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If I could change one thing with you ...

In December, our team held its annual performance reviews as our fiscal year came to an end. While traditional review processes look backwards at what has happened, we have quarterly conversations along the way. There are no surprises at the year end, and we spend a bit of time talking about what we want to do differently in the coming years; what some of our dreams are; and plot out multi-year thinking about our strategies.

This year, I wanted to find out from my management team what they were thinking about longer term. If they were at retirement, what would they want to look back over 20 and 30 year careers with TCIA and see had been accomplished. What did they need to do in the coming years to be at peace with giving their life’s work to mainly one organization? How would they position their work and their contributions in the next few years so that there are no regrets?

Of course, I also believe that you shouldn’t ask of your team things that you aren’t willing to do yourself – or be willing to contemplate yourself. For me, that was clearly defined over the last 16 months…from August 2006 through now. Early on in my time here, we were focused on a financial turn around, getting technology resources in place, and asking the members where we needed to go – creating a base for the future. Mid-way through my time so far, we launched a tremendous number of new programs and repositioned the organization to capitalize on a stronger future. Now, it has become painfully clear to me that none of this will matter to me personally without one big change.

I am thrilled with the progress that this industry has made in the last nine years. We have established best business practices and are helping companies one at a time put systems in place that are making them more money, saving them time, and creating great workplaces. We have identified a program that will help establish a culture of safety in companies and save lives every day. We have created a credibility that has brought national and international attention to arborists and tree care companies. The media is paying attention. The government now partners willingly with us – both regulatory agencies and legislative bodies. Our meetings, conferences, and workshops have consistently brought in record-breaking crowds, such that we provide the technology resources in place, and asking the members where we needed to go – creating a base for the future. Mid-way through my time so far, we launched a tremendous number of new programs and repositioned the organization to capitalize on a stronger future. Now, it has become painfully clear to me that none of this will matter to me personally without one big change.

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There is a shadow over all of this that hangs darkly around the progress. We have had two weeks out of 19 since we started tracking Google alerts and plotting deaths and serious injuries on calendars that we have not lost people in this industry or maimed them. None of our accomplishments as an industry can be fully celebrated as long as this is a daily part of our culture.

No, it does not matter whether it is happening inside the membership or outside. No, it does not matter whether it is a landscaper doing tree work or an arborist doing tree work. No, it does not matter whether the person injured or killed is someone you like being part of the tree care community or not. What matters is that OUR people are dying.

If I do spend 20 or 30 years with this industry, I will only be able to walk away with complete and utter celebration of what we have accomplished together, if we have removed this shadow from over all of us. I need your help. This is not about somebody else or somebody else’s company. This is about every single one of us making this our top priority throughout this industry.

I’m writing this at the beginning of a new year, because I want all of us to be mindful that if we don’t work on this together – with our members, with non-members, with landscapers, with the government, with our friends, and with those whom we do not respect – our calendars and industry data will show this year that we will lose close to 200 people in 2008.

I want to change this one thing with you. Please help.

Cynthia Mills, CAE, CMC
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JANUARY

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Please circle 33 on Reader Service Card
ON THE COVER: The Major Oak in Sherwood Forest, England. Folklore of the area states that the legendary Robin Hood hid from enemies inside the hollow of the Major Oak. A Quercus robur, an English or pedunculate oak, its vital statistics are impressive. Its approximate diameter of 33 feet, height of 52 feet and spread of 92 feet make it the biggest oak in Britain. It is debatable how old the Major Oak is – some say 800 years, while others estimate more than 1,000 years old – but the trunk conceals the truth. Some say the Major Oak would have only been an acorn during the time Robin Hood was gallivanting around Sherwood Forest. The Major Oak needs a bit of support to hold its green head high these days, with several wood supports now used used to support its branches.
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Let’s say Betty takes a long time to get to work with the company pick-up, Joe is taking a very long lunch hour off the job site with the chip truck, and you don’t know if the rumors are true about Bob using the bucket truck to hang Christmas lights for cash. Furthermore, one of the chippers is missing, and Frank can’t remember how many hours he spent on the last work order. Not to mention that on a sales call Louise has locked herself out of her pickup again and needs a key.

Okay, we assume that all of these troubles would not occur in one company in one day. But they could. And they all occur at one time or another in the tree service industry. What they have in common is that they are all easily solved by one simple device. A GPS tracking device placed in a vehicle or piece of equipment can tell the company where it is at all times, how fast it is traveling, how long it was parked at the last job and exactly where it went during the lunch hour. Furthermore, the device could allow functions such as stolen vehicle location and door unlocking, all accomplished remotely.

GPS devices are becoming more and more common among hikers and for personal use cars. But even more importantly, tracking GPS in a vehicle is a true management tool. Whereas the better-known navigational GPS tells a driver how to get around city streets, tracking GPS allows a company to schedule dispatches, route vehicles more efficiently and use its time sheets to do billing and time-in-motion analysis.

It’s based on two simple facts. First, through satellite GPS signals, you know where your vehicle is at all times. Second, by sending commands from your office computer via cell towers, you can tell that vehicle’s driver what to do regarding service calls or other business matters, as well as give the vehicle commands through its internal wiring. Sure, you can find out if the driver has taken the truck to his girlfriend’s house on the other side of town, but the long-term significance is to enable a company to be more efficient.

One of the interesting aspects of GPS tracking, also known as vehicle monitoring systems or fleet or vehicle telematics, is that most of the process occurs online. All you need is an office computer that is Internet-capable, and you can access all the data through a Web browser. Lewis Tree Service in Henrietta, N.Y., has grown rapidly and now, with more than 1,700 licensed vehicles, they are looking at GPS tracking with the idea of installing devices in every unit.
The way it works is that a tracking vendor signs up a client, supplies the client’s vehicles with GPS devices, provides monitoring software, hosts the server, and charges the client to use its services.

Those services range from locator devices that give regular updates and vehicle analysis, to devices that allow processing of all information regarding the vehicle through the vendor’s proprietary software. You can then access that software and monitor the vehicle online. Management reports can be generated using that data.

Costs vary depending on how many services you subscribe to, but they run from less than $20 per month for simple reporting devices to more than $75 per month for elaborate data tracking and report generation. Of course, that is per vehicle, and is in addition to the cost of the device installed in the vehicle. Installation usually costs about $400 for a mid-range GPS reporting device, which is usually placed under the dashboard and ties into the relevant wiring, though it can be placed under the hood or hidden elsewhere. It relies on the truck battery for power and has its own modem for generating signals. There’s also a basic unit that can’t be accessed remotely; it is removed from the vehicle, and its data is downloaded to a computer through its USB port.

Some companies have devices installed in all their vehicles, some in only select or representative vehicles. More rarely, they are placed on service equipment or trailers to provide tracking in case they are stolen (these are special units that have their own batteries). Bulk purchases for large fleets can garner significant savings in price of devices and services.

The Internet is rife with vendors of these services (just do a search for “GPS vehicle tracking” and have a ball), and many of them have been around a surprisingly long time, because other industries have been users for more than a decade. Their primary customers have been trucking companies, delivery services and other companies that put a lot of vehicles on the road, but larger landscape companies have become users because of the number of trucks sent out to jobs. The tree service industry has been slow to respond.

“We have all kinds of landscapers as clients, but I don’t know if we have any tree companies per se,” says Mike Knudson, account executive for Global Tracking Communications, a company that has been around for nine years. He is currently pitching to a handful of tree companies, which are interested in aspects ranging from speeding and on-job reports to the checking of billing accuracy by looking at reports generated off a vehicle’s PTO usage.

“For landscapers, a useful application would be landmark reports,” says Knudson, whose company is in Lake Elsinore, Calif. That would be a report, seen on the company computer, that would show the location of all company trucks on a virtual map. Recently, there have even been moves to integrate vehicle locations with Google Earth photos so that an office manager can see where each vehicle is and watch its progress in real time.

