant investments in wood energy.” That includes residential
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firewood, wood pellet production, and wood chips for business and institutional use, such as schools, hospitals and town halls, even district (neighborhood) heating of villages as is popular in some of the Scandinavian countries. It is this kind of thinking that is driving the adoption of biomass so quickly.

The closing panel cited a recent risk/reward report by noted research firm Harrison Interactive that boiled down the challenge of biomass versus other non-traditional fuels. Biomass, according to research, came in “dead-last” with respect to the public’s familiarity, due largely to the general media’s and government’s fascination with solar, wind and geothermal sources. “People just do not know about biomass,” said one panel member, specifically its reliability… that there is virtually no risk to the availability of biomass feedstock as there is with the unreliable nature of solar and wind power.

The bottom line is that commercial arborists are at ground-zero when it comes to being a supplier of environmentally friendly fuel for heat and electricity. And what this biomass expo revealed is that anyone who produces wood waste can get in on the action. The more you know about the coming market, the better you can plan for a new profit center, confidently market your services and products, and more profitably sell at the best margin to a long-term customer.

Makers of chippers and grinders are already in the game. According to Jason Morey at Bandit Industries, “We are getting busier on whole-tree (chopper) side, especially with the Bandit Beast Recycler.” (The Bandit Beast is used in Poland to process grasses into biomass.)

“We have been talking to tree service companies about what to do with their waste materials, and as (biomass) plants go in we tell them,” Morey says. “Even now, many are paying to get rid of their chips and are happy to know they have an outlet.”

Morey adds that, “Each facility will have specific requirements as to what they can take (in terms of wood type and chip size), but most tree services can easily meet those requirements. Business can go to anyone with even the smallest dump trailer.”

To help achieve this, for example, Bandit makes a screen for its chippers to assist in creating specified-sized chips to meet each facility’s chip needs. Though largely for the overseas market so far, Bandit just took an order for and is currently building a screened unit from a New Jersey company.

“The screen can even go on one of our smaller machines, an 18-inch drum-style chipper. The function of the screen is to keep material in the chipper until material is sized to go thru the screen, then be vacuumed out quickly. We offer a whole line to accommodate users from smallest guy to the largest, needing whole tree chippers.”

Similarly, Jason Showers at Morbark says, “Demand for equipment is definitely on the up-tick, especially given the cost effectiveness to produce biomass products versus those from crude oil,” he says. To address that market, “we’ve got machines for the small operator to the seasoned veteran.”
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Among those machines are disc chippers and flail de-barkers that can be purchased as one combined unit or separately. (Debarking is important since many biomass installations do not accept chips with bark.) Some Morbark machines are capable of accepting tangled brush and otherwise non-salable wood, such as juvenile lumber, and turning it to valuable chips.

Vermeer is helping contractors, farmers, ranchers and foresters take advantage of the new and emerging opportunities in biomass collection, harvest and processing, according to Jay Van Roekel, biomass business manager for Vermeer. Vermeer is betting that the increasing demand for energy will position biomass, in addition to other renewable sources, for tremendous growth in today’s environmentally conscious world.

“For years many companies around the globe have been collecting waste by-products produced during day-to-day operations to be used as “biomass” for the production of power. Its importance will only continue to grow as the supplies of coal, oil and natural gas are depleted,” according to Van Roekel. And as global efforts to recycle and repurpose waste products are expanded, the need for innovative processing equipment will continue to grow.

“Vermeer manufactures some of the best brush chippers, whole tree chippers and grinders in the industry. This equipment is critical to contractors and loggers working in these emerging markets to process wood waste into valued materials,” Van Roekel says. “As the Vermeer product line continues to grow and evolve to meet the needs of current and new customers, the knowledge we have and the groundwork we build today will help propel this important industry forward.”

At the Northeast Biomass Heating Expo, one of the nearly 75 exhibitors was Rotochopper, maker of large-scale industrial grinding equipment for biomass fuels, landscape mulch, animal bedding, compost and many other applications, including the “Perfect In One Pass” mulch processing and coloring system. Monte Hight, Rotochopper marketing vice president, says, “In terms of tree care in general we see growth in the market in general, especially when combined with biomass, as people are getting more back into getting work done as the economy eases. We continue to see growing activity in colored mulch, but now are experiencing interest on the biomass side of things as people are definitely looking to make a product from a chip rather than get rid of it.”

“Over the past few years we have seen an increasing demand for wood fiber, biomass or mulch. Whereas arborists would have to previously pay to get rid of it, now they can sell it at least at a profit,” Hight says, “especially if they can work out a long-term deal.”

“We also are finding that if a company starts out making mulch or biomass products from tree care waste, they will ultimately also turn to other sources such as scrap pallets and sawmill waste to increase their output,” Hight adds.
Closing remarks


“Biomass in all its forms needs to be part of America’s mid- to long-term plan for energy independence,” he told TCI Magazine. “Wood, like other biomass materials, helps not only capture energy but also drive down its cost, which is so important to our economy, especially right now, and to the working family because of jobs and keeping family expenditures down.”

“I believe in an all-of-the-above energy approach and believe biomass can be a part of that for residential and commercial energy use because it is a native resource, it is clean and renewable, it is carbon-neutral and it is plentiful. Trees, as part of the biomass equation, can help the United States come off fossil fuels, create job growth and impact our foreign policy in a positive way. Let’s see less talking and more doing to make biomass a responsible part of our energy equation.”

So, gone are the days when we can let the chips fall where they may. One of the big beneficiaries of the convergence of the environmental movement and the energy debate should be members of the tree care industry.
Altec increases equipment price in May

Altec Industries, Inc., implemented an average price increase of approximately 4.5 percent, effective May of 2012.

“This increase is necessary due to a series of market conditions that have impacted the manufacturing industry, including increases in material and operating costs, commodity demand, and the effects of expanded government regulation on the industry,” a release from the company stated. “The U.S. Department of Labor reported material used to manufacture our units has increased 7.1 percent in 2011, and that percentage continues to grow in 2012.”

Altec remains focused on a range of cost-management initiatives to minimize the price adjustments, including lean manufacturing processes and comprehensive supply chain management programs.

Fecon adds Southern dealer

Fecon has added Power Equipment Company as their dealer and service provider for Tennessee, Northwest Georgia, Northeast Arkansas, Northern Mississippi and Western Virginia. Power Equipment will offer Fecon’s line of Bull Hog mulchers, FTX track carriers and various other forestry attachments, and will be a local service facility for Fecon products and customers.

“I’m very excited about working with Power Equipment Company as a full service Fecon dealer. With the amount of contractors who are clearing in their territory and the potential for future work, Power Equipment’s presence will certainly be a win for both us and our customers,” said Bob Candee, Fecon regional manager.

Send your Cutting Edge News items to editor@tcia.org.

Important: Rope Bridge Safety info for Weaver Cougar saddle

Weaver Leather has been made aware of a few reported failures of the rope bridges that are a component part of the Weaver Cougar Saddle.

“Weaver Leather would like to remind users that the rope bridges are a replaceable component of the Cougar Saddle and need to be inspected daily and replaced at the first sign of wear, in accordance with Weaver Leather’s instructions and warnings. Daily inspection includes both the cover and rope ends. Also, if the bridge is ever shock-loaded, replace immediately. As a regular safety precaution, due to the rigorous strain and conditions these rope bridges endure, we strongly recommend replacing the rope bridge at the earlier of the first sign of wear or 6 months,” the company warns in a note on its website.

If you need to replace your rope bridge, please contact your local dealer or distributor. Or, for additional information and a video with procedures for replacement, visit www.weaverarborist.com/rope-bridge-safety.php.

Safety issue with FallTech Full-Body Harnesses

Alexander Andrew, Inc., dba FallTech, is warning users of its FallTech Full-Body Harnesses with Quick-Connect (bayonet style) Buckles.

“On an unknown number of harnesses the male and female halves of this buckle set may have been improperly paired (i.e., the female half of the buckle may have been matched with the wrong male half of the buckle). This improper pairing can result in disengagement or unfastening of the buckle while the harness is in use, which can result in serious injury or death,” the company warns in a press release about the problem.

The two buckle models that may exhibit this defect are: Duraform 350 06D and FallTech 5-60.

If you have any FallTech Full Body Harness with either of these buckles in use, or in your inventory that bears a manufacturing date of 10/12/2010-2/9/2012, it needs to be removed from service or stock immediately. The date of manufacture can be found in the center section of the first label on each Full Body Harness.

For a listing of all Full Body Harness part numbers that may contain one or more of these buckles, inspection procedures and/or repair or replacement instructions, visit www.falltech.com or contact FallTech’s Customer Service Department at 1-800-719-4619 or (323) 752-0066.
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Telogis Driver Scorecard

Telogis Inc.’s newly enhanced Driver Scorecard manages and communicates the behavioral factors that directly influence driver safety, allowing for configurable scoring for fleets to improve safety programs as well as communicate safety initiatives to staff, management and insurance providers. The Scorecard is part of the Telogis Fleet Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) fleet management system – designed to easily manage and communicate the behaviors that directly influence driver and asset safety. Scorecard offers extensive metrics to identify risky driving behaviors, improve safety and reduce the time and costs associated with accidents. The platform leverages InSight Alerts to trend driver behavior over time to positively impact driver behavior trends.

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Fecon FTX100 LGP

Fecon’s new FTX100 LGP mulching tractor, equipped with a 99hp Kubota V3800 engine, provides cutting power and traction capabilities for all job conditions. Though similar to the original FTX100, this machine boasts a heavier designed undercarriage. The FTX100 LGP offers both 16-inch and 20-inch track shoe options in single or triple grouser, allowing the contractor to outfit the machine for rough terrain or soft ground conditions, where a light footprint or reduced ground disturbance is important. The 20-inch track provides 4.4 psi ground pressure. Added value features are ground clearance, tractive effort and durability. With the standard quick-attach mounting system, the FTX100 LGP can be equipped to utilize several forestry and construction attachments. Compact size and a weight of 14,950 pounds allow for easy transport with mid-sized trucks.

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T.M. Manufacturing Pro Series skid splitters

Now professionals can split and stack wood from the comfort of a skid loader. T.M. Manufacturing’s Pro Series skid splitters are designed with the loader viewing window in mind, so the operator has a full view of the log and the splitting wedge. Controls inside the cab run off the loader’s hydraulics. T.M.’s seven different models of skid splitters fit most quick-attach systems, assuring that a skid splitter can be matched to your skid loader/tool carrier and your skid-splitting needs. Three optional cylinder strokes allow log lengths of up to 37 inches, with no limit on log diameter. Three piston bore sizes allow choices on the combination of power and operating speed (bigger piston means more power; smaller piston means more speed).

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**ArborSystems Wedgle carrying case**

ArborSystems’ new rugged, high-impact-plastic carrying case for the Wedgle Direct-Inject Tree Treatment System is designed to assure everything for use is in one place, which will help keep tree care professionals’ trucks organized.

The all-in-one case, included at no extra charge with every new Wedgle Direct-Inject System purchase, holds the injection unit, all tools and up to four 120 ml chemical packs. A deluxe version includes 12 Portle injection tips and a tip setter for treating conifers. Existing Wedgle owners can upgrade their case for $75.

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**ECHO Bear Cat Log Splitter**

ECHO Bear Cat’s new LS27 Log Splitter, with 27-ton splitting capacity, replaces the company’s LS27270 and LS27270T models and offers a range of options and kits to custom design a machine to fit varying user requirements. The 4-Way Wedge Kit is placed over the original wedge and splits the log in four pieces instead of two, allowing for improved efficiency. The Road Towable Kit comes with trailer lights that hook onto the machine, allowing easy and safe towing. Other kits available include: Cylinder Brace Kit, Quick Split Kit, Throttle Down Kit, Log Splitter Cradle Kit and Stripper Plate Kit. The best-in-class bed height provides the user a comfortable operating position, while decreasing physical effort and maximizing efficiency. The LS27 can be used in the horizontal or vertical positions, and a new wider end plate increases stability when operating in the vertical position. The Subaru 211cc OHC Horizontal Engine has a cast iron cylinder liner, increasing the life of the engine and machine itself, while cutting back on maintenance and repairs.

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TREE CARE INDUSTRY – MAY 2012
Events & Seminar

May 1-30, 2012 (Every Tues. & Wed.)
Arboriculture I – Basic Tree Climbing
Committee for the Advancement of Arboriculture
Quail Hill Boy Scout Camp, Manalapan, NJ
Contact: John Perry (732) 833-3025; www.caanj.org

May 11-12, 2012
Northeastern Forest Products Equipment Expo
Essex Junction, VT
Contact: (315) 369-3078; expo@northernlogger.com; nefpexpo.net

May 14, 2012
4th Annual Urban Forest Symposium: Mobilizing Volunteers
University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Center for Urban Hort.; Seattle, WA
Contact: (206) 585-8033; www.uwbotanicgardens.org

June 4-5, 2012
L1 Precision Tree Felling & Chain Saw Handling
2-Day Hands-On Training Module
Haddam, CT
Contact: www.ArborMaster.com; (860) 429-5028

June 6-8, 2012
L1 Tree Climbing Methods & Work Positioning:
3-Day Hands-On Training Module
Haddam, CT
Contact: www.ArborMaster.com; (860) 429-5028

June 11-12, 2012
L1 Arborist Rigging Applications (climbers/aerial lift users)
2-Day Hands-On Training Module
Haddam, CT
Contact: www.ArborMaster.com; (860) 429-5028

June 20-21, 2012
Greenhouse Production Short Course
OSU-OKC, Oklahoma City, OK
Contact: Becky Sellers, ONLA, (405) 945-6737; info@oknla.org

June 28, 2012
Up By Roots with James Urban
Location: Rochester, MN
Contact: www.rochesterarboristworkshop.com

August 9-10, 2012*
Certified Treecare Safety Professional Workshop
Oregon Convention Ctr., Portland, OR
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; peter@tcia.org

August 11-15, 2012*
ISA Annual Conference & Trade Show
Oregon Convention Center, Portland, OR
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com; (888) 472-8733

September 6-8, 2012
Lake States Logging Congress & Equipment Expo
EAA Grounds, Oshkosh, WI
Contact: GLTIP (715) 282-5828; www.timberpa.com

September 19-20, 2012
Certified Treecare Safety Professional Workshop
La Quinta Hotel, Hayward, CA
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; peter@tcia.org

September 20-21, 2012
Rock ’n Grow! ONLA Annual Convention & Trade Show
Hard Rock Casino, Tulsa, OK
Contact: Becky (405) 945-6737; info@oknla.org

October 15-16, 2012
L1 Precision Tree Felling & Chain Saw Handling
2 Day Hands On Training Module
Taylor, Michigan
Contact: www.ArborMaster.com; (860) 429-5028

November 8-10, 2012*
2012 TCI EXPO Conference & Trade Show
Pre-conference workshops Nov. 6–7
Baltimore, MD
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; dcyr@tcia.org

February 10-14, 2013*
Winter Management Conference
St. Kitts Marriott Resort
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; dcyr@tcia.org

* Indicates that TCIA staff will be in attendance

Upcoming FREE* EHAP grant-funded workshops

May 11, 2012 (ENGLISH language)
Sponsor: Arizona Community Tree Council
Phoenix, AZ

May 11, 2012 (SPANISH) language
Sponsor: Arizona Community Tree Council
Phoenix, AZ

May 15, 2012
Sponsor: MO Dept. of Conservation
Wildcat Glades Conservation and Audubon Center
Joplin MO

June 1, 2012
Sponsor: Tree Care Industry Assn
South Seattle Community College – Georgetown Campus
Seattle WA

June 6, 2012
Sponsor: Aloha Arborist Association
Honolulu, HI

TCIA EHAP grant targeted topic training funds provided by grant SH-22312-11-F-33 from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. Total grant award: $165,000. This workshop provided with 100 percent federal funds.

*A nominal fee is charged for lunch.

For additional workshops listings and details for each workshop, or to register, call 1-800-733-2622, or visit http://www.tcia.org/training/ehap.htm.
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How many times have you taken down a tree and wondered whether there just might possibly be more to do with it than firewood, mulch or – as is all too often the case – landfill material? Conventional wisdom is that lumber comes from trees, and trees come from forests, not out of someone’s yard. The stuff that comes out of yards is waste.

The magnitude of this “waste” is staggering. According to the U.S. Forest Service, urban forests cover approximately 21 million acres, comprising 3.8 billion trees. At some point, every one of those trees will be removed, whether due to development or mortality. This amounts to roughly 52 million tons per year for urban tree residues, not counting yard trimmings or land clearing. If half that weight is in usable saw logs, and the average yield is 200 board feet of lumber per ton, that quantity represents 5 billion board feet – about one third of all hardwood lumber harvested in the U.S. Even at $.25 per board foot, that comes to $1.25 billion! The value doubles to $2.5 billion, after the logs are sawn into boards. How much of that are you burning, chipping or dumping?

I called tree services in southwest Missouri to find out whether any of their larger logs are milled for lumber. With few exceptions, most sawtimber-size trees from the local urban areas are either ground up for mulch, cut for firewood, hauled to the land fill, or burned. Three of the tree services I contacted sell the best logs to local sawmills, but none are set up to mill the lumber themselves. Considering the value of the timber resource, why do so many tree care companies see it as a waste disposal problem?

Part of it is a matter of focus. As one person explained, “I’m in the tree care business, not the lumber business. We get in, do the job as quickly as possible, and move on to the next job.” Sound familiar? Taking the time to cut the tree to the proper length for lumber, haul it to a local sawmill, or saw it themselves just doesn’t seem feasible.

Then there is the issue of foreign material in the logs. I cut a lot of urban logs and have hit fence wire, nails, bolts, ceramic insulators, and even an ax head. Most memorable was a walnut log full of con-
crete! For me, it is a matter of replacing a $30 blade and moving on to the next log. It is a different matter for large commercial sawmills where the consequences can be more serious. A sawyer who runs a large circle mill pointed out the metal wall of the mill building that was riddled with holes when the carbide teeth shelled off after sawing into a steel fence post embedded in a log. “It’s a miracle no one was hurt,” he told me. “I totally destroyed a $1,200 blade.” Small wonder that logs brought in on tree service trucks are generally rejected.

But there are opportunities, and a few tree care services are cashing in on them by adding sawmilling to their business. The cost varies with the size and capacity of the machine, but most manual band-saw mills are less than a third the cost of a new pick-up truck, and some can handle logs up to 40-inch diameter and 16-feet long – if you’ve got the muscle power to maneuver the log. Hydraulic log handling is also available, either as a standard option or as a retrofit to a manual mill. Portable mills tow behind a vehicle like a conventional trailer, and take between 10 and 30 minutes to set up, depending on the model. There is a learning curve, and you may need to teach your crews how to cut logs into usable lengths, but leaving an 8-foot log takes less time than cutting it into firewood. The mill itself may be a little intimidating at first, but my experience has been that the machine is easy to learn, and the safety features are pretty much idiot proof. In 12 years of running band saw mills, I’ve had nothing worse than a few splinters.

If you want to explore the possibility of setting up a band mill, one option is to contact a sawyer who is experienced with urban logs and has already solved most of the cutting issues. Even giving the log away saves the expense of cutting it into manageable size pieces to hauling it off. I work with several tree care companies on this basis. One of the biggest challenges is in teaching them that some of the most valuable wood is too short, too crooked, or has too many defects to go to a conventional sawmill, even if metal were not an issue. If I get a call about a good log on the ground, I’ll drop whatever I’m doing and go pick it up.

Because I live near Joplin, Missouri, where a major tornado struck in May 2011, I have salvaged some remarkable logs, some more than 100 years old. I recently milled a half dozen logs from trees that blew down at an Elks’ Lodge where three people died in that tornado. When dry, the boards will go to a high school woodworking class to be made into furniture that will go into the new lodge. If FEMA contractors had picked up the logs, they would have been mulched or buried in the local land fill, along with the other 435,000 cubic yards of tree debris.

Some homeowners are as attached to a tree as they would be to a pet cat or dog. Suggesting that the tree can continue to be a part of their lives as a kitchen table, fireplace mantle or other furniture can help them deal with the loss, and help create good will with your customers. I once milled a burr oak tree in a customer’s yard. There was no way to move the 48-inch-
diameter by 12-foot-long log. It took two days to mill it to his requirements, but he was absolutely thrilled with the results. He has a fireplace mantle and an 8-foot by 4-foot table built out of a single, solid slab from the tree he played in as a child. Other lumber from the tree went into furniture for his children and grandchildren.

Gene Meurer of Meurer Brothers Tree Service of Belville, Illionis, a 25-year TCIA member company, is an ISA certified arborist, competitive climber – and a sawyer. “About 10 years ago, we bought a sawmill so we could put the logs to a better use than just pushing them into a pile and burning them,” he recalls. “Now, when we cut a tree down, we put each part of it to its best use. We have a stack for logs that go to the pallet mill. If it is good for flooring, we’ll make flooring. Crotches and anything with a weird grain, we cut for furniture.”

With the purchase of a second mill, the Meurer brothers now have the capability to cut slabs up to 60 inches wide for table tops and specialty furniture. With five brothers sharing the two sawmills, he says the sawmilling and woodworking dovetail nicely with their tree care service. “Our focus is the tree service, and in the winter we mill the logs, and stack the lumber. In the evening, we’re woodworkers.”

While Gene says that he would like to move more into full-time woodworking, he is first and foremost an arborist. Still, the tree care business and the sawmills have provided the brothers with some outstanding material for their woodworking. “My whole house is built of stuff we cut down,” he laughs. He continues, “a lot of times, the cemeteries, parks and lots being developed yield the nicest logs, but some of the old houses have trees a couple of hundred years old. Occasionally, we find a nice tree in a backyard.” As for metal, Gene acknowledges that he has hit his share. “We’ve got a metal detector,” he explains. “But with the band saw, you just change out blades and keep milling. You have to figure destroying a blade (with metal in the log) as part of the job. Usually it’s nails or screws, but occasionally we hit a bolt or a pipe. Ninety percent of the time, we’re prepared for it.”

Even other tree services will notify Gene
if they have a log they think he would want. “Usually people are pretty cooperative if it finds the best use of a log,” he explains. “I don’t mind driving 30 miles to get a decent log and paying a little for it.” He acknowledges he salvages only a tiny fraction of the resource in his area. “It is unfortunate that there aren’t more tree services using sawmills,” he laments. “A lot of times they’re just ignorant of the fact that they have something worthwhile.”

Adding the sawmills to their business has opened up new possibilities for the Meurer brothers. They have milled flooring from ash trees cut from the customer’s property, and built cypress furniture for a restaurant made from the trees that were removed during its construction. “One lady put a tree trunk in her house as a post support,” Gene comments. The Meurer brothers are looking at expanding the woodworking end of the business with a kiln to dry the lumber, and have a long-term goal of setting up a material yard where people can come and pick out exactly the lumber they want.

Trash, or treasure? It is your choice. If you want to explore the possibility of setting up a sawmill, a great way to start is to yard up some logs and have a portable sawmill owner cut them for you. Most portable sawmill owners are glad to talk about their experiences, and would demonstrate their mills, if asked. Manufacturers’ websites have machine specs, as well as knowledgeable people who can answer questions. Among the sites I check frequently is Norwoodindustries.com, which has its own forum where mill owners discuss ideas. Woodweb.com and forestryforum.com have forums for sawing, as well as listings of portable band-saw operators in the U.S. and Canada.

Dave Boyt has a degree in Forest Management and manages a family tree farm near Neosho, Missouri. He is a certified logger, and has been running band-saw mills for 12 years. He is a frequent contributor to Sawmill & Woodlot Management magazine, and a technical writer for Norwood Industries, a sawmill manufacturer.

Steps and railing made from recycled urban wood.
We are constantly talking about safety, but what is safety to TCIA member companies, and to their employees? Safety – from what I have observed over the last five years traveling around the country – is an idea, a concept, a learning lesson, a statement, a belief, a need, a necessity. Choose one and apply it to you or your company.

What have you accomplished?

Really, if you picked just one of the noted topics, nothing.

I observed a company in a Chicago suburb that had a safety meeting every morning, challenging their employees and sales force to look at the previous day, and what they needed to accomplish on this day. They were talking about the little things that transpired during the work day, not just having a meeting to accomplish some corporate goal. Not noting a benchmark of safety, but actually having everyone, from the most grizzled old timer to the entry level ground man, have the opportunity to say, “You are not doing things correctly or safely!” Good job, you guys! You have actually created a culture of safety.

This is something that is not easy to do. You can preach safety, give out safety manuals, send employees to safety training, spend lots of money, spend lots of time, but until everyone in the company accepts that safety is an all-encompassing ideal, you have not achieved the goal.

How do we develop a safety culture for our companies? Do we hire safety professionals? Do we buy more CDs? Do we enlist more credentialed personnel?

Yes we can do all those things, but that does not develop a culture.

First and foremost, we need to have every employee in the company be involved in protecting each other, and I mean everyone.

I had been asked to visit a larger tree company in the western U. S. because they had had a number of small accidents in a short period of time. I spent the day with their director of safety talking about their situation. This was a TCIA accredited company with a CTSP on staff. They were having regular safety meetings and frequent on-site crew inspections.

At one point I asked, “How is the sales staff involved in the safety program?”

I was told that they were not included in any level of the program. Bingo! We helped establish a plan where the sales force attended tailgate safety meetings and were enjoined in inspecting their jobs for continued adherence to the safety program. The results – a reduction in the number of accidents.

How do we instill a culture of safety? Here are some ideas.

Have a real safety committee, not just something on paper, and have both management and production employees involved. Meet monthly, have someone take minutes, talk about near hits (I do not like the term near misses). Include discussion on employee suggestions. And then publish the meeting minutes so that all company employees can read and comment on them.

Actually react to good suggestions. If an employee suggests purchasing a device and can make a case for safer and more efficient operations, don’t defer, but implement. If you don’t, the good suggestions from the workforce will dry up.

Talk about safety daily. It only takes a few minutes to discuss what went on yesterday, and what we are doing today.

Make tailgate safety meetings enjoyable. You do not have to follow the regimen in a meetings manual. Be inventive, get involved, show interest. Discuss current situations, and have all personnel attend, including management.

Praise verbally. It is not necessary to set up a program where employees are compensated monetarily for safety; as a matter of fact some insurance professionals
regard this as counterproductive (See related Washington in Review column, page 44 in this issue of TCI). But awards such as plaques, safety equipment, letters of praise can go a long way.

Ask your insurance company to get involved. Very often insurance companies have programs and trainers that they will send you at no cost.

Get equipment manufacturers involved. Some manufacturers have training DVDs, and some may send out trainers.

Observe your employees. If you see an employee looking distracted, talk to him or her. See if something is troubling them. If you know an employee is going through a bad stretch, make adjustments in their job. Maybe that employee does not climb or drive for a few days, until they feel more in control. Use a written pre-job hazard report, and have the employees sign off on the paperwork. Use a similar form for storm damage work. These forms are available through TCIA.

Provide a fairly comprehensive defensive driving program for all drivers. Many times the most accidents a company has are on the road, not on the job.

Provide training and training manuals for each piece of equipment an employee might use. Make sure that all safety warnings are in place on equipment, and that the employees understand them.

If you have employees who speak another language, provide them with translated material, and make sure that they understand their jobs and responsibilities. Sometimes it may be necessary to hire a bilingual employee who can train in another language.

These are some ideas, but certainly not all. Learn to think outside the box.

How do we get safer? Include everyone, train always, talk about it, think about it, share ideas and document what you are doing.

John L. Iurka, CTSP, is a TCIA approved accreditation auditor/consultant and TCIAF approved loss control specialist working out of Sound Beach, New York.

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Having a successful business in this economy is more challenging than ever, particularly if that business is tree and landscape. I have been a practicing arborist since 1969, forming my own company, Schwartz Tree and Landscape, in 1984. I was never fully satisfied working for other companies. One winter, when I was out of work, I spoke to my wife about starting our own tree company. Having very strong feelings about doing things my own way, I never felt really compatible with any of the companies that I had worked for. So, in the winter of 1984, the decision was made to open the doors, so to speak, of Schwartz Tree and Landscape, and start in the spring of that year. I had always loved working with trees. The work was physically demanding, very rewarding, and had a sense of reality that taught very real, non-negotiable lessons. Every day was a new episode of You Bet Your Life.

Now the really challenging part began. What are the elements of a successful tree company, and what are the qualities necessary to run such an enterprise? I had always loved being a craftsman. Loving the work as I did made the physical and mental part of the work come relatively naturally to me. I was now cast into the world of acquiring and maintaining equipment, employing and managing others, contacting potential clients and planning jobs.

We obtained a Small Business Administration loan and set out to select and purchase the trucks, saws, ropes and other paraphernalia that would put us on to the road to prosperity. A 12-year-old dump truck with a lift gate that was in reasonable shape and the other bits and pieces were secured. The next step was to hire a crew. I could write a whole book on the lessons that I have learned through the years on the qualities that are necessary to have in a worker that has a good work ethic, the survival skills and common sense to successfully complete a job and interact successfully with a client. The client has to feel like they are in good hands and are being treated with respect. I learned very early in the process that bailing someone out of jail so that they could come to work was one of the pieces that was definitely not a good fit for the vision of the company that I was trying to create.

I thought back to my experiences with the numerous companies I had worked with to determine the positive and negative aspects of each company and situation. I wanted my effort and judgment to be appreciated, and if I had made a mistake, I did not want to be
attacked as a person. I wanted the incorrect action brought to my attention with alternative actions proposed.

I did not want to hire someone who thought that they “knew it all,” because to me, that meant they had stopped learning and could not progress. I can recall one instance where the climber was in a tree cutting a roped piece that weighed about 800 pounds. He was sitting on a branch and had already started to cut. The lowering line was lying directly over his leg. I signaled him to stop and although he was obviously annoyed at me, he complied. I said that the rope was over his leg which was immobilized by the branch and if he completed the cut that he would be injured. He replied that he had done this many times before with no injury. I told him that I knew that he had never done THAT before because he still had two legs!

The next piece of the puzzle was selling and timing jobs. After meeting a client on site, I have to analyze the assets and the liabilities of each different scenario; what has to be done in the arena of plant management to be of long-term value to the client. One important realization about any property is that it is a very dynamic system. In other words, it is a system that is in constant motion with some very complex, and sometimes unforeseeable interactions. I liken it to the strategy in a chess game.

After a mutually acceptable course of action is agreed upon, my next challenge begins. How long is this job going to take? What I am saying is, how long is it REALLY going to take? For myself, I find that there is generally a discrepancy between how I price the job, and the number of man hours that it actually takes, including traveling time. In one way, I’m still amazed that after 40 years of being in the business, I am still capable of totally under-

estimating the time that any particular job will take. When this scenario arises, I make sure that the job is still done properly, with no shortcuts taken. My promise to the client will always be kept, and I will learn my timing lesson and apply it to the next job. The owner’s relationship to his crew is very important. It must be built on a mutual trust, with each side holding up their end of the deal. I tell my crew that our relationship is as follows: I make a promise to the client, and their responsibility is to keep that promise.