Communications with several GPS tracking vendors indicate that the uses for the service range widely, but all promote it as a management tool. One of the common uses is as an aid to dispatching. When the office manager can see which truck is closest to a client, it is easy to dispatch the nearest vehicle. That results in big savings in time and fuel costs.

The “geofence” is another popular function. Software can be programmed to send
the office an alert when a vehicle goes outside a proscribed area, and that can be used to either notify the company when a vehicle is stolen or to keep employees within a desired range of travel. Notifications of speeding or sudden starts or stops can be sent, alerting the company to unsafe driving, and a report can be generated on how long a vehicle idles at each stop.

In fact, any element of a vehicle’s use that can be sensed through its wiring can be recorded. If you want to know when a door is opened, that can be wired in. And the company can send action signals back to the vehicle. For example, if a driver in a remote area doesn’t respond for a long time, the home office can honk the vehicle’s horn.

Shawn Gaston, CEO of Gaston’s Tree Service in Gainesville, Fla., swears by the devices. The TCIA member says he first tried GPS tracking when he bought three new Altec bucket trucks in 2004. He wanted to know where these major investments were “at all times,” and he ordered devices to be delivered with a tracking service already installed.

Apart from keeping track of the trucks, and having a built-in theft alert, Gaston wanted to know when the PTOs of the trucks were in operation, and that was part of the service he signed up for. He wanted to be able to use that data for a tax discount on the time the PTOs were not in service, and that also was easily done. Also, he wanted to be able to disconnect the PTOs
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“Boy, they were great. They could tell me how fast they were going, right up to the minute,” Gaston says. This wasn’t a secret spy operation, though. Drivers were notified that the devices were in the trucks.

He does feel that driving safety may have improved simply through this notification.

The vendor that set up the software also basically managed the system for him, with the assistance of his secretary in the Gainesville office. They could e-mail him any alerts, and he could e-mail them instructions or changes. In fact, the system has been so smooth that Gaston says he may get more personally involved just to use the management tool more effectively.

“I think it’s an incredible add-on for people in our industry,” Gaston says, because any tree service company that has more...
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Although even two-truck companies can get the same benefits from tracking devices, Mike Moser is looking at much bigger savings and scales of efficiency. He’s the fleet and purchasing manager for Lewis Tree Service in Henrietta, N.Y. The company has grown rapidly and now has more than 1,700 licensed vehicles. Moser has been researching service providers with the idea of installing devices in every one of them.

“One of the big things I want to do is tap into the control module of the vehicle.” Moser says, which means that the company will be able to look at a huge array of data and affect many aspects of the vehicle.

The first objective mentioned by Moser is to reduce costs of maintenance and fuel. Accurate reporting of mileage and wear will be used to time vehicle maintenance, rather than using a set schedule as is done now. The company will be able to track when vehicles are off-road and hence in need of shorter maintenance intervals, in addition to being able to route trucks more efficiently. The company’s main business is utility line clearing, and crews and foremen will be able to find each other more quickly using GPS.

But Moser says that one of the most promising ideas is to reduce the use of PTOs when not needed. When a bucket truck, for example, is just idling or driving along the freeway, and its PTO is engaged, it is using more fuel and risking damage. The tracking device can be set up to detect that and turn off the PTO. A similar use will be to detect overheated engines before they can burn up, which happens occasionally in the larger trucks.

“If we can get that truck shut down it could save $15,000 per engine,” Moser points out. Just saving one engine per year could pay for much of the service for the entire fleet, and shutoff can be done remotely with a tracking device.

Here are some of the other major tasks that Lewis Tree may set their tracking software to do. The company wants to encourage safety by monitoring speeding and harsh stops, and would use its findings to help train drivers to be more careful. It would monitor whether the boom is out of its rest in bucket trucks, thus reducing the chance of damage. And they will use it in theft recovery, as well as in notification if a vehicle is started up after work hours. Another safety factor is that if an employee is hurt in a remote area, the GPS device will enable the company to find him.

But Lewis Tree also is interested in using the service for accounting purposes. One of the main objectives is to monitor off-road use in order to apply for refunds on highway fuel tax payments. Another is to use the automatic reporting software to calculate highway mileage traveled in each state. That is now done by drivers and is time consuming.

Lewis Tree is currently installing new custom software in its offices, and it plans to upload the GPS tracking data right into the system to facilitate management, accounting and maintenance decisions. Moser says it will all be accomplished with existing employees, because the system will “push” data into the system without extra staff monitoring.

Moser emphasizes that the GPS tracking system will not be used to spy on employees. Drivers, for example, will be notified of the devices placed in their vehicles and trained to utilize them. Lewis Tree is a caring and trusting company, he says, and this will not be an invasive system. In fact, he hopes to be able to individualize the system to meet the different requirements of the 80 general foremen and their crews.

As other companies in many industries are doing, Lewis Tree is hoping to use the vehicle monitoring system primarily as a management tool. As a company with 900 bucket trucks and another 800 vehicles of various sorts, the potential savings are enormous.

Don Dale is a freelance writer living in Altadena, Calif.
Please circle 36 on Reader Service Card
AlturnaMats Acquires competitor Mobile Mats

AlturnaMats, Inc., producer of ground protection mats, has acquired one of its major competitors, Mobile Mats, of Green Bay, Wisconsin. Terms of the deal were not disclosed. According to Michael Gierlach, president of AlturnaMats, the integration of AlturnaMats with Mobile Mats comprises the largest ground protection mat manufacturing group in the nation. These mats are used to eliminate damage to lawns and soft terrain due to vehicle traffic related to tree care, landscaping, construction and other services, and to keep heavy vehicles from getting bogged down in mud.

Under terms of the new arrangement, Phil Schounard will continue to head up Mobile Mats and operate from the Green Bay facility. However, as of January 1, 2008, Mobile Mats are now available through AlturnaMats’ dealer network. Currently, AlturnaMats, Inc. offers its AlturnaMats, which feature a bold diamond plate tread, and VersaMats, which provide a finer, slip-resistant tread designed for both vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Mobile Mats are slightly lighter in weight and have a unique “M” shaped tread. Both firms also market one-piece plastic outrigger pads in a variety of sizes.

Barko loader wins Paul Bunyan log-loading test

Jerry Logan of Art Saylor Logging won the 2007 Paul Bunyan Show Loader Competition October 6, 2007, using a Barko 295ML Magnum. Logan walked away with $700 total in cash prizes thanks to his operating skills and the Barko 295ML Magnum loader.

Held at the Guernsey County Fairgrounds in Cambridge, Ohio, the Log Loader Competition is part of the larger Paul Bunyan Show held each year by the Ohio Forestry Association. The purpose of the competition is to demonstrate the speed and efficiency of a hydraulic log loader and the professional individuals who operate them. Contestants have the choice of using a Tigercat, John Deere, Hood, Prentice or Barko loader for the event, where each operator must move a series of logs from a designated area near their loader, load them into a log bunk, then unload the logs back to the designated area on the ground. They have six minutes to complete their task, and points are deducted from 100 total possible for time consumed, failure to abide by safety regulations, improper log stacking, etc. Logan was awarded $500 from the Paul Bunyn Show and an additional $200 from Baker & Sons Equipment located in Lewisville, Ohio. Baker & Sons supplied the winning Barko 295ML loader for the competition, and is also Barko’s newest forestry dealer in the area.

Changes at the top at Crary

Chuck Crary, president of Crary Industries Inc. – a subsidiary of ECHO Incorporated – stepped down as president and became chairman of the board effective December 1. Keith Nilson, formerly vice president of operations at Crary Industries, replaces him.

Chuck Crary started the West Fargo, North Dakota company in 1979, with his cousin, as a small machining shop for area agricultural businesses. The company doubled its size every five years until it was acquired in 1999 by the investment firm KRG Capital Partners, LLC. KRG combined Crary Company with three other companies to form TerraMarc Industries, a company specializing in agricultural products such as potato harvesters and the Bear Cat chippers/shredders.

Nilson joined Crary Industries in March 2004 as vice president of operations. He and Chuck Crary have seen the company’s workforce grow from 116 employees in 1999 to 225 employees in 2007. The company’s manufacturing facility has grown from 6,000 square feet in 1981 to today’s 202,000-square-foot operation. ECHO purchased TerraMarc in April 2006 and renamed the company Crary Industries.

Giuffre Bros. takes Terex surplus during model update

Giuffre Bros. Cranes Inc., of Milwaukee, has committed to purchasing 90 end-of-run Terex 3470 and 3670 boom trucks that will be available as Terex’s Iowa operation tools up for new models. These popular units, a mainstay in the industry since 1989 for their size and reach, will fill the gap during the transition. The purchase commitment puts Giuffre Bros. in a position to accommodate other Terex dealers and rental houses until new models become available.

Novozymes Biologicals buys Philom Bios Inc. of Canada

Novozymes has acquired Canada-based Philom Bios Inc. The inoculant company will become the cornerstone of Novozymes’ BioAgriculture business.

“We are committed to establishing Novozymes as a leader in the sustainable agriculture industry, providing earth-friendly alternatives to traditional pesticides and fertilizers,” said Ted Melnik, Novozymes Biologicals’ president. “This merger reinforces that commitment.”

Using technologies developed in Salem, Va, Novozymes will expand Philom Bios’ current market presence in the agricultural segment. The merger provides future opportunities for growth of Novozymes in Salem; however, no immediate changes are planned. Philom Bios will continue to do business from Saskatoon, Canada and Novozymes Biologicals’ existing business will remain in Salem.
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N.E. Ropes Tachyon climbing line

New England Ropes’ newest arborist climbing rope, Tachyon, features the company’s patent-pending Flexifirm core technology, with a tough durable UV- and abrasion-resistant polyester sheath over a unique “dual-core” of nylon surrounding polyolefin inner core strands. The result is a rope that has superior strand definition and a firm, round shape that improves friction hitch performance. Additionally, Tachyon has no sheath slippage so it performs exceptionally well in popular mechanical devices without the “bunching” or “bagging” in the cover experienced with other 11mm climbing ropes. Tachyon, available in three high visibility colors for safety, was designed to have a slightly larger diameter than other 24-carrier ropes. The 11.5mm diameter and firm, round cross section improve grip and reduce hand fatigue without the weight or bulk of ½-inch ropes. Its weight is 5.8 pounds/100 feet; diameter 11.5mm; tensile 6,800 pounds (spliced and cycled per CI1500-02). Contact New England Ropes at (508) 730-4524 or via www.neropes.com.

Nesco EZ Reach TRAX 42

Nesco Sales and Rental’s EZ Reach TRAX 42 spider-type lift now combines a compact SDP Manufacturing track drive with a Versalift SST40 aerial unit, creating a more versatile unit with a 42-foot working height and a 350-pound bucket capacity. The SDP track system retracts to a 36-inch width, allowing it to travel through narrow passages and gates. Other features include radio remote drive and hydraulic tool outlets at the bucket. This unit comes with its own trailer, outfitted with a toolbox and electronic breaks. Contact Nesco Sales and Rentals at 1-800-252-0043 or visit www.nescosales.com.

Timberwolf HV-2 log splitter

Timberwolf’s TW-HV2 commercial-grade log splitter is built to last and designed to handle season after season of heavy duty use. The model’s horizontal/vertical splitting capabilities make it easy to operate, and now Timberwolf has made the HV2 an even greater value with the addition of both a stripper head and log cradle at no extra charge. The TW-HV2 offers up to 25 tons of splitting force, a 10-second cycle time and operates in either the traditional horizontal or vertical position. Powered by a 9 hp Honda OHV engine, its stripper head ends the problem of “sticking” logs by peeling them off the wedge as it retracts. The log cradle makes handling of logs fast and easy. The enhanced TW-HV2 promises excellent value. Contact Timberwolf at 1-800-340-4386 or via www.timberwolfcorp.com.

Jaraff 4-WD All-Terrain Tree Trimmer

Jarraff’s four-wheel drive All-Terrain Tree Trimmer can easily navigate through tough environments while offering low ground pressure and minimal mainte-
John Deere 4.5L engines earn certifications

Three new models of John Deere Power Systems’ 4.5L engine have received Tier 3/Stage III A certification from the EPA and the European Union. The turbocharged PowerTech E 4.5L engine features a power range of 63-74 kW (85-99 hp) and is the first Deere engine under 100 hp to be electronically controlled. This engine comes with a two-valve cylinder head and incorporates a high-pressure common-rail fuel system, full-authority electronic controls, a multiple injection strategy and a fixed geometry turbocharger, as well as all the performance of Tier 2/Stage II engines. The turbocharged PowerTech M 4.5L engine features a power range of 56-63 kW (75-85 hp), and the turbocharged and air-to-air aftercooled PowerTech M 4.5L engine features a power rating of 74 kW (99 hp). PowerTech M 4.5L engines feature economy of design, a two-valve cylinder head, a fixed geometry turbocharger and a mechanical rotary pump fuel system. The simple design and mechanical controls of PowerTech M engines give OEMs and end users flexibility and cost savings while maintaining the same platform as Tier 2/Stage II engines. Contact John Deere Power Systems at 1-800-533-6446 or jdpower@JohnDeere.com.

Bandit 1680 ‘Sharptooth’ Beast Recycler

Bandit's new Model 1680 “Sharptooth” Beast Recycler offers compact solution to tree waste disposal. Tree services and municipalities looking for a real “son of a Beast” to help dispose of brush and limbs should consider looking at this compact grinder. The 1680 is simple to maneuver and easy to tow. Featuring a 52-inch-wide by 24-inch-high infeed opening, this compact unit weighs in under 20,000 pounds and rides on two 10,000-pound Torflex axles for easy transport. The 1680 also features 26 cutter bodies with teeth, engine options up to 275-horsepower and an optional 36-inch hydraulic folding infeed pan. Contact Bandit Industries at 1-800-952-0178 or via the Web at www.banditchippers.com.
Events & Seminars

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Contact: www.glte.org; 1-800-879-6652

January 7-11, 2008
Advanced Landscape Plant IPM PHC Short Course
University of Maryland
College Park, MD
Contact: Debbie (301) 405-3913; debrar@umd.edu; www.raupplab.umd.edu/conferences/AdvLandscape

January 8-10, 2008
Landscape Ontario Congress 2008
Toronto Congress Centre,
Toronto, Canada
www.locongress.com

January 8-10, 2008
Rutgers North Jersey Ornamental Horticultural Symposium (Tree, Turf & Landscape Day)
Morris County RCE office, Morristown, NJ
Contact: (973) 285-8300

January 9-11, 2008
Minnesota Green Expo
Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis MN
Contact: 1-888-886-6652; info@minnesotagreenexpo.com

January 9-11, 2008
2008 CSRA Tree, Turf and Ornamental Seminar (Central Savannah River Area)
Julian Smith Casino, Augusta, GA 30904
Contact: Henry Frischknecht/Terry Troutman, Empire Tree & Turf (706) 854-0926

January 14-17, 2008
Indiana Arborist Association Annual Conference
Marriott Inn, Indianapolis, IN
Contact: Rita McKenzie mckenzie@purdue.edu; (765) 494-3625; www.indiana-arborist.org/pdf/2008-01-17Annual.pdf