The next piece of the puzzle is ethics. Am I just out there selling, or am I competently giving my client advice that will bring long-term benefit to his or her property. We are all works in progress. Speaking for myself, I have always learned more from my mistakes than my successes. That being said, the lesson that I have learned through the years is to learn from my mistakes and not repeat them at a client’s expense.

The next piece of the puzzle is competency. If we are not competent, what are we selling? In Photo 1 is a purple leaf plum, (*Prunus cerasifera*). This tree had fallen over, and a landscaper had righted the plant and supported it with a stake. There is some very pertinent information about this plant that the landscaper was either unaware of or chose to ignore. Root flare at ground level is critical if these plants are going to be capable of supporting themselves with a healthy root system. If the root flare is below grade, the supporting roots die and can no longer do their job. Photo 2 is the base of this plum. Note that there is a straight trunk going into the ground. This should be a red flag to anyone with a plant background. Righting and staking is all well and good, but the most critical part of the cure was left undone. This tree should have had its grade restored so that after the root system redevelops, the tree can support itself as nature intended.

This brings us to another very important point. What happens to these supports? How long should they be left in place, and what happens if they are not removed? Approximately 20 years ago, I came across a commercial development that was landscaped with 4-5-inch ashes and maples. They had been planted three to four years earlier. The supports, each of which consisted of wire with hose around it, were severely girdling the trees. Photo 3 shows one of the girdled trees.

I called the property manager to tell her of the situation, and she replied, “that can’t be, our landscaper was there last week to fix that situation.” I told her to have him check again. A few days later I called her again to check on the progress. She told me that he could not find anything wrong. I told her specifically what the effect of the hose and wire meant to the vascular flow of the tree. He made a return visit to the site. Photo 4 shows the result of his final effort.

What he had done on his first visit was to remove the 2-inch by 4-inch stakes, removing only the stakes while leaving the hose and wire in place. Two different aspects of this scenario left me a bit bewildered.

The first was that this landscaper had worked on this particular property for three years. The growing season is approximately 26 weeks. This company had made 78 visits to this property to care for their plants. In none of their visits was this potentially lethal and expensive situation noticed or dealt with properly. The second aspect of this example was that the property management company had no idea what they were getting for the money.
they were paying. Photo 5 is probably the most outrageous example of support girdling that I have in my files. This is a white pine that was planted 12 years earlier, with the Arbortape (tape or ribbon used to tie or shape young seedlings) support left in place. Every plant has its own particular character and responses. What I find interesting about this response is that the tree was fully foliated with no sign of crown decline. Apparently, the way a white pine deals initially with girdling of this nature is that the xylem functions relatively normally while the photosynthate being carried by the phloem cannot travel beyond the girdled area.

The next piece of the puzzle is industry standards. Thank goodness for ANSI. I received a call from a maintenance man for a local organization. He told me that his boss had asked him to get prices to “trim” the property. The plant material included many diverse ornamental trees and shrubs. This word “trim” is loaded with ambiguity. My definition of trim is as follows: “removal of part of a plant to achieve an objective.”

I walked the property with the maintenance man and realized that different parts of the property had to be treated very differently. The way the proposal request was phrased suggested that someone was being requested to come to the property with sharp tools, cut some plants, and then send the organization a bill. I told him that his request had to be much more specific than that if the property was going to be better off after the trim than before. I offered to write trim specifications for him. He got this blank look on his face, thanked me for my time, and walked back to his office.

Photo 6 is a crabapple that had been trimmed by the company that eventually did the job. The trimming of shade trees has very long lasting effects, as they are larger than ornamentals and live much longer. My company specializes in “naturalized” pruning. Our method is to only remove the liabilities in a tree and make it look like it had never been touched. Photo 7 is a Norway maple before trim, and Photo 8 is a Norway maple after “naturalized” trim.

One of the most unusual scenarios that I have ever encountered was the trimming of two elms. Photo 9 shows the elms at the completion of the trim. As arborists, we know that anything we do to a tree is designed to produce a reaction. In this case, as photo 10 clearly shows, the intent of this manner of trim was designed to turn the tree in photo10 into “Big Bird.”
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The last major piece of the puzzle is the company/client relationship. I believe very strongly that the optimal relationship is symbiotic. I tell any new clients that in my business relationships, I look for long term, symbiotic relationships. I make it clear that if they are displeased or disappointed in any work performed, I want to know immediately. I will make every effort to rectify the situation as soon as possible. Any complaint that comes into the office is addressed immediately. It has been my experience that if a client thinks that his or her concerns are not being taken seriously, our business relationship is over.

This particular time in history has brought our industry to a crossroads. Mediocrity and lack of caring about quality of workmanship are at epidemic proportions. We, as professional arborists, see it daily in much of the tree work cur-
rently practiced. The charge we have been given as professional arborists is to be the “Guardians of Tomorrow.” We have to keep our eye on the ball, and that ball is stewardship.

David L. Schwartz is president of Schwartz Tree Care, Inc., a 15-year TCIA member based in Cranston, Rhode Island. This article was based on his presentation, “Pruning: The Good, Bad and Ugly,” at TCI EXPO 2011 in Hartford. To listen to the audio file of his presentation, visit www.tcia.org and click on podcasts on the homepage; or, in the digital version of TCI Magazine online, click here.

Photo 9 shows the elms at the completion of the trim. As arborists, we know that anything we do to a tree is designed to produce a reaction...

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TREE CARE INDUSTRY – MAY 2012
How many UNSAFE BEHAVIORS can you find in this picture?

In this feature, a take-off of the Highlights Magazine children’s puzzles, our goal is to point out unsafe behaviors that can, and have, led to injuries or deaths in the tree care industry.

One month we run the image and challenge readers to identify one or more hazards depicted. The next month we identify the hazards and run a new picture. The intent is that these will be used individually and/or by crews, for Tailgate safety sessions or in other training.

Email your name, title/job and company name along with the hazards you find to editor@tcia.org. Each month we will draw a name from the list of those who submit the correct hazards and award a prize to one winner.

Extra Credit: Point out any Z133 Standard section numbers violated.

Caution: This is a staged photo intended to show one or more ANSI, OSHA violations, or other hazards. Activities shown are NOT approved practices.

Cuidado: Esta es una foto para mostrar una o mas ANSI, OSHA u otras infracciones de seguridad. Las actividades mostradas no son practicas aprobadas.

For the previous pic, above, which ran in the April 2012 issue, unsafe behaviors include:
1) Using gas powered tools in a pedestrian walkway with no traffic control
2) Fueling in the traffic right-of-way, with back toward traffic
3) Using a chain saw on concrete (Sometimes this is unavoidable. It’s not a violation of OSHA or ANSI)
4) No tarp or barrier under the fueling station
5) Smoking while refueling
6) No PPE (hard hat, ear protection) or gloves on the one refueling
7) No hearing protection on the standing saw operator
8) Equipment shall not be operated within 10 feet of refueling operations
9) Using a chain saw within 10 feet of another worker
10) No cones/signs or job site/work zone set up
11) Appears to be putting oil into fuel fill, and/or
12) Using a non-approved container for gas

Other comments:
a) I would use a funnel or a fuel can with a nozzle.

Congratulations to Matthew MacNally, tree crew foreman for SavaTree in Mashpee, Massachusetts, whose name was drawn from our group of April Hi-Lights respondents. He wins a copy of TCIA’s new Pro Arborist Series Volume 1: Climber Safety, a $44.99 value ($34.99 Member price).
Please clarify treatment options for ALB

I have read, with a great deal of dismay, the article entitled “Asian Longhorned Beetle: The Threat in Black and White,” in the April 2012 issue of Tree Care Industry Magazine.

I direct your attention to the section regarding myths and misconceptions in the treatment of ALB in Southwest Ohio. Your authors, Joe Boggs and Amy Stone, pen as myth #3 “Insecticides are highly effective in controlling ALB: they make treated trees immune to the beetle.” They go on to “dispel” this myth with the conclusion that “... the most effective eradication tool remains the chain saw, with trees being cut down and destroyed.” This statement gives the over-reaching impression that Tree Care Industry Association – Voice of Tree Care, advocates intentionally ignoring an earlier finding referenced by Christine Markham, APHIS ALB national program director, in the Asian Longhorned Beetle Cooperative Eradication Program Strategic Plan, calling on the use of chemical treatment as a part of the overall strategy to combat the ALB. In fact, Christine Markham has cleared the way for chemical treatments to protect uninfested host trees within quarantined areas in Massachusetts to continue for 7-8 years, or until eradication is declared. Yet this glaring APHIS fact is overlooked by your authors.

I would like an explanation of this oversight and a correction to the article in light of support for APHIS findings that 99 percent successful ALB eradication acknowledges the use of chemical treatment as part on an overall strategy, as quoted by Christine Markham.

Doug Simmons
Bethel, Ohio
Editor’s note: The letter writer is a resident/homeowner and a core member of the Bethel ALB Citizen’s Cooperative, a grassroots advocacy group dedicated to the preservation of healthy non-infested trees.

Joe Boggs response: We are perplexed as to why Mr. Simmons is claiming our article does not recognize that insecticides have been used in Asian longhorned beetle eradication programs. In fact, our article states, on page 14, “Insecticides have been used in ALB eradication programs in North America ...” We noted that there are some challenges with insecticide efficacy; however, this is not unique to ALB. As tree care professionals know, insecticide applications always carry a certain amount of uncertainty. That is why we stated on the same page, “... insecticides have always been used in conjunction with other eradication tools.” Of course, one of those eradication tools is the chain saw, which carries a certain efficacy.

Our article makes it abundantly clear that ALB is potentially the most destructive non-native pest to have ever arrived on our shores; we risk losing trees in 13 genera (Acer, Aesculus, Ulmus, Salix, Betula, Platanus, Populus, etc.). ALB is like emerald ash borer on steroids! The overarching goal of our article was to raise awareness of ALB. Thus, while Mr. Simmons claims he read our article “with a great deal of dismay,” we were likewise dismayed that he never mentions in his missive what is truly at stake: failing to eradicate ALB would be catastrophic both to our trees and our tree care industry. We are pleased that he recognized Christine K. Markham, national program director, Asian Longhorned Beetle Eradication Program, USDA APHIS PPQ. She and her dedicated colleagues are why we stated on Page 1, “If there was a silver lining in Ohio, it came in the form of the USDA APHIS; they have been waging war against ALB since 1996. Much has been learned over the past 15 years and several battles have been won – ALB has been eradicated in Chicago and in several locations in New York and New Jersey.”

We fail to see the need to make corrections to our article since our perspectives conform with the overall strategy for ALB eradication programs in the U.S., even as described by Mr. Simmons. However, we hope that he sees the clear need to prevent ALB from spreading beyond its current boundaries; beyond the area in Ohio where he lives. There is simply too much at stake.

Joe Boggs and Amy Stone

Christine Markham also responds: I empathize with the individuals and communities that are dealing directly with ALB infestations. It is devastating to watch (Continued on page 65)
I am sure most regular readers of this publication are familiar with my articles on the various hazards associated with tree work. While there are certainly many more stories to write on the subject of safety (it would be hard to argue that you can have too much emphasis on safety), I thought this time I would focus on a class of arborists we often do not write about, the homeowner, aka, the amateur arborist. You might find this article provides some useful discussion points when faced with a homeowner deciding whether to hire a professional or do the work themselves.

Tree work is among the highest risk professions in the United States, with a fatality rate ranked near commercial fisheries and logging, two industries widely acknowledged for their capability to kill those engaged in the work. Our high ranking is not too surprising, as any activity that combines large, heavy objects, power equipment and height creates a risk-filled environment. I refer to this as high risk, not dangerous, as danger implies there was an element of chance or luck involved in the outcome of an incident. We, as arborists, do not manage danger but we do, and can, manage risk. A tree crew is minimizing risk every day they in the field by establishing work zones, conducting pre-work inspections and briefings and wearing the proper personal protective equipment (PPE). If you want to see dangerous tree work...
work, watch a homeowner.

The Internet is filled with stories and pictures of homeowners who have removed their dead ash or elm, sometimes using rental lifts but often just from ladders. “The money I saved!” is a frequent comment on these sites. However, with the exception of the comical “tree removal gone wrong” videos that appear on YouTube, you rarely see any postings of do-it-yourself removals that did not work out so well. If you want to hear about those, you need to look at homeowner insurance claims, emergency room admissions or the obituaries (or monthly in the "Accident Briefs" listed in TCI Magazine).

Every arborist has probably heard a homeowner exclaim upon hearing the price for removing a particular large tree, “That’s robbery! I’ll do it myself!” (or the equally humorous, “How much can I save if I take the day off from work and come out to help you”).

Removals do look simple; after all gravity rules and a cut tree will fall. The trick, of course, is having it land in the correct space, a thought that often only occurs to the homeowner when they’re standing with their running saw watching the tree come down in precisely the wrong direction.

Each year thousands of homeowners are injured and more than 100 are killed while attempting to perform tree work. Tragically, many of these incidents involve children. No, the children were not felling the tree or climbing high on a ladder cutting branches, rather they were doing what children do outside – play. Unfortunately they were playing in what any arborist would recognize as a work zone, the area in which the tree or branches may land. There have been a number of incidents where children have been killed when the tree came down in a different direction then was anticipated. One fatal incident involved a child playing in a sandbox in front of a 50-foot tree about to be felled. The homeowner misjudged the height of the tree, a misjudgment that will probably haunt him for life. If the potential customer can refer to our removal price as “robbery,” then surely these tragic incidents done for the sake of saving a few dollars could be called far worse.

Another recent incident proved fatal to a homeowner who was attempting to remove a tree while standing on a ladder. The person cut through the hinge and the tree fell on the ladder crushing him to the ground. Homeowners are killed each year because they fail to notch or back cut the tree properly, resulting in falls that come down in unanticipated directions or roll off the stump, striking the feller. Even simple precautions, such as clearing escape routes or using lines or wedges to assist in directing the fall, are routinely ignored by homeowners who assume the work is simple and straight forward.

Another source of incidents is when homeowners rent a lift to remove the tree in sections. There are numerous portable lifts available on the rental market today. Many are not designed for tree work and are better suited to and more maneuverable for painting the second story of a house or other duties. Most I have seen are not to be used as cranes or in the vicinity of electrical conductors, a thought lost on the renter. These portable lifts have been subjected to dynamic loading as large limbs, tied off to the cage, are cut. Overloading the capacity of these lifts can result in the collapse of the machine – the homeowner does not fall from the lift as much as falls with it. Failing to check the environment for power lines, or failing to understand their hazards, also has resulted in incidents and these incidents are almost always fatal.

When a homeowner contacts a 14 kV line while standing in a metal cage, the outcome is as predictable as it is deadly.

Merely running the chain saw creates dangerous conditions for homeowners. A study of emergency room visits in the Midwest found that homeowners attempting to perform tree work were far more likely, in fact five times more likely, to be admitted than professionals, and with much more serious injuries. One reason for this difference was that professionals use PPE – chaps and helmet among other equipment, while homeowners think nothing of running chain saws while wearing shorts and flip-flops.

Homeowners seem to have a very casual attitude toward running chain saws. Despite the fact they are operating a machine that is capable of having 600 cutting teeth per second passing over a single point with each tooth capable of slicing through a quarter-inch of flesh; they seem unfazed by this hazard. Improper chain saw use accounts for 20 to 40 fatalities each year and more than 40,000 emergency room visits among homeowners. Yet every day you can watch homeowners running saws without any PPE to reduce the severity of a potential saw-body contact. And they are usually running the saw above their shoulders with their kids playing next to them. The fact we have incidents with homeowners running chain saws...
is not surprising; what is surprising is that most homeowners survive the experience!