January 15, 2008
EHAP-Electrical Hazard Awareness Training
Troy, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

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Indianapolis, IN
Contact: (765) 494-3625; McKenzie@Purdue.edu

January 16-17, 2008
Annual NJ Nursery & Landscape Conf. & Trade Show
Somerset, NJ
Contact: www.gardennj.net; njnla1@aol.com

January 16-18, 2008
Mid-Am Horticultural Trade Show
McCormick Place, Chicago, IL
Contact: 1-800-223-8761; mail@midam.org

January 17-29, 2008
43rd Annual Shade Tree Symposium
Penn-Del Chapter ISA, Certification exams Jan 27.
Lancaster Host Resort, Lancaster, PA
Contact: E. Nertz (215) 795-0411; www.penndelisa.org

January 17, 2008
CTPA Annual Meeting
Farmington, CT
Contact: Chris Donnelly, cmandonelly@aol.com

January 24, 2008
Pesticide Safety
Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education
Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: www.cooke.rutgers.edu

January 24-25, 2008
Utah Pest Control & Lawn Care Association Annual Trade Show & Convention
Red Lion Hotel, Salt Lake City, UT
Contact: Les Ingram (801) 773-4411; afungus@gmail.com

January 27-29, 2008
Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course
The Virginia Horticultural Foundation
The Founders Inn and Spa, Virginia Beach, VA
Contact: (757) 523-4734; www.mahsc.org

January 29, 2008
Urban Soil Fertility and the Effects of Mycorrhizal Fungi & Beneficial Bacteria
Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

January 30-31, 2008
2008 Connecticut Turf & Landscape Conference
CT Grounds Keepers & CT Irrigation Contractors
Conn. Conf. Ctr, Adrian’s Landing,
Hartford, CT
Contact: Dick Tice (203) 699-9912 or rtice@snet.net

January 31, 2008
When Is Wilt Not a Wilt: Wilt, Vascular and Bacterial Diseases of Woody Plants
Traverse City, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

January 31, 2008
Professional Certified Applicators 2008 Trade Show
Sheraton Long Island Hotel,
Hauppauge NY
Contact: PCA of Long island (631) 744-0634; http://www.pcaofli.com/2008_PCA_Trade_Show.html

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95 FORD FT900: Cummins, 250 hp, 9 spd trans, A/C, 46 GVW, 10 ton NATIONAL 4006 CRANE, 56 ft hook ht, A2B, winch, 12” ft steel flat / utility body. $29,500.

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97 CHEVY 3500: 6.5L Turbo-diesel, auto winch, 15 GVW, 2 ton HIAB 025 CRANE, picks 1,610 lb at 11 ft max reach, winch, 10” ft steel flatbed with 28” wood sides. $13,900.

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5 TON COPMA
96 INT 4700: T444E, 210 hp, 6 spd, A/C, 33 G GVW, with 5 ton COPMA C1310 CRANE, picks 2,760 lb at 16” ft max reach, 18” ft wood flatbed / dump. $33,900.

5 TON COPMA
97 INT 4800 4X4: DT466E, 250 hp, Allison 4 spd auto, 2 spot transfer, AWD, 33 G GVW, with 50 ft LIFT-ALL LM50-2MS CRANE, joystick ctrl, winch & jib on upper boom. 18” ft fiberglass utility body. $39,900.

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94 MACK RD688S: 350 hp, 8 spd, Allison 4 spd auto, A/C, 21 ton NATIONAL 800C CRANE, 133” ft hook ht, A2B, capacity 1 overload shutdown, 2 spd winch, 22” ft steel flatbed. $79,500.

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97 GMC C6500: CAT 3116, 170 hp, Allison 4 spd auto, 25,950 lb GVW, 3% ton HIAB 060 CRANE, 7 ton NATIONAL N80 CRANE, winch limited to 2,050 lb at 32” ft max reach, 11” ft steel flat / utility body. $52,900.

7 TON NATIONAL
2000 INT 4900: DT466, 250 hp, Allison 6 spd auto, 33 G GVW, with 7 ton NATIONAL N80 CRANE, winch limited to 2,050 lb at 32” ft max reach, 11” ft steel flat / utility body. $52,900.

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93 FORD F800: Cummins, Allison 4 spd auto, 33 G GVW, with 52 ft ALTEC AM600H CRANE, hwy winch & jib on upper boom. 13” ft utility body. $24,500.

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92 MACK DM695S: 300 hp, 8 spd, A/C, 60,940 lb GVW, with 9 ton COPMA C1930/6P CRANE, picks 1,786 at 52” ft max reach, 21” ft steel flatbed. $49,500.

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52 FT ALTEC
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37 FT ALTEC

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Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

February 19-22, 2008
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Contact: (240) 404-6482; www.ascas-consultants.org

February 22, 2008
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Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, IL
Contact: (847) 835-8261; www.chicagobotanic.org/symposia

February 24-29, 2008
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T-BAR-M Conference Center,
New Braunfels, TX
Contact: www.NJArboristsISA.com

February 26-27, 2008
Trees, People & the Law Symposium
National Arbor Day Foundation
European Crystal Banquet Ctr., Arlington Heights, IL
Contact: www.arborday.org/tpl or (888) 448-7447

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Woody Ornamental Updates: Review ’07, Anticipate ’08
Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

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MGIA’s 21st Annual Trade Show & Convention
Rock Financial Show Place, Novi, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

March 6-7, 2008
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Rutgers Univ., Cook Campus Ctr,
New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: (732) 574-9100; www.NJArboristsISA.com

March 6-8, 2008
Ecological Landscaping Association 2008
Conference & Eco-Marketplace
MassMutual Center, Springfield, MA
Contact: Penny Lewis ELA.info@comcast.net; (617) 436-5838

March 16-18, 2008
Southern Chapter ISA Annual Meeting
Knoxville, TN
Contact: Dwayne Carter, 1-888-339-8733; dcarter@isasouthern.org

March 17-19, 2008
Certified Pesticide Applicator Training & Testing
Bellville, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

March 26-27, 2008
West Virginia Vegetation Management Association Conference
Stonestown Jackson State Park Lodge,
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Contact: Mike Chedester (304) 234-3143

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Nature of Tree Care III:
Planting Shigo’s Tree

By Jack Phillips

Wonder and Desire

The value of trees is well documented, if not obvious, but our attempts to plant and preserve trees are often unsuccessful. In other words, our desire to live closer to nature sometimes increases our distance from it.

Harvard entomologist E.O. Wilson has described natural desire as “biophilia,” the desire humans need to connect with nature on a deeply personal level. This “gravitational pull of nature on the human psyche” goes beyond the environmental concerns of human life. We approach nature with wonder and openness when desire is nurtured.

Alex Shigo taught wonder. As a young botanist, he concluded that “either the books are wrong, or the trees are wrong.” Shigo taught us to look closely and to touch trees, to enter the reality of nature as we walk in the woods or peer through a microscope. His research provided the basis for “modern arboriculture”; in fact, it can truthfully be said that he changed the way we care for trees. Even more importantly, he changed the way we look at and think about trees.

Information, no matter how current and complete, is useless without a proper perspective; Shigo gave us both. He taught us not only where to look but how to see. We can see individual trees and other creatures in the woods, but we also need to see them all as parts of a dynamic system. We need to think about what it means to be a tree and what it means to plant one.

A tree-systems approach

Shigo may be best known for his work in pruning and compartmentalization of decay, but his teachings on planting need to become more widely known and practiced. It seems to me that his approach goes far beyond the important methods of sustainability, plant health care and integrated pest management. This is a “systems” approach because our understanding of a tree as a system within a system informs planting and all other aspects of arboriculture. It is more than plants and pests; it is a web of relationships.

Informed arboriculture requires special equipment. The indispensable tool for sound arboriculture does not require gasoline or a truck; it is not loud or messy or expensive. In fact, it costs less than $2 and can be purchased in bulk. It is a compact folding hand lens. Keep one in your pocket and give them to your clients. This may lead to the purchase of a microscope, which still costs less than a chain saw.

It also requires time in the woods or other native tree habitats. We can best learn about trees by spending time with them before they are turned into books. We need to see them above and below, as individuals and communities in various stages of life. We need to watch them stand and fall, grow and die and everything in between.

We need to get close and stand back to see the secret life of trees and to understand their communal nature. Native soil is a wilderness of complex relationships and multitudes of creatures — many yet to be named or even counted. E.O. Wilson has stated that a handful of forest soil contains...
literally thousands of species and billions of individual organisms. Forest trees have co-evolved with, and live in relationship to, them all.

In addition, trees also have to endure human-caused changes to their environments. For example, a green ash in the urban forest must deal with pavement, nitrogen fertilizer, water stress, global warming, pavement and emerald ash borer. And the biggest problem of all may be poor planting.

**Planting Shigo’s tree**

Of all the research and conceptual models he gave to arboriculture, I find his three-tree model to be the most useful for teaching and planting. Conceptual models are figurative ways to understand and apply information by painting mental pictures that simplify complex ideas. The most famous of Shigo’s models is “compartmentalization of decay in trees” (CODIT). This model clarifies how trees respond to wounding and is used to teach proper pruning techniques.

Likewise, the three-tree model clarifies how trees form relationships as they grow and age, and what this means for planting. Shigo identified three stages of “trees” to show a progression of changes in the tree system over time. Trees become increasingly dependent on other organisms as they grow and age, and vitality is determined by their ability to form relationships. We can’t create these relationships, but we can create environments where they are possible.

Landscape soils are often poor in organic content that can’t be replaced by fertilizer or applications of mycorrhizal inoculants. It is impossible to create or recreate nature, but we can make planting sites more natural. Native tree soils – whether forest, savannah or river bottom – contain large amounts of dead organic material in various stages of decay. We obviously can’t duplicate this in town, but we can make better habitats for soil organisms, from insects to microbes, and in so doing make better habitats for trees.

Soils on developed sites also tend to be compacted, and the presence and activity of soil organisms is the only reliable way to reverse this. Aerators and air excavators may be impressively expensive and noisy, but in the end, the natural approach works. Soil health requires pore space for the movement of air and water through the soil, and these pathways are created by and are necessary for root function and organic activity.

Mycorrhizal fungi can’t thrive and infect tree roots without a healthy environment. Consequently, the efficacy of commercial inoculants does not need to be debated here because mycorrhizae won’t survive in a poor environment, regardless of how they arrive. Even if one believes in mycorrhizae by the bag, soil needs to be dynamic and alive.

The fact that trees and their associates work together to create the habitat and community upon which they depend is a source of wonder. Trees don’t keep all of the carbon they capture from sunlight, but
release a large percentage of photosynthate into the soil. The creatures that depend on this energy from the tree make elements, air and water available to the tree. These relationships go far beyond concepts such as balance and symbiosis, indeed their sheer numbers and complexity exceed our science and lead us to fascination and mystery.

The three-tree model sees the forest for the trees. Trees of like species connect through root grafts, and all of the trees in an area are connected through a below-ground web. The so-called urban forest does not resemble a forest at all – trees are planted in isolation from each other, separated by hardscape barriers and greenly sterile soils. Urban trees seldom reach potential vitality because connections are prematurely broken or never established. Trees survive in groups by sharing energy and information. Shigo called this the “intelligence of tree systems.” We can take advantage of tree intelligence by planting trees in groups and by eliminating root barriers between them.

There are no universal prescriptions for tree planting because each site and each tree is unique. A tree-systems approach follows principles that apply to most, if not all situations. Stated simply, planting trees means creating possibilities. Planters are matchmakers and midwives. This means planting trees the way they would naturally grow in the kinds of places they would naturally grow. This is what I did with a group of monks.

Monks and serviceberries

A monastery is one of my clients. After having a new garden designed and planted on the grounds, the monks were faced with a languishing Gymnocladus. Kentucky coffeetree was a good choice, but this tree was not thriving. It had been planted in a flagstone patio with adequately permeable surfaces and substrate. Root space was not the problem. Rather, it was suffocating.

Upon excavation we discovered that the root collar was about 13 inches too deep. In addition to excessive depth, the root ball had been buried in clay subsoil and commercially prepared mulch with burlap and wire basket intact. Upon dissection we found a scarcity of fine roots. In fact, there were scarcely any roots at all.

New Skete Monastery is nestled in a mountain forest. Oaks, aspens, dogwoods, maples, witch hazels and serviceberries provide a background for the garden, and also a palette. After transferring the coffeetree to rehab, we decided to plant a serviceberry, locally known as shadblow, instead. Brother Stavros in particular delighted in the seasonal beauty of this tree. We found an excellent specimen in a nearby nursery and got to work.

I prefer to plant trees in groups, but this design did not permit that. Nonetheless, the
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dynamism of the ecosystem informed our practice. Since the nearby serviceberries could not directly connect, we collected an offering instead. We dug a small amount of forest soil containing serviceberry roots with mycorrhizal structures to plant with the tree and gathered mulch from the forest floor. Our buckets were alive with critters.

We removed enough flagstone to increase the surface area of the planting space, so as to increase oxygen infiltration. Roots are the “lungs” of a tree, and oxygen is necessary for every process in the system. We adjusted the depth of the hole so the root collar could be positioned above grade, as a serviceberry would naturally grow. Roots can negotiate a multitude of challenges, but these all take time and energy. Improperly planted trees can survive but their vitality and resiliency will suffer, as with our coffeetree.

One of the taxing challenges often faced by landscape trees is nursery packaging. There are those who claim that burlap, twine and wire baskets need not be removed. While it is true that roots can grow through and around these materials, this demands a lot of energy. When energy demands increase, trees have less energy for growth and defense. Wild roots often face challenges, but they are much better prepared than their tree-farm counterparts. We removed the entire package before filling the hole.

Growing wonder

When we plant a tree we bring nature closer. The forest is closer while sitting by this little serviceberry, and the monastery is connected to the forest in a new way. By the time of my departure, visitors had already begun to visit the serviceberry, while robins and oven birds searched the mulch for prey.

We continue to plant and grow with Alex even after his departure. My friends and I still travel to the woods where he taught us, touching trees and trying to see with his eyes. We have planted many trees with him in the hope that they will survive us all. Our wonder continues to grow.

Jack Phillips is an ASCA registered consulting arborist in Omaha, Nebraska.
Injured tree trimmer rescued in Salinas

A man was rescued November 28, 2007 after becoming pinned by a branch while trimming a tree in Salinas, California.

The man, identified by fellow workers at the scene as Gabriel Ortiz, according to The Salinas Californian, was working in a crew of four to cut branches. About 10:30 a.m., a passerby noticed Ortiz pinned against the tree he was in.

Firefighters were called to the scene, and the group foreman went up in an aerial lift bucket to bring down Ortiz.

Firefighters attended to Ortiz and took him by ambulance to a Salinas-area hospital. Dispatchers said Ortiz may have a broken leg.

Tree trimmer pinned by fronds, killed

A 31-year-old man from Anaheim was killed November 26, 2007, while trimming a 70-foot palm tree in Cerritos, California, according to a report in The Orange County Register.

The man, identified as Jose Angel Barajas, was trying to cut the palm fronds when a cluster of them came down and pinned him against the trunk of the tree, according to Los Angeles County Fire Department officials.