Another danger occurs when the tree finally reaches the ground. I used to give quotes for tree removal that were “too expensive” only to be contacted again once the homeowner got the tree to the ground and did not know what to do with the brush. Sometimes after cutting up the branches and limbs (another task filled with hazards, spring poles being a leading source of incidents among amateur arborists), the homeowners pile the brush in a haphazard manner and then call the tree company back to do the clean-up. They are often surprised to learn, as were some of my customers; that removing the logs and brush may be a significant cost of the removal and a lot more if a mess of tangled branches has to be chipped. I even had some jobs that would have been cheaper had they called us to do the entire removal rather than just dispose of brush!

Homeowners faced with this unexpected clean-up cost (they thought only $50 in the $2,000 quote for the removal was associated with clean-up) resort to renting a chipper in another do-it-yourself attempt to save money. Chippers have been a boon to tree businesses. Rather than having to cut branches and stack them in the backs of trucks or flatbeds, now almost the entire tree can be reduce to a pile of chips. But any machine that can reduce a tree to small fragments less than one-inch in size can do the same to a human being.

Chippers are involved in incidents each year in which hands or feet are pulled in accompanied quickly by arms, legs, torso and head. Homeowners (and professional arborists) are killed each year because they decided to use their foot to kick through a jammed log, only to have their body inadvertently pulled in as the jam clears. A few years ago the youngest person killed by a chipper was only 14 years-old. Felling trees and cleaning up the brush is not for most homeowners and certainly is not an activity to involve the kids.

Homeowners may recognize that the work is beyond their capability and hire someone to do the work. While this is the best option, homeowners need to be cautioned in assuming anyone with a saw and a pick-up is an arborist. Any time you combine unemployment and storms; there will be a lot of folks who figure they might as well start a tree service. There is a steep learning curve to becoming experienced in tree removals and the homeowner may not want to have their property be the training ground. A good consumer will ask questions to determine the level of experience of a company. How long they have been in business, are they members of the Tree Care Industry Association and are their workers certified in the safe operation of equipment and the work, are all good questions to ask. None of these credentials can guarantee nothing will go wrong, but they certainly are good indicators of a company that is professional and safe.

Homeowners should always enquire about insurance. Good tree care companies maintain the proper insurance to protect the homeowner if an incident occurs on their property. Many homeowners are surprised to learn, sometimes too late, that a worker invited onto their property may sue them to cover the cost of any injuries resulting from an incident in their yard. Even more a concern, some homeowner policies will exclude coverage for these claims if the homeowner hires a company that did not have the proper workers’ compensation and liability insurance. I have seen instances where an injured tree worker sued the homeowner for the cost of the injury and the homeowner’s insurance did not provide any coverage. The homeowner is expected to check for insurance and failing to do that leaves them vulnerable to a claim, not the insurance company.

Removing a tree is rarely a pleasant decision for a homeowner. Shade that may have taken a lifetime to create will be missed as well as the other amenities provided by mature trees. However, homeowners should not make matters worse by attempting to do this work themselves or hiring someone who is not qualified or insured to do the work. The loss of the tree should not be compounded by the loss of a life.

Dr. John Ball is a professor of forestry at South Dakota State University, where he instructs courses in arboriculture and serves as the campus arborist.
CTSP CEU Quiz #2012-3: May 2012

1. Which is not a descriptor of safety?
   a. a concept
   b. a need
   c. a necessity
   d. an option

2. You have not achieved your safety goal:
   a. if you have no accidents on the jobsite
   b. until everyone accepts that safety is an all-encompassing ideal
   c. until OSHA signs your company off
   d. unless you use the word “culture” behind it

3. Which is not a way to instill a culture of safety?
   a. record that a meeting was held, even if it didn’t take place
   b. have a real safety meeting with management and production employees involved
   c. react to good suggestions
   d. make tailgate safety meetings enjoyable

4. If you know an employee is going through a rough stretch:
   a. make adjustments in your job
   b. give him/her complex tasks to help focus his/her mind
   c. send them home on leave without pay
   d. make adjustments in their job

5. It only takes a few minutes to discuss what went on yesterday:
   a. so talk about safety daily
   b. so talk about safety weekly
   c. so ignore talking about safety daily
   d. so there is no need to get your insurance company involved

6. Which is an example of an awards program?
   a. plaques
   b. safety equipment
   c. letters of praise
   d. all of the above

Certified Treecare Safety Professionals can earn one (1.0) “professional development” CEU toward their recertification by taking this short comprehension quiz that is tied to this month’s safety articles in this issue of TCI Magazine. The CTSP CEU Quiz is a bimonthly feature in TCI. This quiz is based upon information in the article: “What is Safety?” by John Iurka, (page 26).

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 TCI’s safety articles for training and may wish to use this quiz to test comprehension.

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TREE CARE INDUSTRY – MAY 2012 39
October of 2011 was a tough weather month for those of us in North Jersey. Previously, in August, Hurricane Irene dumped 10 inches of rain on us. Then, on October 29 we saw 6 inches of wet snow while the leaves were still on the trees. The annual rainfall averages is 30 inches. We have had 75 inches two years in a row. Discussions of soil failure and water management have reached new heights.

The hurricane in the middle of October turned out to be a dud. It rained a lot, but the winds never materialized. The media bombarded us with tales of destruction for a week. It has been my opinion for quite some time that the purpose of weather forecasts is to sell advertisements. The hurricane Irene hype fell into this category. The October snow was a different matter altogether.

On Thursday we were told that there would be some snow, a dusting to an inch. Friday morning, after 3 inches fell, the weather people were predicting up to 2 inches of snow. After 6 inches fell, the weather people were saying up to 12 inches of snow fell in some areas, just as they predicted. Oh well, at least they got the names of the days right. I wish the weather people had to plan plow routes by their own forecasts.

As you may have guessed or heard, branches broke on nearly every tree. While most were small, they were hanging from the ends of other branches and many were hard to reach. There was plenty of big stuff down as well. I have seen pictures of storms that did more damage than this one, but this is the biggest event I’ve been through, by quite a stretch.

One thing this storm taught me was that my cell phone holds 35 messages. People who actually were able to get through to me invariably told me my voice mail was full. It stayed full until December 26. I honestly don’t feel I would be a better man if I had 50, 75 or a hundred un-listened-to voice mails. The office phone just rang and rang. The moment it was hung up, it rang again. My secretary/wife at times had to take the phone off the hook for a little while in order to get any work done.

Landscapers asked for crews by the week. The ones that are nice (“please,” “thank you” and paid their bills on time) got their wish. One corporate account needed us for eight straight days for cleanup. This backed me way up. As I wrote this 10 weeks later, we were still not caught up. We worked three straight weeks without a break. I don’t like working seven days a week, along with it just not being safe. I am a Certified Tree Care Safety Professional. Rushing, long hours and just more work than we can possibly get to are more likely to produce an accident. On a personal note, my son is autistic and there fell. The day after the storm was Sunday and everyone wanted everything done right away. Well, that didn’t happen.
is no way to tell Christopher that this is the worst storm in recent memory and Daddy has to work 14 hours a day, seven days a week. If I am not home when I am supposed to be, Christopher has problems.

So what’s the issue? Tree people put in lots of hours. That just goes with our profession. Maybe it’s me, maybe it’s Bergen County, New Jersey, or maybe it just all the customers. My company has two crews – that’s it. When I am getting 100-plus calls a day, 96 people are going to be unhappy. Until this storm, I never knew I had so many Number 1 customers. The sense of entitlement around here is incredible. “It’s just one limb,” “It will only take you two minutes,” “Can you be here today or do I have to call someone else?” Honestly these calls went to the bottom of the list (it was a very long list).

Well, two months later I still had not been paid by most people. Customers have short memories in how important it was for me to be at their home and take care of the work pronto. After the bills went out, the calls changed from, “Where are you?” to “That’s way too much money.” Once the snow melts and the sun is shining, people forget how fast you got to them, working in the snow, in the dark on a Sunday – along with them already knowing the price before we started.

One guy sent the bill back with a note saying he would not pay anything; the bill was for $250. This, my friend, got personal. One of my colleagues put it like this, “I have no friends anymore, only people who are mad the work hasn’t been done yet and people who are mad the work was done.” Every job I did get to, all I heard was how lucky I am to have this much work. I really didn’t need any of this, as I already had work scheduled through the end of the year.

When the next storm comes, and it will, I will be ready. After asking some questions, I realized a lot of this was my fault. Changes will be made. The days of “just take care of it” are long gone. That went away with the economic meltdown. Everybody now wants big jobs for cheap money. From this day on, signed proposals, everyone, every time. I should have been doing this all along. Everyone pays, unless I know you’re a very good payer, the customers will have to be home with check or cash.

I anticipate doing much better on the next storm. Landscapers first, at least the ones that pay well; second, all my regular customers, and; third, people with a pocket full of hundreds. Having a thick skin helps, too. Honesty is the best policy, having an office manager/wife was a huge help. She suggested just telling people we are just too busy to take on more work right now.

It’s spring. I have gotten some rest and have plenty of good work lined up. It is good to be in the tree business.

Colin Milde, CTSP, BCMA and a New Jersey Certified Tree Expert, owns Ramapo Tree & Shrub Care, LLC, an eight year TCIA member company located in Mahwah, New Jersey.
Computer Disasters: Preparing for the Worst

By Reid Goldsborough

Expekt the best, prepare for the worst, according to the maxim. This plays out in interesting ways with personal computers.

Computer disasters run the gamut, resulting from such causes as computer viruses, hard disk crashes, accidentally erased files, accidentally reformatted disks, sabotage, theft, lightning strikes, fires, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and even terrorist bombings.

The recent trio on the East Coast of rare earthquake, rare tornadoes, and common enough hurricane emphasizes the reality of natural disasters.

A ruined computer or broken hard drive may not be anywhere near as tragic as the loss of life, but computer disasters can and have cost people lots of money and hassle, and when crucial data was irretrievably lost, they’ve even caused some businesses to fail.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, according to another relevant maxim.

Here are some important, and relatively easy, preventive measures that any computer user – whether in a business, professional or home setting – can take.

**Back up your data.** This has always been and remains the single most important disaster prevention measure. Even if your computer or other device gets trashed, as long as your data is intact, you’re good to go on a new device.

USB flash drives, also called flash drives or thumb drives, let you store lots of data on a device you can pop into your pocket when heading for safe ground. Kingston Technology (www.kingston.com) offers its brand of DataTraveler flash drives with capacities from 2 to 256 gigabytes targeted to consumers, businesses and government agencies.

Though backing up through a “cloud” service over the Internet takes more time, it’s safer since the data is already off site. Some are free, some cost.

**Computer disasters can result from viruses, hard disk crashes, accidentally erased files, accidentally reformatted disks, sabotage, theft, lightning strikes, fires, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and even terrorist bombings.**

BackBlaze (www.backblaze.com) charges $5 per month or $50 per year to back up unlimited data from one computer. Amazon Cloud Drive (www.amazon.com/clouddrive) lets you upload as much as 5 gigabytes of data for free, with charges for additional data.

**Keep the electricity flowing.** When you lose power, an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) provides enough electricity to let you save documents you’re working on and power down properly to avoid problems or, depending on the type, to keep on working. APC (www.apc.com) offers UPSs for a wide variety of users, from those working in home settings to data centers.

For portable devices, a battery pack can charge laptops, netbooks, tablets, and smartphones when the power is out. XPal Power (www.xpalpower.com) offers a range of power packs, from the XP600, which you can carry in your wallet or purse to charge a cell phone, to the XP1800, which can charge three portable devices at the same time.

**Consider worst-case scenarios.** When you don’t have backups or the backups are faulty, all is not necessarily lost. If you’re a do-it-yourselfer, software programs can sometimes recover trashed data, a less expensive option. If you’re not technically oriented or if the problem is beyond your technical expertise, companies can do the work for you, a considerably more expensive, but more reliable, option.

R-Tools Technology (www.r-tt.com) offers a range of programs for Windows PCs, Macs and Linux computers. Its R-Studio program, which costs $79.99, handles different kinds of hard drives and different operating systems.

Seagate Recovery Services (services.seagate.com), part of hard drive manufacturer Seagate Technology, can recover data off trashed hard drives from any manufacturer. In existence since 1989, it works with businesses and consumers, offering priority as well as economy service. If it can’t recover your data, it refunds your recovery fee.

Seagate offers good advice on what to do and what not to do when you realize you’ve lost data, which is similar to the advice offered by other data recovery services.

If your hard drive is making unusual noises, you should shut it down immediately and not power up again. Even just running programs can write new data over data you don’t want to lose.

If you can’t access your hard drive, first eliminate the simplest possible causes, such as loose cables. As long as the hard drive isn’t making unusual noises, sometimes simply restarting the computer can fix the problem.

Like other data recovery services, Seagate recommends that you don’t use do-it-yourself data recovery software, which it says can make it more difficult for it to recover data and possibly cause further data loss.

Better than having to make the decision of inexpensive data recovery software or expensive date recovery service is to avoid having to use either. Back up crucial data, and make sure the backups are good.

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway.

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INJURY-REPORTING CAUTIONS

Rich Fairfax, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for OSHA, recently issued a memorandum intended to provide guidance to both field compliance officers and whistleblower investigative staff on several employer practices that can discourage employee reports of injuries and violate section 11(c) of the OSH Act or other whistleblower statutes.

Section 11(c) prohibits an employer from discriminating against an employee because the employee reports an injury or illness. Reporting a work-related injury or illness is considered a core employee right, and retaliating against a worker for reporting an injury or illness is illegal discrimination.

If employees do not feel free to report injuries or illnesses, employers do not learn of and correct dangerous conditions that have resulted in injuries, and injured employees may not receive timely and/or proper medical attention.

Fairfax frames the memo with an overarching statement: “OSHA has also observed that the potential for unlawful discrimination … may increase when management or supervisory bonuses are linked to lower reported injury rates. While OSHA appreciates employers using safety as a key management metric, we cannot condone a program that encourages discrimination against workers who report injuries.”

Company owners and managers are urged to review their historic practices and current policies against the issues that OSHA raises in the memo:

OSHA has received reports of employers who have a policy of taking disciplinary action against employees who are injured on the job, regardless of the circumstances surrounding the injury. OSHA views discipline imposed under such a policy against an employee who reports an injury as a direct violation of section 11(c). In other words, an employer’s policy to discipline all employees who are injured, regardless of fault, is not a legitimate nondiscriminatory reason that an employer may advance to justify adverse action against an employee who reports an injury. In addition, such a policy is inconsistent with the employer’s obligation to establish a way for employees to report injuries under 29 CFR 1904.35(b).

In another situation, an employee who reports an injury or illness is disciplined, and the stated reason is that the employee has violated an employer rule about the time or manner for reporting injuries and illnesses. Such cases will receive careful OSHA scrutiny. Because the act of reporting the injury directly results in discipline, there is a clear potential for violating section 11(c) or FRSA. OSHA recognizes that employers have a legitimate interest in establishing procedures for receiving and responding to reports of injuries. To be consistent with the statute, however, such procedures must be reasonable and may not unduly burden the employee’s right and ability to report.

For example, the rules cannot penalize workers who do not realize immediately that their injuries are serious enough to report, or even that they are injured at all. Nor may enforcement of such rules be used as a pretext for discrimination.

In investigating such cases, OSHA will consider factors such as the following:

- Whether the employee’s deviation from procedure was minor or extensive, inadvertent or deliberate;
- Whether the employee had a reasonable basis for acting as he or she did,
- Whether the employer can show a substantial interest in the rule and its enforcement, and
- Whether the discipline imposed appears disproportionate to the asserted interest.