At 8:23 a.m., firefighters responded to reports of a tree trimmer being stuck in a tree in a residential area. Upon arrival, rescuers heard a groan coming from the tree, but could not see Barajas, who was hidden under the fronds about 40 feet above the ground.

The weight of the frond skirt came down and he was pinned from the top and held in place by a waist belt, according to authorities at the scene.

About 25 firefighters assisted in the rescue using an aerial ladder and a chain saw to get to Barajas. It took them more than two hours to reach him, untangle him from the waist belt and lower him.

He was no longer conscious by the time firefighters reached him, and was pronounced dead at the scene.

At least two other tree trimmers were in the area, but it was unclear if they knew Barajas.

Investigators from the California Occupational and Safety Health Administration responded to the scene. An autopsy was pending to determine the cause of death.

Man injured by falling tree branch in Kahalu‘u

A 41-year-old man was rushed to The Queen’s Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, December 10, 2007, after a tree branch fell and hit him in the back of the neck. Tree trimmers were apparently clearing trees on Mapele Road in Kahalu‘u. It was not clear whether the man was a tree trimmer or pedestrian.

The man was transported to Queen’s in serious condition with possible cervical spine injuries, according to the Honolulu Advertiser.

Tree trimmer killed by dump truck on U.S. 17

A crewman trimming trees on U.S. 17 about seven miles north of Hardeeville, South Carolina, was killed December 10, 2007, when a dump truck struck him by the side of the road, according to a highway patrol officer.

Steven Johnson, 32, of Brunson died instantly, according to Martin Sauls, Jasper County coroner.

No charges were filed in connection with the case, which remained under investigation.

Tree trimmer electrocuted

A tree trimmer was electrocuted while working in Poquoson, Virginia, November 29, 2007.

Edward Dix, 49, with a last known address in Chesapeake, Va., was taking down a tree when one of the branches became entangled in a power line. When
he tried to free the branch, Dix apparently came into contact with the power line and was electrocuted.

Dix was an experienced tree trimmer working as a day laborer, according to WKTR Channel 3 in Norfolk, Va.

It happened at around 1:30 p.m. Emergency crews arrived after neighbors say they saw the man being electrocuted while he was cutting branches off a tree 20 feet above the ground.

“I heard a bunch of screaming and I thought it was just a machine because there was a bunch of stuff running and it got louder and louder and that’s when I walked out front and saw it,” said Ashley Hunt, who lives next to the home where it happened.

Hunt saw sparks flying from a tree branch as it touched a nearby power line and then arced back, hitting the worker and electrocuting him. According to Hunt the sound was so loud those living blocks away heard it.

Timberland recalls steel-toe boots due to injury hazard

The Timberland Company, of Stratham, N.H., has issued a recall of its Timberland PRO Direct Attach Steel Toe Boots. The boots could fail to provide the intended protection against compression and impact, posing the risk of a foot injury to consumers.

While no injuries have been reported, the recall is being conducted to prevent the possibility of injuries.

About 193,000 pairs are affected. They include model numbers 26002 (wheat nubuck leather), 65016 (wheat nubuck leather), 26038 (black full-grain leather), and 38021 (brown oiled full-grain leather). The model number is printed on a green loop tag on the inside of the boot, just below the size. The boots have a four digit date code ending in 35 and beginning with the numbers 25 through 45 (e.g. 2535, 2635…4535), which can also be found on the loop tag below the model number. They were manufactured in the Dominican Republic. Direct Attach Steel Toe boots made in China are not subject to this recall.

The boots were sold at shoe stores and other independent retailers nationwide from September 2005 through September 2007 for between $90 and $115.

Consumers should stop wearing the recalled boots immediately and contact The Timberland Company to receive a free replacement pair of boots.

For more information, contact Timberland at 1-800-445-5545 between 8 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. EST Monday through Thursday, and Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. EST, or visit the firm’s Web site at www.timberland.com.
While the body dangled from a rope 20 feet above the ground, one of the other workers on the ground called 911. Moments later, emergency crews arrived.

The fire department put up a perimeter because of the live lines. Emergency crews had to wait for Dominion Power to arrive and shut the power down before they could get to the victim. The power company used a bucket lift to finally get the man down.

Poquoson police have finished their investigation into the incident and ruled it an accidental death. An autopsy confirmed that the cause of death was electrocution.

The incident is also being investigated by Dominion Power and by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Send accident news to Don Staruk at TCI, 3 Perimeter Road, Unit 1, Manchester, N.H. 03103, or staruk@tcia.org.
Knowing the maintenance cycle of the chipper, what large repair and replacement costs to expect, and when it’s “time to throw down the chips” and purchase a new piece of machinery is an important part of your profitability planning for 2008.

There’s no tried-and-true way to predict any of these costs exactly, but there are some things to anticipate.

Universally, the most costly repair will be the chipper’s power plant – the engine. Well-cared-for engines, diesel especially, can go for thousands of hours. Poor attention to filters and fluids and/or inattention to other maintenance areas will kill the machine prematurely and cost you thousands of unnecessary dollars.

After the power plant, the mainstream thinking is that major maintenance costs are likely to run to hydraulics – motors and pumps – then the cutting edges. Knives are a relatively inexpensive, expendable part of maintenance, but they are a constant maintenance cost that builds over the life of the machine. Inattention to those cutting edges to save a few bucks is a prime suspect in premature chipper failure.

When is it time to replace or upgrade your chipper? Opinions vary, but they fall into two camps.

First, a well-run business will purchase and proactively expense a piece of capital equipment like a chipper, trading it in or selling into the secondary (used) market as soon as the capital write-offs have been exhausted and while there is still lots of valuable life left. The second school of thought is broader. It has to do with your business fundamentals. For example, if the cost of repairs is outrunning your mechanic’s capabilities or costing you money on a job, that’s a signal to think new. Conversely, if yours is a rare tree care business where chipping isn’t a mainstream function, then occasional use of a chipper that is gradually becoming inefficient or problematic may not be such a problem.

You get to decide. But to help, we queried the chipper makers.

The experts at Vermeer Manufacturing say there is, indeed, a time to “say when,” even after years of proper maintenance and faithful service. Business models, growth plans, market pressures and time will converge periodically and that’s when it’s obviously time to upgrade to a newer unit with more advanced technology.

“The life cycle of a brush chipper can vary considerably depending on the application in which it has been used and its care,” explains Chris Nichols, environmental sales manager with Vermeer Manufacturing Company. “We have seen brush chippers with up to 15,000 hours on them, but this is not the norm.”

According to Nichols, there are three groups of tree care contractors. “The first group will put 10,000 to 15,000 hours on a unit. They reinvest back into the unit by upgrading wearable parts to keep the machine running efficiently. The second group will upgrade chippers at the 5,000-hour mark. These contractors are not concerned about resale value and want to get the most out of their investment. The final group typically trades units every 2,000 to 2,500 hours to ensure that they have the most up-to-date technology in their chipper fleet.”

“Most tree care contractors prefer to trade their units at 2,000 to 2,500 hours while they still have good resale or trade value. These units, if properly maintained, also have a very productive life ahead of them in the secondary market.”

What are the signs it may be time to upgrade?
First, Nichols advises tree care pros to look at business needs and to evaluate how they’ve used the chipper in their businesses. “Ask if your current unit is too big or too small based on your business niche,” he says.

Did you start business as a full-service tree care company requiring a diverse chipper fleet and then move to line clearing and maintenance, where a chipper specifically designed for that application may be more efficient? Have you given up lot clearing to concentrate on fine pruning and plant health care?

The point Nichols makes is that chippers are designed for specific purposes, and you need to find the right match for your business model to enhance efficiency. So, maybe it’s time to upgrade, or downgrade, not so much because of maintenance as for need.