In a third situation, an employee reports an injury, and the employer imposes discipline on the grounds that the injury resulted from the violation of a safety rule. OSHA encourages employers to maintain and enforce legitimate workplace safety rules in order to prevent injury in the first place. In some cases, however, an employer may attempt to use a work rule as a pretext for discrimination against a worker who reports an injury. Fairfax cautions that careful investigation is needed, and that several circumstances are relevant:

- Does the employer monitor for compliance with the work rule in the absence of an injury?
- Are the rules deliberately vague so that they may be manipulated and used as a pretext for unlawful discrimination? Vague rules, such as a requirement that employees “maintain situational awareness” or “work carefully,” are cited.

Finally, some employers establish programs that unintentionally or intentionally provide employees an incentive to not report injuries. For example, an employer might enter all employees who have not been injured in the previous year in a drawing to win a prize, or a team of employees might be awarded a bonus if no one from the team is injured over some period of time. Fairfax asserts that there are better ways to encourage safe work practices, such as incentives that promote worker participation in safety-related activities, such as identifying hazards or participating in investigations of injuries, incidents or “near misses.”

If the incentive is great enough that its loss dissuades reasonable workers from reporting injuries, the program would result in the employer’s failure to record injuries that it is required to record, causing the employer to be in violation of a record-keeping rule.

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.
The Award of Merit was presented by Scott Jamieson, then TCIA Board Chair, at Winter Management Conference in Curaçao in February.

Our association’s highest honor – the Award of Merit – is awarded to individuals and companies that represent leadership in the field of arboriculture and long-term commitment to the industry.

Members of the TCIA Awards Committee this year were past Chairs – Randy Owen, Terrill Collier and Scott Packard. The Board of Directors wholeheartedly endorsed their selection of someone to join this distinguished group. We don’t give an Award of Merit every year, one reason why this is considered our industry’s most prestigious recognition.

TCIA often recognizes people from within our active member tree care companies who give considerable time and energy to our industry. This year, in thinking about those to whom we are grateful for gifts of creativity, vision and dedication, what came to my mind was our tremendous partners – TCIA’s associate members – and one gentleman and company in particular.

This year’s honoree has 25 years of experience in the industry, currently serving as president of a company that has distributors throughout U.S. and in 30 foreign countries. Having started out in sales and marketing years ago, he is still sought out for his expertise in this area within his company, while leading one of the largest manufacturing firms in our industry.

The company has been a strong advocate by contributing volunteers to TCIA’s Board and associate member committee. This honoree himself was on the board of the National Arborist Foundation, eventually became chair of the Foundation, and had a hand in merging the NAF with the ISA’s Research Trust to form what is now the TREE Fund. He served as a director and treasurer of that entity for several years. Over the years, he has helped raise more than $250,000 for arboriculture education and research.

Randy Owen, president of Owen Tree Service in Michigan, former TCIA Board chair who served on the NAF Board with our honoree, estimates that our honoree is responsible for more than half of the Robert Felix Memorial Fund’s receipts.

Beyond fundraising and donations, this year’s Award of Merit honoree volunteers and recruits others to get involved with activities of the industry and association. That spirit carries over to leisure activities here at Winter Management Conference, where it is not unusual for him to invite others along on an outing, often people he does not even know well, just to help them be more involved.

A TCIA PACT partner, Student Career Days Sponsor, and a regular participant at Winter Management Conference, our honoree was one of the driving forces behind the creation of both Tree Care Industry Magazine and TCI EXPO. He has supported both ever since as important engines for education, promoting professionalism and advancing tree care businesses.

But our honoree is not living in the past. He and his company are leading our industry into the future of the green energy movement. He is helping develop biomass equipment and finding markets for turning green waste into energy and making wood waste more valuable, both of which will have a positive financial impact on the tree care industry. He is a source of information and guidance to the Voice for Trees PAC on wood waste utilization legislation in Congress, as well as a healthy contributor to the PAC. Most recently, his company is partnering with TCIA and his competitors to improve safety in the industry.

We know him as someone who never says “no” and never lets us down. We know him as someone who is a tough businessman with a deeply committed heart to our industry. A true leader … a total gentleman … someone who is always willing to help. For these and countless other contributions to our industry, today we honor Jerry Morey, president of Bandit Industries, with the TCIA Award of Merit.
Crane truck operator electrocuted

A tree care company worker was electrocuted while working at a residence March 2, 2012, in Pineville, Louisiana.

Charles Griffin, 49, was operating a crane truck in the yard of the residence when a portion of the boom contacted a power line. Griffin jumped from the truck, but touched a metal ladder connected to the truck. He was taken by emergency responders to Rapides Regional Medical Center in Alexandria, where he was pronounced dead, according to the report on www.thetowntalk.com in Alexandria, La.

Submitted by Darren Green, ASLA, landscape architect/forester, City of Alexandria, Louisiana.

Trimmer electrocuted touching truck

A man was electrocuted in a tree-trimming accident March 5, 2012, in Sac County, Iowa. Edward Peters, 63, of Lake View, who owned a painting and tree trimming business, was leaning on a boom truck while a worker in a bucket on the truck was cutting branches. The 50-foot boom touched an overhead power line. Electricity traveled through the truck and Peters, who died at a hospital in Sac City. The co-worker wasn’t injured, according to the Omaha World-Herald report.

Climber rescued after tree fails

A tree thought to have been killed by drought in Houston, Texas, fell on top of a climber trying to remove it March 6, 2012.

The climber, 30, was 30 to 40 feet up when he cut a limb and the entire tree fell over on top of him. Workers had to cut the trees off the victim to save his life. He was flown to the hospital with two leg fractures and possible spinal injuries.

Firefighters believe the crew was doing everything right when the tree snapped, according to a KPRC TV report, and limbs cut prior to the failure appeared solid.

Tree company owner killed in struck-by

A falling tree limb struck Clayton Leon Boyd, 61, of Brodnax, Virginia, March 8, 2012, in New Kent, Virginia, killing him. Boyd was the owner of a tree service company. The accident occurred in woods off a highway, according to a WAVY-TV report.

Man hurt by cut tree

A large tree limb fell on a man helping to cut a tree down March 10, 2012, in Marlboro, Massachusetts, pinning him on the ground. The man was located about 70 yards behind a house, with a large tree branch on top of his left thigh. Using equipment, the fire department was able to free the man, who was not complaining of any pain but who was transported to UMass Medical Center in Worcester for precautionary measures.

The victim was assisting the homeowner at the time of the incident, according to the Marlborough Patch.

Man critically injured by falling tree

A man was critically injured March 11, 2012, when a large tree he was cutting down fell on him in Dunn, Wisconsin.

James Hirsch, 51, was revived after being found without a pulse and not breathing on Department of Natural Resources property. Hirsch had obtained a permit to cut wood on the DNR property.

A neighbor to the property heard Hirsch’s cries for help and called 911. First responders and neighbors lifted the tree off of Hirsch. CPR was started on Hirsch, and by the time he was being transported to the hospital, his pulse had been restored, according to The Capital Times report.

Man felling trees killed by struck-by

A man died March 12, 2012, after a tree fell on him while he was helping to clear a vacant lot in Puna, Big Island, Hawaii.

Methodius Suda, 30, of Hilo had been helping cut down trees on a relative’s lot. As he was cutting an Albizia tree, he was struck in the head by a falling ohia tree (a flowering evergreen myrtle) and knocked unconscious. The 30-40 foot ohia tree, about 8-10 inches in diameter, had already been cut and was leaning against the Albizia tree before it struck Suda.

Fire department personnel took him to Hilo Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead, according to the HawaiiNewsDaily.com report.

Climber rescued from tree

Firefighters used a ladder truck March 13, 2012, to rescue a tree service company climber suspended in a tree behind a house in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The man was trimming a tree when a
The man, who was helped down by the department’s high level rescue team, was hospitalized, but his name and condition were unavailable immediately, according to the News & Record report.

**Trimmer killed when aerial boom fails**

A tree trimmer was killed March 19, 2012, in Carroll County, Ohio, after the bucket he was working in fell to the ground with him in it. Ebner Whitman, 49, of Amsterdam, Ohio, an employee of a local tree care company had been working in the bucket trimming trees along the roadway. He was about 30 feet up when the boom, which was extended about 15 feet from the truck, reportedly broke and the bucket fell. Whitman was found in the bucket still attached to his safety line, according to the Salem News report.

**Tree worker killed by falling branch**

A tree worker died March 23, 2012, after he was struck by a falling limb in South Bend, Indiana. Mardoqueo Pineda, 60, who had been working in the backyard of a home, was found unconscious with a pool of blood around him when emergency personnel arrived. The tree branch was about 8 inches in diameter and about 2 feet long, and fell 30 feet onto his head. He was taken to Memorial Hospital with a head wound and quickly pronounced dead from blunt force trauma to the head. It was unclear if Pineda was wearing a helmet, according to the South Bend Tribune report.

**Police chief injured cutting from ladder**

The Atlantic, Iowa, police chief was hospitalized after suffering multiple injuries in a tree cutting mishap March 26, 2012, at his Atlantic home. Steve Green, 53, was on a ladder at his home cutting a branch off of a tree about 15-to-18-feet off the ground when the branch hit the ladder, knocking him to the ground. He suffered a broken shoulder blade, fractured shoulder and collar bone, two broken ribs, bruises to his face, and other, internal injuries, according to a KJAN Atlantic/RadioIowa.com report.

**Tree worker injured by falling tree**

A tree service worker was injured after part of a tree being cut fell on him March 26, 2012, in Marshall County, Indiana. The man was working on a 50-foot pine tree, bringing down the top section, which was about 20 feet tall. He was apparently using a rope to lower the section and the rope pulled him forward, causing the section of tree to land on him.

The man suffered leg injuries. The extent of his injuries were not immediately known, according to the WNDU NewsCenter 16 report.

**Tree trimmer electrocuted**

An employee of a tree cutting business died from an accidental electrocution after he contacted a power line while trimming tree branches March 27, 2012, in Friendswood, Texas. Julio Cesar Castro, 37, was in a tree attached to a waist harness trimming backyard limbs with a pole saw. Co-workers heard Castro scream and climbed a ladder to help but were unable to free him. The Galveston County Medical Examiner’s Office ruled Castro’s death (Continued on page 48)
was from an accidental electrocution, according to The Daily News report.

Climber rescued from palm

Emergency crews rescued a tree worker stuck in a palm March 28, 2012, in Clairemont California. The man was trimming a 25-foot palm when he became stuck, according to the San Diego Fire Department. Authorities said the man was wearing a harness when he became stuck, presumably by collapsing palm fronds. Shortly after the incident was reported, the man was safely removed from the tree, according to www.nbcsandiego.com.

Firefighter injured from struck-by

A firefighter escaped serious injury when he was struck by a falling tree while fighting a ground fire March 29, 2012, in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Kurt Jensen, 60, a member of the Fall Creek Area Fire Department, was moving a hose, while others in the area of a fire along a road west of Augusta were cutting trees. One, about 6 inches in diameter, landed on his head. Firefighters cutting the trees on a hillside may not have known he was in the area.

Jensen said he might have seen it coming and tried to take a step and start running, but was not able to avoid it. He was wearing a neck collar and suffering pain is in his left hip following the incident, but his helmet may have helped him avoid more serious injury. “The helmet kept my head from getting cut open,” he was quoted as telling The Leader-Telegram.

Climber electrocuted

A Philadelphia tree worker was electrocuted March 29, 2012, while trimming trees in the rear yards of homes in Abington, Pennsylvania. David Ruiz, 47, was in a tree in an area separating backyards of homes on two roads when it is believed he swung his safety line around and it came in contact with a high tension electric line and he was electrocuted. A co-worker on the ground was able to pull on a rope that was dangling from Ruiz to the ground, breaking the contact between Ruiz and the power line, but Ruiz remained hung up in the tree. After power to the wires was cut, members of the Abington Fire Company were able to use ladders to reach Ruiz and lower him to the ground, where he was pronounced dead, according to a Montgomery News report.

Tree company worker crushed by dump

A tree service employee was killed March 29, 2012, in Pella, Iowa, when he was crushed by the falling body of a dump truck.

John “Jack” Allen Hagens, of Pella, was attempting to secure a tarp to the bed of a dump truck. While standing between the raised truck bed and the cab of the truck, it appears Hagen’s leg inadvertently hit the release lever on the truck, thus sending the raised bed down onto him. Hagen was pronounced dead at the scene, according to the Knoxville Journal-Express.

Tree worker killed by struck-by

Tyler Granfield, 28, of Southwick, Massachusetts, founder of his own tree service company, was killed March 29, 2012, when a tree fell on him while working in the backyard of a home in East Longmeadow, Mass., according to a WWLP-22News report.
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By Tamsin Venn

What is your newest product for tree care?

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What image does your company look to portray?

When people call up, they talk to the secretary or me. They talk to the guy who makes the tools, the person who is involved in the day-to-day production of the tools, not to a customer service agent. Fanno has a history of that. My grandfather and father worked directly with the customer, and were always accessible.

What is the greatest challenge your business currently faces?

It’s just competition from everywhere. To be a U.S.-based manufacturer of tools is challenging. We use some international products and bring in some new designs. Once, we only faced the competition from domestic sources. Now, any branded product is under scrutiny from manufacturers from around the world. As a small manufacturer, we’re challenged by government regulations, overseas markets, supply chain issues for distribution and marketing. In other words, we have challenges all the way through. Manufacturing is key to that, but as with any small businessperson, you have to have a crystal ball to foresee any future issues. You just to keep doing what you’re doing best – be aware of the outside forces, but not let them control you.

What is something that sets your company apart?

People are sometimes surprised there’s a Fanno behind the Fanno name. Because of the three-generation nature of our business, I think people see that as something to be honored. Tradition is still highly regarded.

Another unusual fact is that my grandfather’s grandfather was one of Oregon’s first settlers; his farm in Beaverton was designated one of Oregon’s Century Farms. He was active politically in the early days of Oregon statehood. He was one of the signers of the Oregon state constitution.

Does your company use Social Media for marketing?

We’re pretty behind the times in that area. We’re always looking at things like that, but not just as a gadget. We want to be sure that any service or product brings value to the customer, not just an empty piece of spam or e-blast. That’s one reason we advertise in the TreeWorker (TCIA...
monthly newsletter). This is a useable and important piece of information for the tree professional. It’s fun, simple, and full of very good information.

If we interviewed some of your customers, what would they say?
You’d have to ask them! Quality tool, designed well, must-have for my daily work, trusted.

Does your company promote social and environmental responsibility?
I was on the board for the TREE Fund for a number of years. People have a responsibility to give time to the industry you’re selling to, whether it’s giving a speech to a local group about tool care or doing outreach for a nonprofit such as TCIA or the TREE Fund. I’ve offered my time as a volunteer for TCIA. By giving my time back to organizations, I’ve had an opportunity to network with industry people who have the same passion for the cause.

Tell us about your TCIA involvement.
We’ve been a TCIA member since 1977; Seed PACT partner since the program began, long-time exhibitor and TCI Magazine and TreeWorker advertiser; member of the Awards Committee; and member Nominations Committee choosing future board members. I was chair of the Associate Member Advisory Council for two years, acting as a liaison between the leadership and vendors. One thing that is very evident: a lot of organizations see their vendors as someone to be sold ads or booths. TCIA vendors feel themselves to be a vital part of the organization. Vendor representation on the board helps. We’re far more included, and there’s much more appreciation for us.

Why does your company support TCIA as the industry’s trade association?
If I run across tree care professionals, I always ask if they’re affiliated with TCIA. It’s in their best interest. TCIA’s leadership and organization is very supportive of professional tree care. Anything of value is going to cost you money. The value is worth it. I think that’s why the membership has increased so much. People realize the benefits of insurance, safety training, increasing your sales – that’s good business.

What are some of your best memories with TCIA?
Working with Bob Felix, former executive vice president of TCIA (then NAA), and his wife, Pat, former vice president of membership services, and seeing the organization grow exponentially. TCI EXPO was the first show of its type. It really catered to the professional user, as opposed to the collage of different tree care entities. It focused mainly on the commercial business of tree care and brought in the large tree care companies. The safety and training was very much needed. Before that the industry was characterized as a bunch of rag tag guys who liked climbing trees and cutting them down.

Fanno’s No. FI-1330 13-in Tri-Edge with 6 points per inch, 18-gauge special formula saw steel and 30-inch laminated handle, is designed for cutting larger limbs from the ground or a bucket truck.

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Part-Time Regional Outreach Coordinators

TCIA’s newly created outreach coordinator positions will concentrate on creating groups of tree care business owners who meet and interact regularly (face-to-face and online) and facilitating increased participation in TCIA programs via regional workshops that address both owner and employee needs (EHAP, CTSP, etc.). Regional coordinators will live and work in their assigned regions to organize member gatherings (breakfasts, after hour’s gatherings, etc) where current members interact prospective members are invited to see what they are missing. Coordinators will work to strengthen the visibility of professional tree care through consumer awareness opportunities at events, via social media, and traditional press. Target areas for coordinators are Chicagoland base for upper Midwest area, Southern California base for West coast area and Atlanta to Charlotte corridor base for the Southeast area. Other locations will be considered depending on strength of the candidate, local industry, location, and TCIA strategic plans. To read the complete job description, requirements and application details, visit www.jobs.tcia.org. Resume and cover letter to: Bob Rouse, Rouse@tcia.org.

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Think of one of your favorite name brands. Whether it’s a professional product for use in your business or a favorite product for your personal use, chances are you chose it because you’re comfortable with it; you have a mental image of that product and the company behind it. That’s what brand identity is all about.

Major companies go to great lengths to build and protect a unique brand image because they know the marketing power of a positive brand identity, especially in a difficult economy. However, building a brand identity isn’t just for the biggest players. Every business can enjoy the extraordinary marketing power of a strong business image.

Exactly what is a brand? It’s more than a logo on a business card or the sign on the side of a truck. It’s the promise that a business makes to its prospects and customers. It identifies the ways in which its products and services differentiate it from its competitors. Simply put, a brand is the image that a business projects in the hope of developing brand loyalty.

The brand identity for your business is the mental image you create in the minds of your customers and prospects. Your brand is your business personality. It can be a powerful marketing tool, a drag on your sales and profits, or anything in-between. That’s why you must take control of your brand identity. When you develop a strong and positive brand image, your target customers will develop an emotional attachment to your services. They’ll become loyal in much the same way that you are loyal to your favorite brands.

It isn’t necessary for you to take the time and resources to create a brand image that will be recognized the world over. It’s only necessary for you to create the kind of image that will dominate your little piece of the marketing world.

Here are seven steps that will help you to build the kind of brand identity that will boost your sales and profits on a permanent basis:

Separate yourself from your competitors

The first and one of the most important steps in creating a strong brand identity is determining what makes your tree care business unique. Begin by analyzing your major competitors. Look for their strong selling points and ways that you can differentiate your services from the others.

The next step is evaluating your own strengths and combining them to form a unique identity – a marketable image for you and your business. Perhaps you’ve been in business longer than your competitors have, or maybe your personnel are well-trained specialists known for their skill and accuracy in diagnosing problems and caring for trees. Perhaps you have highly knowledgeable salespersons who take pride in their knowledge of trees and how they can use that knowledge to best serve their customers’ needs. Perhaps your equipment is a model of state-of-the-art efficiency and safety.

Whatever your marketable strengths, write them all down, study them, and then determine how you can combine them to separate yourself from your competitors. Once you’ve sold yourself and your employees on why you are the best choice for customers who require the utmost in professional know how, you must focus your marketing efforts on ways to promote this image to your customers and prospects.

Take action on something that most of your competitors only talk about

Tree care is a people business; you sell your services to people, not to objects. All of the Harvard Business School expertise in the world is no substitute for an understanding of that basic business principle.

The most effective, least expensive, branding technique for any tree care specialist is an uncompromising commitment to customer satisfaction. Making certain that every one of your customers has positive feelings about you and your business...
will turn those customers into walking advertisements.

Employ strong visual elements

A major part of brand image is visual recognition. Science long ago recognized that we humans remember what we see far longer than what we read or hear. That’s why those major brands that are favorites of yours have a highly recognizable visual image.

A basic visual image for your business calls for an esthetically pleasing logo, which may or may not be a stylistic rendering of your company name. The logo in itself is not your brand, but it serves as the anchor for that all-important visceral image that is part of every successful brand identity. Once you create your logo, you must use it on all business cards, letterheads, envelopes, trucks, heavy equipment and anything else visible to the public, all with a consistent visual image. You can extend these essentials to include a website, a brochure or any other professionally designed pieces. To embed your brand identity in your market area, you must use it consistently in every visual item you produce.

Make sure that all of your visual elements are unique to your business and that they will not be confused with those of a competitor.

Harness emotions

All successful brand images have a large emotional content. While it’s important to make solid use of the purely rational in developing reasons why prospects should look to you when they need tree services, it’s essential that you remember the power of the heart and mind in shopping decisions. Scientists tell us that emotion is a more powerful system in the brain than the rational system. That’s why it’s important to try to influence as many positive emotions as possible at every step in building your unique brand image.

Harness the power of repetition

Repetition is an important part of building a strong brand identity. Marketing experts say that it takes six or more “impressions” for potential customers to remember and connect with a business. That’s why those annoying TV ads are repeated ad infinitum. Consistent and repetitive use of your visual materials will help to build an enduring and powerful brand for your business. Simple efforts such as employees passing out your business cards or brochures at every possible opportunity and asking satisfied customers for referrals will help to harness the power of repetition.

Travel branding roadways

Once you’ve created your brand image, it’s important to make sure that it reaches your prospects and customers. The available branding roadways are almost unlimited, but for a small business like yours, it’s important to utilize the least expensive. Advertisements in local media are fine for those who can afford them, but for businesses on a limited budget, there are many effective alternates. Among them are such techniques as regular emails to people who have logged on to your website, occasional postal card mailings to past customers, a presence on social media such as Facebook, and asking satisfied customers to spread the word.

Live up to your new image

Once you create and support your brand identity, it will work for you by helping to develop new customers 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but only if you live up to the promise you have created. The time and effort that you’ve invested in branding your business will be for naught unless you and your employees remember that branding is about meeting expectations, not just creating them. If you fail to meet the expectations created by your new brand identity, your customers won’t be coming back or recommending you to their friends.

All successful brand images have a large emotional content...

Scientists tell us that emotion is a more powerful system in the brain than the rational system.

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Boundary and Border Line Tree Disputes

By Lew Bloch

Boundary and border line tree disputes are the most common type of problems that I get involved with as a consulting arborist. It is the first chapter in my book, *Tree Law Cases in the USA*, and the longest chapter. In general, a boundary line tree is jointly owned, sometimes by more than two parties, because the property line runs through any part of the tree trunk. A border line tree is located near to the property line and may have roots and/or branches that extend across the property line. Interestingly, a tree can start as a border line tree and when the tree trunk grows large enough to cross over the property line it becomes a boundary line tree and is then jointly owned.

Many of these disputes are quite emotional between two neighbors, and the consulting arborist, no matter which party hires him or her, must be un-emotional and give sound, honest advice whether it is what the client wishes to hear or not. There have been numerous times when I have been called, and sometimes retained, because a neighbor trespassed and cut off some tree limbs. I question them and advise them on the phone that we need to know just what the monetary damages are. Sometimes there are no damages, sometimes minor damages and sometimes the cutting may have actually been beneficial to the tree.

Sometimes I can calm them down and they understand that they just need to suck it up and move on, and sometimes I get, “I don’t care, they trespassed and I want to sue the S.O.B.s.” Yes, I reply, they did break the law, but what are your damages?”

Quite frequently, after a lengthy telephone call ranting and raving about the neighbor from the so-called injured party, I will ask if they are having problems with this neighbor other than the trees. And, quite frequently I will get, “Yes, how did you know?” It seems as if the richer the neighbors are the more likely it will actually go to trial.

There is a difference between a tree being a nuisance versus a tree being an inconvenience. Generally speaking, and this should not be construed to be a legal opinion, a nuisance is a problem with the limbs, roots or tree trunk causing damage or possibly likely to cause damage in the future to the neighboring property. It could be a house foundation, footings, walls, patios, roofs, swimming pools, etc. On the other hand, falling fruits, leaves, nuts or small twigs could be considered to just be inconveniences and not really subject to relief by legal means.

In some states, case law involving border line trees follows a very old procedure that is called “The Massachusetts Rule,” wherein a neighbor can take self-help procedures to abate a problem being caused by a neighbor’s tree. Some states have modified or even overruled this process in stating that you cannot compromise the health or safety of a neighbor’s tree in performing this self-help. For more than 25 years now, what is known as “The Hawaii Rule” (sorry New Englanders, but Hawaii Rule sounds cooler than Massachusetts Rule)
recognizes that encroaching tree parts may be a nuisance when they cause harm or pose an imminent danger. It further states that a neighbor can force a tree owner to abate the nuisance, or, if any damages occur, to look to the neighbor for recovery.

Several years ago The Supreme Court of Virginia handed down a decision confirming the Hawaii Rule stipulations. Of course these types of situations will require inspections and reports by consulting arborists to document any real damages or potential future damages, and we have to be extremely careful not to be caught up in the neighbor disputes and emotional situations. We must be truthful and realize that anything we say or write might be questioned by an opposing attorney in a courtroom and be scrutinized by another consulting arborist. We need to be an advocate for the truth (or for the tree), NOT an advocate for the client.

There are two books about neighbor disputes that I have in my library (well, on my bookshelf): one is Neighbor Law by Cora Jordan; the other is Neighbor vs. Neighbor by Mark Warda. Both are well written by attorneys but in the language for non-lawyers. They both discuss trees, walks, fences, easements, views and water flow as well as other neighbor issues and laws. On the jacket of Neighbor Law it states, “Neighbors: They wouldn’t be so bad if they didn’t live next door…” In the introduction of Neighbor vs. Neighbor it states, “Ever since the first humans shared a cave, people had disagreements with their neighbors.”

I was involved in a really ridiculous lawsuit between two neighbors recently that prompted me to write this article. As a consulting arborist, when I get into legal casework, I make it my assignment to help settle the case! In this case I was quite successful! I frequently hear colleagues talk about winning a case or that so-and-so lost a case. Our job is not about winning or losing, and some 90 percent plus of lawsuits never get to the courtroom; they are settled. Our job is to offer opinions to help prevent courtroom appearances. Yes, that’s right; we only offer opinions, not necessarily just facts in our reports.

In this case, the plaintiff (I was retained by the defendant’s insurance company) actually filed this case in circuit court for $100,000 plus punitive damages, attorney’s fees, interest and costs.

Here is what precipitated this case. The plaintiff had a large addition built on their house in the rear and side facing the defendant’s house. Because the construction activity was noisy and disruptive and the new addition quite large and imposing, the defendant had a hedge of 21 Leyland cypress trees (5-6-feet tall) planted close to the property line. There was not much room between their house and the property line. For some reason, this provoked the plaintiff. Figure 1 shows this hedge toward the new addition in the front part of the property, and Figure 2 toward the new addition from the rear patio of the defendant’s house. Figure 3 shows the hedge from the plaintiff’s property toward the defendant’s house. I took these photos more than three years after they were planted.

The plaintiffs did hire a certified arborist who was prepared to testify to the following:
- The trees (Leyland cypress) were in whole or in part on the plaintiff’s property.
- The trees were interfering with the plaintiff’s use and enjoyment of their property.
- The trees will cause damage to the plaintiff’s property.
- The trees are not in good health and present a danger to both properties.
- Three of the trees are dead.
- Encroaching branches and roots will likely kill the defendant’s plants.
- The trees were planted in an effort to retaliate against the plaintiff.
- By planting the trees a trespass occurred.
- The trees were an inappropriate species and a better species should have been planted.
- The trees would likely fall over and damage the plaintiff’s property.
- The trees will need pruning twice a year and cost the plaintiff at least $1,000 per year for pruning on his side of the hedge.

![Figure 3: The hedge from the plaintiff's property looking toward the defendant's house.](image)

Without going into a lot of detail, I opined that Leyland cypress is a common species for privacy hedges in this region, and if they were properly maintained they would not cause damage to either property under normal weather conditions. Also, if properly maintained, they would add landscape value and be an asset to both properties. I also commented that the four trees near the street were not doing well because the plaintiff’s contractor cleaned his paint cans out near them and the drainage was not good, but none of them were dead or dying. The defendant had numerous photos of the paint and water around these trees.

I also wrote that the statement by the plaintiff’s expert arborist that there were better species for this hedge actually documented that a privacy screen was acceptable if a different species was used. Of course they did not offer a better species for this situation. I also had statements debating all of the other complaints, especially about the trees being dangerous and interfering with the plaintiff’s use of the property.

It so happens that I live in a duplex fairly close to the case location and have a Leyland cypress hedge between my rear deck and my next door neighbor’s deck as well as a neighboring duplex having the same situation. I took pictures of both of these hedges that had been in existence for almost 17 years and are approximately 15 feet tall and 4 feet wide and pruned once a year to maintain them. This is exactly what the defendant wanted his hedge to look like... (Continued on page 64)
At Kramer Tree Specialists in West Chicago, Illinois, we are focused on continuous improvement utilizing total employee involvement. One program currently in progress but not yet perfected is our weekly discussion topic. Actually, being an organization with an emphasis on performance improvement, we realize that perfection is a moving target. Regardless, we continue to drive toward that goal.

One reason we began issuing weekly discussion topics is for OSHA compliance. When you begin investigating mandated safety rules, it can quickly become a bit overwhelming. We’ve pondered how we will stay in tune with every rule. One way we’ve moved forward is by concluding that total compliance takes time, and the act of getting started is very important and that we will improve as time passes. With this in mind, we instituted regular, company-wide weekly discussion topics this past July.

One of the first questions considered was, “what topics should we discuss?” Another was, “what comes first?” One easy method is to identify the hazards encountered in our work and how those relate to the time of year. This shouldn’t be too difficult since we are mostly involved in the Midwest tree-care industry, right? However, one easy mistake could have been to ignore a large portion of our workforce. We wanted to keep in mind that these discussions should include our entire company. Safe work habits don’t begin when you leave the shop; it should be far in front of that when these are developed. And KTS employees include mechanics, drivers, climbers, salespersons, clerical staff and plant health care technicians to name a few, all of whom must participate in a weekly discussion.

We create and post one pertinent topic for the whole company each week. Each topic is written in English, with a Spanish translation included below it. This assures that we are all on the same page during a given week. If a group’s discussion creates questions in the mind of one employee, they can take them to any other employee and know the topic has been discussed by that group also. This increases positive interaction through total involvement.

We also want to make sure that at the end of any given year we have covered a broad spectrum of issues. These can include required topics, such as Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) or Haz-Com, or weather concerns, defensive driving or first aid to name a few. We look at the entire year, evaluate what we want to communicate and decide when the best time for that message might be. This is our formula for consistency. We can also add in time-sensitive topics when something comes up that needs to be communicated quickly.