Second, you may have made a conscious decision to upgrade all of the equipment in your business on a regular cycle, essentially staggering their ages and conditions, so you are not upgrading all the units in one year. “This should allow you to upgrade into newer technology, take advantage of trade or resale values, and manage the overall age or condition of your fleet,” he says.

Finally, existing chipper components, because of the application and work, may be showing age or wear that can result in reduced chip quality, increased cost of operation or decreased efficiency.

“Before you upgrade brush chippers, it’s important to know the type of work you are currently doing and will be doing in the future,” says Nichols. “Ask yourself what chippers have done for you in the past and what size and type of chipper has been successful in your business.”

In addition to reminding us that the engine is the heart of the chipper, requiring routine oil and filter changes, tune ups, radiator flushes, as well as hose and belt replacement, Nichols suggests that storing the chipper indoors, out of the elements, can also help extend the life of the unit.

When is it time to sell or trade? “Contractors need to ask themselves if they have time to sell the unit outright and still maintain their business,” says Nichols. “They need to be on-hand to visit with a potential buyer and demo the unit for them at their convenience.” The trade-in route means dealers see hundreds of potential customers every month and have the time and experience to demo and sell a used chipper, simply reducing one’s hassle.

Dennis Beam, sales manager for Altec Environmental Products says that, because each chipper model is different, “operators should refer to the placards on the machine and follow prescribed maintenance schedules itemized in both the chipper operations manual and the engine manual supplied by the manufacturer.

So, when does the machine need to go into the shop for service? “Anytime that a foreign object goes through the chipper it should be properly shut down and checked for damage; this may require service,” says Beam. “Minor problems can usually be found and repaired before they become major field down-time issues. Unusual noises, leakage, smoke or erratic operations are good indicators of needed service. Also poor discharge, poor chip quality and vibration could be indicators that the machine needs to be inspected and repaired. If the operator is not trained to perform the monthly and yearly maintenance items, it should be taken to a service location,” he says.

At some point, it’s time to give up the ghost and purchase new. Here are seven signs, Beam says, that the time has come:

> If you’ve outgrown the size of the chipper, and you find you need more production and capacity.
> If you’re experiencing 10 percent downtime in a 40 hour work week.
> If there is a tool, such as a winch, that you need, and your chipper does not have it.
> If there is a safety feature that is not working and cannot be repaired.
> If the engine requires replacement.
> The engine does not meet emission standards.
> Total cost to repair exceeds 25 percent of a replacement.

That’s a bit different from knowing when it’s time to trade in. “It is difficult to determine a generic time to optimize the trade-in time from a calendar standpoint,” Beam notes. “However, a properly maintained unit holds its value very well. This will vary, based on usage. Overall condition, paint/rust, engine hours and whether all safety features are working will play a role in its value.”

So, it’s important, from Beam’s perspective, to:

> Understand the difference between retail and trade-in value. There are magazines and Web sites that will help in determining the value.
> Try to trade while everything still works. If you are trading it with mechani-
cal problems, the market for it is greatly reduced. Buyers of used chippers want to put the machine to work immediately.

- Explore times when the used market is better. A busy hurricane season can help the market.
- Have service records, which may also increase the value.

Jerry Morey, president of Bandit Industries says, “The chipper engine is obviously the single biggest replacement item. Generally, he says, it makes sense to R&R (repair and refurbish) the existing engine rather than upgrade to a Tier 1, 2, or 3 type. (The “tier” nomenclature refers to stages in increasing emissions efficiency.) All chippers are grandfathered, so an engine upgrade to a Tier 3 may actually represent an extra expense over a good rebuild. Plus, a Tier 3 engine will be more expensive than a Tier 1,” he advises, in the event you want to go the upgraded engine route.

“An owner may be convinced to rebuild the engine rather than trade, but the reality is most people trade to get a new machine primarily because chippers are evolving and becoming more efficient. Most of our customers are upgrading to newer chipper technology. Electronics are better and far more efficient than the old ones,” Morey says.

“We are most particular with our drum chippers, favoring oversize drums in small to mid-size chippers to help reduce wear and tear on the machine and reduce maintenance. Plus, the larger sizes make it easier to cut material and thus diminish the load on the engine which, in turn, reduces fuel consumption,” Morey says.

The evolution of the chipper has reduced much of the general maintenance to fluids and filters. “Mostly you can’t fix the new machines yourself, and the major issue in that regard will turn out to be electronics,” he points out. “I can see an operator’s expense coming in the electronics. Chippers all now have computers and their own electronic control box, even electronics tied to the auto feed. An owner might be able do some electronics maintenance, but generally they should go back to the authorized dealer.”

Overall, though, “As a machine gets older, look for wear in specific areas. The hydraulics eventually need work –
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- Reduce downtime
- Provide more efficient chipping
- Increase the longevity of the machine
- Increase the resale value
- Reduce the fuel consumption

Altec Environmental Products includes check sheets in every manual that should be utilized to ensure proper inspections. In general, however, the following items should be performed:

Daily
Note: The daily inspection (except where noted) shall be performed prior to leaving the shop for the following reasons:
- General...
  - Transport safety.
  - Tools or parts may be required that are not found at the worksite.
  - It sends a bad message to be performing repairs at the worksite.
  - The evidence of fluids on the equipment (or the ground) may indicate a problem that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Equipment...
- Check the engine & hydraulic oil level.
- Insure the cooling system is operational (hoses undamaged, coolant level adequate and belt undamaged) and the radiator is clear of debris.
- Inspect the welds and structural components for cracks.
- Insure the controls are functional and that the PTO has free play.
- Insure the air filter is secure and clear of debris.
- Insure the hydraulic hoses are undamaged and secure.
- Insure the blades are undamaged, secure and have an adequate cutting edge.
- Insure all safety devices are operational and undamaged.
- Insure all warning placards and Operator Manuals are in place and legible.
- Insure all guards are securely in place and the discharge chute is secure.
- Insure all lug nuts are secure and the tires are safe for transport.
- Insure the hitch, tow bar and tow chains are secure and undamaged.
- Insure there are no loose components or other items (tools, cones, etc.) on the machine that could fall from the machine during transport.
- Insure adequate fuel for the day's operations.
- Insure the electrical system does not show loose, frayed or damaged wires and that the lighting system works properly.
- Start the engine and insure it is running properly and all systems are working properly.
- Grease the cutter mechanism bearings. (This should be performed at the end of the work day to prevent condensation in the bearing)

Weekly
- Grease the Panic bar connections.
- Grease the PTO bearings. (DO NOT over grease)
- Insure adequate PTO free travel.

Monthly
- Check the battery for correct water level (if applicable) and insure all connections are secure, undamaged and do not show signs of corrosion.
- Check the drive belt tension and alignment.
- Change hydraulic filter (200 hours).
- Grease the feed roller bearings, chute rotation and slide box.
- Refer to the engine manual for proper oil change intervals and perform when directed.
- Inspect the anvil for proper edge and adjustment.

Yearly
- Grease the wheel bearings.
- Flush and replace the coolant.
- Replace the fuel filter.
- Flush and replace the hydraulic oil.

Courtesy of Altec Environmental Products

Echo Bearcat offers 12-inch and 6-inch chippers that offer a flip open hood design that allows for quick access to service points and ease of engine maintenance.

Hydraulic pumps and motors get weaker and won’t perform, but an owner can certainly handle some of that with a good maintenance crew,” Morey says.

Don’t be afraid of a good rehabbed chipper. Bandit, Morey says, puts many chippers into the secondary (used) market. “We have a facility dedicated to rebuilding chippers you can trust.”

John Bird, vice president at J.P. Carlton, had a very interesting take on “strategic” chipper maintenance costs. “My No. 1 concern is knife maintenance. Improperly maintained knives lead to other problems, and you end up with metal fatigue problems or other more expensive issues. A good rule of thumb is don’t run anything through that you would not be comfortable running through your chain saw, like dirty wood with rocks and metal. Dirt and debris lead to premature knife wear plus other wear.”