A slight push-back that we received on our global topic approach was that job-specific topics might be ignored. This concern is resolved in communicating to employees that the meeting is theirs. Simply include the current global topic and create further discussion as necessary as determined by your group. We have also created a spot on the bottom of our sign-off sheet.
where employees can write in ideas for future topics. We meet by department, which allows employees to raise internal concerns. Since we have only been working this controlled process since last July, we have plenty of room for growth, however, we have made significant progress toward our goal.

As far as the content goes, most topics require some research before issuing. While almost any topic can be researched online, you do need to be very careful about accuracy of your content. Keep in mind, you are directing a workforce.

We have all participated in safety meetings at which we’ve experienced a low level of interaction. You know the ones – someone gets up in front of the group, “recites” from a script and then asks if anyone has questions. Of course, nobody says anything. At this point, everyone gets up and goes about their work. This is an important issue that needs to be cured.

Keep your message brief and on point. We keep the entire document to one page. There is little reason to go on and on when many employees learn best from “doing.” Our desire is to generate a discussion. We also let the employees know we are looking for their involvement and ideas. We ask for their help and encourage them to be a part of the solution.

Although we are not there yet, we see improvement. While some workers may be content with sitting and listening, we are not satisfied with just reading through a topic and moving on. Our topics are kept to one very brief paragraph. We try to capture the essence of the topic and provide some supportive guidance. This is usually followed by a few questions. The questions are open-ended. We are not looking for merely head-nods. Other times, we ask the group to create a list or to share ideas. This helps get employees involved in the discussion.

One more important aspect is meeting duration. While the owners of our company support the time for the meeting, we need to be respectful of production needs. Keep the meeting to about 15 minutes. We try not to let people take us off-track. You can always take note of concerns raised and answer them off-line. Long meetings that turn into complaint sessions are not the goal and are mostly unproductive. Stay on subject.

Finally, make sure you are tracking your effort. Create a sign-off sheet. While there is little need for legal signatures that can’t be read anyway, we need to know who has attended. We have employees print their name and submit a completed sheet. These are saved in hard copy and in our computer system. We also maintain a list of the topics issued, by date.

Our successes on this effort currently include: global weekly safety topics, company-wide issuance, participation, tracked sign-off sheets, improved communication, OSHA compliance and a path created toward the continuous improvement of Kramer Tree Specialists.

Climate change helps, then quickly stunts plant growth

Global warming may initially make the grass greener, but not for long, according to new research conducted at Northern Arizona University. The study, published in April in *Nature Climate Change*, shows that plants may thrive in the early stages of a warming environment but begin to deteriorate quickly.

“We were really surprised by the pattern, where the initial boost in growth just went away,” said Zhuoting Wu, NAU doctoral graduate in biology. “As the ecosystems adjust, the responses changed.”

Researchers subjected four grassland ecosystems to simulated climate change during the decade-long study. Plants grew more the first year in the global warming treatment, but this effect progressively diminished over the next nine years, and finally disappeared.

The research reports the long-term effects of global warming on plant growth, the plant species that make up the community, and the changes in how plants use or retain essential resources such as nitrogen. The team transplanted four grassland ecosystems from higher to lower elevation to simulate a future warmer environment, and coupled the warming with the range of predicted changes in precipitation – more, the same, or less. Grasslands studied were typical of those found in northern Arizona along elevation gradients from the San Francisco Peaks down to the great basin desert.

The researchers found that long-term warming resulted in loss of native species and encroachment of species typical of warmer environments, pushing the plant community toward less productive species. The warmed grasslands also cycled nitrogen more rapidly, an effect that should make more nitrogen available to plants, helping them grow more. But instead much of the nitrogen was lost, converted to nitrogen gases lost to the atmosphere or leached out with rainfall washing through the soil.

Bruce Hungate, senior author of the study and NAU Biological Sciences professor, said the research findings challenge the expectation that warming will increase nitrogen availability and cause a sustained increase in plant productivity.

“Faster nitrogen turnover stimulated nitrogen losses, likely reducing the effect of warming on plant growth,” Hungate said. “More generally, changes in species, changes in element cycles – these really make a difference. It’s classic systems ecology: the initial responses elicit knock-on effects, which here came back to bite the plants. These ecosystem feedbacks are critical. You just can’t figure this out with plants grown in a greenhouse.”

The findings caution against extrapolating from short-term experiments where experimenters cannot measure the feedbacks from changes in the plant community and from nutrient cycles. The research will continue at least five more years with current funding from the National Science Foundation and, Hungate said, hopefully for another five years after that.

“The long-term perspective is key. We were surprised, and I’m guessing there are more surprises in store.”

Consulting: Boundary lines

*(Continued from page 61)*

like. These are shown in figures 4 and 5.

Then as a real “kicker,” I proposed a solution to this neighbor dispute in my report. The defendant was to keep the hedge at approximately 15 feet tall and about 2 feet wide on his side. He even agreed to take the responsibility and expense to trim the plaintiff’s side as well if he could get permission for access.

I stated in my report, “With the above scenario, both parties would have an attractive ‘green fence’ that would add to the landscape value of both properties. And, at absolutely no cost to Mr. X (the plaintiff).”

Can you imagine how the court would look at this if the parties couldn’t settle?

I submitted my report, the defense counsel immediately sent it to plaintiff’s attorney, and in about three weeks they settled the case. The settlement: the defendant was to maintain the trees at 15 feet and remove the four trees near the street that were not doing well. No money was involved in the settlement.

This was one of the easiest “no-brainer” cases I have ever had.

My most recent neighbor dispute case, also as a defense witness, is for $1 million plus punitive damages. This case also seems to be quite unreasonable and the plaintiffs do have a consulting arborist retained. The attorney that I am working with believes that this is unlikely to settle and will actually see the courtroom.

Author’s Note: Please do not accept anything in this article as legal advice or
Kudos for EHAP help

Thank you to TCIA for developing the free Electrical Hazard Awareness Program workshops to train employers and employees of tree care companies in safe ways to handle electrical hazards associated with trees. We appreciate your use of the federal grant from OSHA, awarded through the Susan Harwood Training Grant Program, to make sure that our arborists know how to remain safe when working near electric sources. The workshop was well-received by the attendees, and the instructor, Gary Ickes, was easy to work with.

It was a pleasure working with you (Debbie Cyr, TCIA meetings coordinator) and TCIA staff in preparing for the workshop that we hosted March 6 in Little Rock, Arkansas, at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service meeting room. Ms. Cyr, you went above and beyond the call of duty in your efforts to make sure that the workshop materials were received in time for the workshop. There was a glitch with UPS that slowed down the delivery of the materials, and you were ready with a Plan B in case the materials weren't received the day before the workshop.

Katherine Ritchotte (TCIA Accreditation/A300 and EHAP assistant) was helpful in responding promptly to any and all questions.

Cathy Slater, executive secretary
Arkansas Urban Forestry Council
Hot Springs, Arkansas

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By Scott Laug

Like many of you, I got my start in the tree industry by dragging brush. I am a second generation arborist. My dad started his own business about 30 years ago. So my first job was working on my dad’s tree crew.

I had helped my dad once in a while, mostly raking, but my first full day on the crew came when I was 15. I remember it like it was yesterday. It was the first day of vacation from school and I was going to start working full time for the summer.

The job was clearing about an acre or two of Scotch pine (Scots pine, Pinus sylvestris), but it seemed like 10 acres at the time. Most of the trees had a diameter of about 10-12 inches. This was before we had a large chipper and long before we even considered using a loader to move brush. We were going to do this clearing job by hand. Looking back, if I were to do this job today it would be a piece of cake.

The crew was my dad, myself and his only other employee at the time, Kurt, who everybody calls Chum. My dad was going to fell the trees and Chum and I would chip the brush. My dad started up his Stihl 026 and the action started fast, with my dad knocking down trees and Chum grabbing what seemed to be whole trees and dragging them to our Bandit chipper. I think he chipped two whole trees before I even got my hands on a branch.

My dad first suggested that I “hustle up,” and second that I “grab the ends of the trees and help Chum drag the whole pines to the chipper.” I wasn’t the biggest kid in the world and at the time I probably weighed about 100 pounds. My first attempt at “helping” drag the whole tree didn’t go so well. I tripped on some of the branches and Chum ended up dragging me and the tree. The second attempt went a lot like the first. I tried really hard to keep up and after a while I started to help out a little, I think. As anybody who has experience chipping Scotch pine knows, they tend to have a lot of jagged dead stubs on them. I seemed to get cut and scratched by most of these stubs all day long.

That was how day one on this job went. It ended up being a three- or four-day job. I can’t remember exactly because the days started to blur together. I do remember that on day two I was less than enthusiastic about going back to work. On day three the temperature reached 100 degrees and even Chum was beat. By the end of my first week I was ready for a new career.

That was 19 years ago. I’ve come a long way since then and couldn’t imagine making a living doing anything else. My dad, Chum and I have looked back on the “Scotch pine job” and laughed, but at the time it sure seemed like a tough way to start. One thing I did learn in those early years was how to work hard. It also makes me really appreciate loaders and big chippers.

Scott Laug is an ISA Certified Arborist and operator of L-P Tree Service, a 17-year TCIA member company located in Coopersville, Michigan.
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Dendroctonus ponderosae, an insect the size of a grain of rice, has the capability of wreaking havoc and mass destruction – and is pretty much doing so in the western U.S. It has made the top of the list of forest pests in at least two states, Colorado and Montana, according to the 2011 Forest Health Reports from each of those states. And these states are not the only ones impacted in a major way by the current outbreak.

What is it?
Lumped generically in the category of a bark beetle, the mountain pine beetle (MPB) has become infamous as it has cut a devastating swath across the mountain pine beetle (MPB).

By Sylvia McNeill, BCMA

Mountain Pine Beetle
By Sylvia McNeill, BCMA

Soil and Plants in the Built Environment
By James Urban, FASLA

Regional News

Regional Section Features

This row of Scots, or Scotch, pine in Montana was decimated in one season by mountain pine beetle. Photo courtesy of Sylvia McNeill, McNeill’s Tree Service.
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Mountain pine beetle

(Continued from page RS1)

the western portion of the continent. It is a dark brown to black beetle 3.5 to 7 mm (\(\frac{3}{8}\)–\(\frac{3}{4}\) inch) in length. It is almost inconceivable that something so small can cause so much damage.

A native to western forests, from Mexico through Canada and from the Pacific Coast to the Black Hills of South Dakota, in low (latent) numbers, MPB typically kills small numbers of pine trees every year in clumps, going to trees that are already suffering stress from one source or another, such as drought, dwarf mistletoe, fire damage or perhaps a lightning strike. They can also become opportunistic to trees that have been affected by root disease. This activity is part of the forest ecosystem and serves to thin stands, which, ultimately, can produce a healthier forest as other trees are released from competition for nutrients, sun and water. However, as S. Sky Stephens, a Colorado state forester, notes in her article “The Bark Beetle Trifecta,” “MPB has become more active on the landscape in response to a number of forest conditions including even-age stands of lodgepole pine and drought.” This is similar to areas of Montana that have been hit particularly hard as well. The numbers have increased far beyond latent or low in this current outbreak, having reached what may be unprecedented levels.

What has caused this massive increase in population? Well, you will hear many theories, but it is likely to be, as most things are, a combination of events such as ongoing drought, pollution, fire damage and, conversely, fire suppression, which resulted in overcrowded stands (even-age stands of particularly susceptible hosts that have reached a vulnerable age give ample habitat), and the climate change that has resulted in milder winters in some areas, allowing more beetles to survive.

Identification

A Field Guide to Diseases & Insect Pests of Northern & Central Rocky Mountain Conifers, by Hagle, Gibson and Tunnock, lists MPB as one of the few bark beetles that usually make very obvious pitch tubes on bark surface at the site of attack. The pitch tubes are masses of red, amorphous resin mixed with bark and wood borings, often described as popcorn-shaped. Boring dust is evident in bark crevices and around the base of infested trees.

A definitive identification key is the gallery. All beetles have specific galleries, and field identification is often based on them rather than the presence of the insect itself. The MPB produces a vertical egg gallery with a crook, or “J,” at the start (bottom) that can extend upward 30 inches or more. Galleries are packed tightly with boring dust, and larvae (grubs) are present during fall and winter. Most pupate in late spring and the adults emerge from the bark in midsummer to attack new trees.

A mass attack results in feeding that girdles the tree. In addition, the beetles can vector a blue stain fungi that clogs the vascular system. Infested trees fade within a year from yellow-green to reddish-brown. Host trees with thin bark, such as the lodgepole pine or Scotch (or Scots) pine, may have their bark removed by woodpeckers searching for larvae.

Why should we care?

This is a native insect, performing a function within the forest community. Yeah, it’s gotten a bit out of hand, but what can we do, nature will take its course. All of that is true. But this current outbreak, which dates back to the late 1990s, has resulted in the damage of 70,000 square miles of forest in the Rocky Mountains of Canada and the United States, an area the size of Washington State.

According to Colorado’s 2011 Forest Health Report, foresters...
have observed an overall area of 752,000 acres of lodgepole, limber and ponderosa pine forest in which MPB had killed trees during the past year alone, and in Montana’s 2011 Forest Health Report they note bark beetle infestations statewide show 1.1 million acres affected with 3.8 million trees involved. These are just two of the western states’ statistics.

Even though the MPB is a native insect, and part of the normal forest community, it has no regard for boundaries. It doesn’t care if its host tree is in the wilderness, state forest, private interface or urban settings. If there is a host tree within its flight range, all bets are off. That flight range is approximately 2 miles, and at least one entomologist has stated that, with a good tail wind, it can make 10.

General information states that at typical populations they attack stressed trees, but when the numbers reach the epidemic proportions we have been seeing, a mass attack can overcome seemingly healthy trees. It is one thing to view a photo of a remote site with a hillside of dead trees, but it becomes up close and personal as you realize your view has changed from lush green to red-brown and the dead trees are no longer out in the unnamed wilderness, but at your favorite recreation area, your travel corridor, your land, and even your own backyard.

The host species list for this insect is “most native and introduced species of pines, except Jeffrey pine” (Field Guide, Hagle, Gibson and Tunnock), so virtually all of our pines are susceptible to one degree or another. An aside here, the Jeffrey pine may not be susceptible to the MPB, but it does have its own species of *Dendrotonus* specific to it.

What can we do about it?

If you are a professional working in the western U.S or Canada, it is hard to escape an encounter with this potentially devastating pest. Whereas many clients in the interface call the forest service or county extension agents for information on how to deal with this problem, your clients are going to often rely on your knowledge and expertise as well.

It is important to get a positive identification of the pest. There are many bark beetles. Know your host species and positively identify the pest. For instance, *Ips* species can present similar damage, but is generally isolated to the upper crown and is considered a secondary pest. The red turpentine beetle, *Dendroctonus valens*, also has pitch tubes but they are located primarily at the base of the tree and, in our area, are not considered a lethal pest.

Your recommendations may include evaluation of your client’s cultural practices and recommendations to improve the site or stand management. They may include recommendations on the use of chemical or biological control whose efficacy can be species and site specific. The individual biology and life cycle of the pest may determine a specific course of action or timing of application as well. The MPB typically has a one year life cycle but their emergence and flight times may vary from state to state and timing the application of treatments is critical.

Contacting your local forest service or Department of Natural Resources and Conservation of your individual state is recommended for current updates and recommendations specific to your area. We have noticed, here in Montana, that recommendations have subtly changed over the years as they’ve seen what has worked and what hasn’t. Some suggestions that have proven effective in one state may not be recommended in another simply because of environmental conditions.
The following are suggestions for the disposal and removal of infested trees in Montana, according to the DNRC Montana website beetles.mt.gov:

- "When mountain pine beetles are in an area, one treatment that can have some benefit is removing currently infested trees. This is most effective when the beetle population is low to moderate and can be used in conjunction with other techniques, such as preventive spraying or the use of anti-aggregating pheromones. Once the beetle population is at high levels, removing infested trees is of less benefit."

- “Before removing any trees, those that are currently infested by mountain pine beetle must be identified across the entire area. This is best done after beetle flight in the fall. These trees will still have green needles at this time… Beetles have already left trees with red or brown needles and their removal will not affect the population, but it may reduce the risk to public safety from tree failure and decrease the amount of fuel.”

Once infested trees are identified, a treatment plan can be determined. Simply cutting the trees down and leaving them untreated on site does not control the beetle populations. Beetles will continue to develop and emerge the following summer. Infested trees need to be removed from the site or treated in some way to destroy the developing insects before the new beetles emerge and fly the following year, which normally occurs from July to August.

Several options are available for removing infested trees. If logs are not to be processed promptly, they should be removed to areas without nearby host trees to avoid spreading beetles. This recommendation of removing to areas without nearby host trees can be extremely problematical in the Rocky Mountain regions. But further DNRC Montana suggestions include:

- Harvest and take logs to a mill.
- Haul to a central community processing or disposal area. Severely impacted communities may consider creating a location where infested material can be taken and processed to reduce the beetle population. This provides possible economic benefits by increasing the supply of material for marketing and sale.

- Several options are available for treating infested trees when they cannot be removed from the site. All material greater than 4 inches in diameter needs to be treated. Any of these treatments need to be done before beetle flight the next year:
  - Cut and use as firewood as long as it is used the same winter. Cut into firewood lengths, split, and spread out in a sunny location to accelerate drying. Do not stack. This should be done by March at the latest to be effective, since 6 to 8 weeks of drying is required. If wood can’t be split, scoring it lengthwise several times around the piece with a chainsaw down to the wood will accelerate drying.
  - Burn on site. Be careful not to damage surrounding live trees. The heat from a fire can sear a tree, even without the fire reaching it. So watch where stacks are to be placed and keep them small and under control.
  - Bury on site.
  - Chip on site. Chips can be hauled off, used as mulch, or dispersed through the forest. We personally recommend, if chipping on site or dispersing through the forest, that this should be done mid-winter, allowing the chips to dry out as well.
  - Remove the bark down to the wood. There are several manual and power tools available.

“In warmer climates, covering infested logs with clear plastic has been shown to be occasionally effective in killing developing beetles. Cooler weather conditions in Montana, and a general lack of success

This ponderosa pine was mass attacked on private property by Bitterroot River. More than 100 trees have already been taken out on this property due to infestations. Photo courtesy of Sylvia McNeill.
Adult excavating tunnel. Although this ponderosa pine, Pinus ponderosa, is still producing pitch, it has been heavily attacked by MPB, and this adult beetle is excavating a larval gallery, treading the oozing pitch. Photo by Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

in this practice, result in our not recommending it,” caution foresters with the Montana DNRC.

The Colorado State Forest Service website gives treatment/management options that are very similar. However, they additionally offer the solar treatment, but with the caveat of it being appropriate in some areas. They give excellent and specific instructions on how best to ensure and to check for efficacy. As the instructions are extensive and detailed, I will supply the link:

Both states list the same three chemicals that are currently registered for use in preventing bark beetle attacks: carbaryl, permethrin and bifenthrin. Please note the term “preventing.” None of these claim to kill the insects already in the trees. They only kill beetles attacking the tree, not emerging. Therefore, this has to be applied prior to flight.

In addition to removal of infested trees, spacing to allow sunlight in larger tracts, and chemical preventatives, your client may ask about the pheromone patches available. These are anti-aggregation chemicals that, basically, send a

View from the mountain

By Sylvia McNeill, BCMA

The Mountain Pine Beetle has always been here, it is a native and part of the forest community and an important one. But the impact on private lands, when those trees are viewed as amenity trees, is devastating and heartbreaking.

In some areas the outbreak is considered to have collapsed. But in many of these areas, there are very few primary host trees left. Ravalli County, Montana, where we are, is now under attack. It is up close and personal.

For our clients, a serious attack can involve the majority of pines on their property. All too often they don’t notice anything amiss until the tree starts turning brown. By then it is way too late. Nothing can be done except remove it.

Because of our arid climate, natural reestablishment is a long, slow process.
message out to the beetles that the tree has a maximum capacity already. These have proven effective in combination with other management strategies in small woodland situations and may be preferable in high value trees in urban settings with a lesser beetle population intensity.

Knowing and understanding your clients, their goals and resources will be a deciding factor in how you help them make the best decisions for managing their pines, be it an interface acreage with several hundred trees or the urban owner with a valued specimen residing in their front yard.

References
S. Sky Stephens, Colorado State Forest Service, csfs.colostate.edu
http://csfs.colostate.edu/pages/mountain-pine-beetle.html

Sylvia McNeill is an ISA-Boared Certified Master Arborist and owner of McNeill’s Tree Service, a five-year TCIA member company located in Corvallis, Montana.

Montana DNRC, beetles.mt.gov

A Field Guide to Diseases & Insect Pests of Northern & Central Rocky Mountain Conifers, Hagle Gibson, Tunnock

Upcoming FREE* EHAP grant-funded workshops

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South Seattle Community College – Georgetown Campus
Seattle WA

June 6, 2012
Sponsor: Aloha Arborist Association
Honolulu, HI

TCIA EHAP grant targeted topic training funds provided by grant SH-22312-11-60-F-33 from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. Total grant award: $165,000. This workshop provided with 100 percent federal funds.

*A nominal fee is charged for lunch.

For additional workshops listings and details for each workshop, or to register, call 1-800-733-2622, or visit http://www.tcia.org/training/ehap.htm.
Plants are typically included around buildings, parking and in urban parks where the soils are highly disturbed by current or past construction. Photos courtesy of James Urban.

By James Urban, FASLA

Plants are typically included around buildings, parking and in urban parks where the soils are highly disturbed by current or past construction. These soil conditions may include remnant undisturbed soil profiles; stockpiled and redistributed A and B horizon soils, i.e. “topsoil”; graded/mixed soils and even heavily compacted B and C horizon soils. Frequently, this results in plant decline and loss is significant.

Development standards for preparation of planting soil typically do not recognize soil disturbance in the design of planting conditions. Adding 4 to 6 inches of “topsoil” over whatever subsoil conditions exist.

Educating landscape architects, civil engineers and planners who design plantings and write specifications, and making changes to current standards, is challenging.

Educating landscape architects, civil engineers and planners who design plantings and write specifications, and making changes to current standards, is challenging. Few site designers are well versed or even interested in learning about planting soils. Typical construction budgets include only sufficient funds to meet the development standards noted above. Lack of funding is a significant barrier to change and undercuts the moti-
vations for learning new skills; and standards modification cannot change more than the design professionals’ skills and abilities to implement the change.

The following must be included in any modifications to improve upon the current situation:

- **Site designers must be required to understand planting soil, and estimate existing soil conditions at the end of construction, not prior to the start of development.**
- **Sub-grade compaction and drainage requirements must be modified.**
- **There must be a transition layer between sub-grade soil and planting soil layer.**
- **Depths of planting soil for different types of plantings need to be part of the requirements, and planting soil specifications need to be improved.**
- **Soil specifications must recognize, and treat separately, the different types of soil conditions and resources that may be encountered.**
- **Topsoil, soil chemistry, compaction and compost specifications need to be rewritten.**
- **One of the most critical changes is to stop the aggressive screening and mixing of otherwise good soils.**

- **Soil processing damages residual soil pedds (clumps of soil loosely bonded together by clay, fungi and biotic glues) and dramatically reduces drainage.**
- **To compensate for the damage, the soil industry adds significant amounts of sand and compost to re-establish drainage, making a soil that is very irrigation and fertilizer dependent, while being prone to settlement after compost decomposition.**

- **Soil specifications must also consider the impact of irrigation systems on soil design; controlling compaction during installation of planting soil; establishing soil elevations to reflect expected planting soil settlement; and adding the majority of the organic amendments in the top 6 inches of planting soil, rather than into the soil mix.**

- **Finally there is a need to establish better quality control requirements and...**
“Whenever a natural soil is disturbed, it loses some of its ability to support plant life by losing its structure, its one irreplaceable attribute.”

From Up By Roots – Healthy Soils and Trees in the Built Environment, by James Urban

larger soil modification budgets. The designers must create dedicated soil plans, soil details and write soil specifications sections that are separate from the planting sections.

Fortunately there is hope on the horizon. The American Society of Landscape Architects is developing new requirements in the Sustainable Sites Initiative: Guidelines and Performance Benchmarks. Soil scientists on this committee have incorporated many of the above modifications and landscape architects are encouraged to better understand the principles of soil in their designs.

James Urban is a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects (FASLA), author of Up By Roots: Healthy Trees and Soils for the Built Environment (available from TCIA at www.tcia.org), and operates Urban Trees + Soils in Annapolis, Maryland.

Up By Roots Workshop

James Urban will be presenting an Up By Roots Workshop, hosted by the Rochester Arborist Workshop, June 28, 2012, at the Rochester Community Technical College, University Center, in Rochester, Minnesota.

Up By Roots is a one-day workshop highlighting the principles of soil science and their use in facilitating the growth of healthy trees and developing water-efficient landscapes. This workshop includes lectures and field work intended to introduce the underlying scientific principles guiding tree biology and soil-water relations. This hands-on workshop will highlight key soil and site assessment techniques; skills that are critical for arborists, landscape architects, architects, planners and urban foresters.

This program is ideally suited for anyone who designs, specifies, installs, or manages trees in the built environment and is worth 7 ISA CEUs and 7 LA CES (landscape architect continuing education system) credits.

For more information, visit www.rochesterarboristworkshop.com.

Sub-grade compaction and drainage requirements must be modified.
Regional News

Terex Equipment relocates, expands Colorado location

Terex Equipment Services (TES) has relocated its Commerce City, Colorado, location to a new site in Aurora, Colo. The move significantly expands the square footage from 5,400 square feet to 31,500 square feet.

“Our customers are increasingly expressing a need for repair and maintenance work performed by experts,” said Siva Balakrishnan, Terex Aerial Work Platforms vice president and general manager, global services. “This expansion is integral to the company’s value proposition of continuing growth and delivering value-added services for customers in the Rocky Mountain region.”

The facility will cater to all customers with service needs of Genie aerial equipment, Terex utility equipment and other equipment. The new location of TES’s upgraded air and overhead crane support, which allows for inspection, repair and service for aerial, hydraulic, electric and hybrid equipment.

Dave Vance, branch manager, reports directly to Richard Gunderman, director of operations TES, Terex.

PCI Waste & Recycling newest Northwest Bandit dealer

Bandit Industries of Remus, Michigan, welcomes PCI Waste & Recycling Equipment of Portland, Oregon, as a Bandit dealer. Serving the entire Pacific Northwest including Washington, Oregon and Idaho, PCI’s full line of industrial refuse and recycling equipment will be a perfect home for Bandit’s line of chippers and stump grinders.

“We’ll have all in-house service,” said Dave Eagy, who owns PCI along with his wife Lahna. “Greg Latimer in operations, Donald Wiseman in sales and the rest of our staff bring 29 years of chipper experience to the table, and we’re very excited to be on board with Bandit.”

“They (PCI) are a dedicated group of individuals with a passion for what they do, and they understand that exceptional customer service is part of the Bandit experience,” said Jason Morey, Bandit Industries marketing manager.

Vermeer Sales Southwest Albuquerque moves, expands

Vermeer Sales Southwest Inc.’s Albuquerque location has moved to a new, expanded facility. The previous facility, which opened in 2000, was 6,000 square feet and the new building is 13,000 square feet on 2.5 acres of land.

“The timing was right for this investment for many reasons, but most importantly, for our employees and customers,” said Kyle Pieratt, chief financial officer of Vermeer Sales Southwest. “This new facility reinforces our commitment to the marketplace and our unending desire to take care of our customers.”

VSSW purchased the building and invested $350,000 for improvements to follow the 5S lean manufacturing philosophy, and interactive technology and visual displays for more positive customer experience.

VSSW opened in Gilbert, Ariz., in 1989 and services the Arizona, New Mexico and Las Vegas, Nevada, areas.

TCIA Legislator of the Year

The Tree Care Industry Association Board recognized Congressman Tim Walberg (R-MI) as Legislator of the Year for 2011. Walberg is Chairman of the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Workforce Protections. He also sits on the Homeland Security and the Oversight and Government Reform Committees.

As Chair of the Workforce Protections Subcommittee, he has been a loyal ally to the tree care industry. In June, Walberg invited TCIA to testify at a hearing on how OSHA is undermining state efforts to promote workplace safety. Peter Gerstenber ger appeared on behalf of TCIA and shared details on the work the association has done to increase workplace safety across the country and OSHA’s failure to promulgate a proper safety standard for the tree care industry. Walberg provided a valuable platform for TCIA to raise the profile of the issues impacting the industry, and has continued to be supportive.

In Walberg’s role as a Member of the Education and Workforce Full Committee, he has staunchly opposed the efforts by the Department of Labor and the National Labor Relations Board to deny employees crucial information about union representation, limit free speech communication by employers, and create legal pitfalls for small business owners facing union organizing drives. He has also shown support for H-2B visas as a co-sponsor of the Save our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act.

Congressman Walberg and his staff deserve to be honored for the contributions and support they have provided TCIA on both our legislative and regulatory agenda.
TCIA Chair’s Award was presented by outgoing TCIA Board Chair Scott Jamieson at TCIA’s Winter Management Conference in Curacao in February. When I looked back at my years of service on the Board, and more closely on my year as Chair, I thought about who to honor this year with the Chair’s Award. I recognized that there is someone who has worked tirelessly in recent years on behalf of the industry.

For me, this year’s Chair’s Award is about inspiration and perseverance. This individual has given tremendous amounts of time and energy to TCIA over his company’s 30 years of TCIA membership, which they celebrate this year. He has served on just about every committee we have ever had, has represented TCIA on the TREE Fund board, has won multiple Excellence in Arboriculture Awards … remember those? His company was the first to be accredited in his state, and he served on the task force that created the CTSP credential. He has given tirelessly to this association over his 30 years of membership, leading the way on many initiatives.

Yet, for me, what stands out is a short moment in time, a conference call to discuss an issue on the board. A trivial matter had exploded beyond all rational boundaries and our three-member executive committee had gathered on the phone to restore things to civility. What I remember is this individual’s desire to participate on this call to discuss a really meaningless issue, when we look back at it today, just hours before he was to undergo major surgery.

It was in that brief moment that I realized just how committed this person was to our association. And months later, while still recovering, this individual, our board Chair, refused to miss leading our board meeting because he was restricted from traveling. Instead he set up a Skype feed from his house so he could be with us virtually (and we could watch his wife make breakfast in the background). He led us through our board meeting from 3,000 miles away. And although he was with us virtually, I might suggest that it was from that moment forward that he was with us in our hearts, the place where true leadership finds its base.

Often leadership is revealed in our most vulnerable moments. What tests us reveals who we really are – that person few others, including ourselves, ever really see. How we respond to situations beyond our control can be an inspiration for others. Ralph Waldo Emerson said that “what lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”

No one has inspired me more or has more within him than our Chair’s Award recipient, Terrill Collier.
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US industry spends billions of dollars every year in outfitting workers in FR clothing, but most organizations do little to nothing to protect workers from insect-borne disease. Every day, millions of employees are exposed to insects that can carry malaria, lyme disease, dengue fever and other dangerous diseases. In the United States health experts are predicting 2012 to be the worst year for Lyme disease risk ever.

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