So while the overall costs of knife repair or replacement may be high, in the long run, don’t skimp; those knives can cut your costs of major maintenance.

“Another thing we don’t see is customers doing a good job of keeping maintenance records, so they don’t realize how long it is between required maintenance. That can affect the machine life and actually void your warranty,” Bird adds. “It also goes to accountability. When we see companies running multiple crews who do good documentation, we and they can truly see quantitatively their maintenance costs over a long period and what maintenance costs are associated with each crew and each machine. Good crews cost less in the long run by keeping up maintenance and documentation. You can keep crews...
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accountable and know what repair costs are from crew to crew.”

For Bird, the time to upgrade to a new chipper has a lot to do with what effect the maintenance downtime has on the business. “It’s a fine line because you may not be able to see significant productivity improvement with incremental technological improvements, but you can definitely see productivity drop-offs when a machine gets past its service life. That’s one tipping point.”

Then there’s Tom Gross, owner of Dynamic Manufacturing Corporation, who notes that, “There are a couple of starting points for buying a new machine, especially if you are leasing or financing over three to five years. It’s always a good idea to look at replacing your chipper for no other reason than to get the best resale you can and to take advantage of the new technology being brought into the industry.

Of course, expensive maintenance items are another factor. “Anything engine-related really should go back to the dealer. Engines are a big ticket item that can run into big costs, and doing it yourself can void warranties very easily. Not only do you not want problems with your warranty in a major overhaul because of your mechanic’s skill level or oversight, not pulling maintenance or not doing it in a timely fashion can hurt you with respect to warranties. Nowadays, with electronic monitors, manufacturers can tell the maintenance history of an engine simply with computer programs,” Gross warns.

“If a breakdown is major or will represent a significant amount of money, consider getting rid of the machine. Look down the road for your overall cost of ownership and think ahead to when it’s worth re-selling and when you can get more in trade or resale.

Charles “Chuck” Ritz, president of Karl Kuemmerling, LLC, maker of the Mitts and Merrill chipper, is of the opinion that if you make it right in the first place, there should be little major maintenance needed. In fact, he says, “We have units made in 1957 and 1958 that are still in the field. And we get trade-ins, mostly from the ’70s and ’80s, which we go over and refurbish and resell at a third to a quarter the cost of a new machine.”

Usually, chippers that do come in, whether in trade or for R&R, need either an engine overhaul or cutter head bearings, Ritz says. “If an owner does the required maintenance, there is no reason our chippers won’t go 20 or 30 years without major maintenance.”

The company makes the newer styles with hydraulic feed rolls and heavier overall technology, Ritz says, but “I like to steer customers to the drum style because it is less expensive to buy initially and then to maintain.”

In all, there are more than a half dozen Mitts and Merrill models all capable of taking up to 8-inch diameter wood. Models are designed around the power plants, usually diesel, and featuring a variety of mainstream engines, such as John Deere, Cummins and Perkins.

They key, Ritz says, is to keep the chipper knives sharp and the bed knife properly adjusted. Given the fact that the double edged cutting knives can be sharpened three times on each side, and that the throat bar can also be sharpened many times, even the knives can have a long life, he notes.

“The big daily maintenance issue in tree service is the knives,” agrees Rob Faber, Morbark’s commercial sales specialist. “Make sure they are in top operating condition – DAILY – to keep edges sharp and ensure that there are no cracks or chunks taken out. Periodically, people forget to check the anvil, cutter bar or other shear...”
points, either on the disk or drum. Those don’t need to be changed as often as knives – maybe every 200 to 300 hours – but they do require maintenance. Check belts to see they are tight and not worn. That alone can rob a machine of power and puts more strain on bearings. People need to look at the maintenance requirements of the clutch manufacturer. If the clutch is not on spec, you can have costly engine issues,” he says. His bottom line is that the small stuff can lead to the big costly repairs, such as a $5,000 engine overhaul.

Faber agrees that the signs are there for a new chipper when you start putting a lot of money into major high-ticket items. In his book, those are engine issues, turbos, injectors etc., hydraulic motors and pumps. Another benchmark: “If it’s paid off, maybe it’s time to move to another machine.”

Kevin Covert, sales and marketing manager for chippers at Rayco, agrees that it’s overlooking the low-cost maintenance items that will cost you. “The main items are owner greasing of bearings, daily check of the chipper knives, generally simply flipping them to a new edge or replacing them as needed.”

The cost of knives do add up over time to become a major maintenance line item in the annual budget, and what damages them is not the wood but the debris like rocks and mud that do them in, he says. “Feeding mud, rocks and metal will definitely do extensive damage to a knife, the drum and possibly the drum housing,” Covert says.

“A chipper will run and run and run if you only maintain it and keep it clean, but when you reach a point when you’re spending more time fixing than running the chipper, then it’s time for the old one to go.” Trade-in is a good way to go, he says, and you can trust a re-habbed chipper done by an authorized retailer.

The implication here is that you might get a better deal on a trade through a dealer than an outright sale of a battered machine, and you don’t have to fear buying a brand name chipper that’s been done by authorized retailers with access to education and parts.

Sal Rizzo, president of Salsco, takes a different view yet. “We make our machines heavier duty to begin with, so you don’t have to worry so much about maintenance and costs. For example, the feed door is the heaviest in the market and our bearing mounts for the impeller are an inch and a quarter thick; you can put a cup of coffee on the machine and it won’t vibrate off! If you pick up the trade magazines, you hardly see one of ours for resale. Ours are built to run forever,” he says. “We also spec Caterpillar and John Deere engines to support the heavier machines we make with the larger shafts, clutches and belts. We also buy American quality when we can because quality shows up in the long run.”

What gets customers to buy a new Salsco unit is usually business related. According to Rizzo, “Capacity usually gets them. They want to grow their business. And many are good businessmen and know it makes a lot of sense to write off a machine in five to seven years, then buy new after expensing it and getting it off the balance sheet.”

“A chipper is no different from a car when it comes to maintenance and life expectancy,” explains Bob Campbell, sales manager for Woodsman. “The engine can definitely cost a third of the cost of a chipper to fix, yet nowadays they’re so relatively simple and cheap to maintain that they can go a long, long time.”

“What I find is that customers are trading in their chippers more for upgrades rather than wear and tear. With the new chippers come new engines that run cleaner. The price of chippers has increased because the newer Tier 1, 2 and 3 engines are more expensive, but the maintenance needs have not really increased; in fact, some are simpler.” In the final analysis, the engine is relatively cheap to maintain, he says – if you actually maintain it.

“When’s it time to upgrade? Hard to tell,” Campbell says. “It’s a tradeoff of what you have invested in your equipment and what the piece of equipment means to your livelihood. From that perspective, the added cost of a new Tier 3 engine is relative.”

One problem he sees is the cost of fuel. “Guys who would be switching out and buying a new chipper sooner may be delaying their purchases to try to make up for the rising cost of fuel.” That may be a false economy, he argues. “Be extra careful with your maintenance now because it will affect what you have left to trade in later.”

In addition to repeating the call for regular maintenance, Campbell suggests making a regular visual inspection of your chipper to ensure nothing is lodged or dislodged and that it looks as good as it runs. “We powder-coat all machines so we and the user can take pride in their appearance. After all, a good looking piece of equipment helps you in business. It projects your business brand. How company equipment looks says a lot about the company,” Campbell says.

He concludes by suggesting that owners make sure all warning signs and maintenance decals are clear, legible and in place. “Preach proper safety, operation and maintenance.”

Maintenance – like it or not, you have to do it or pay early and often for not doing it. Upgrading. That’s a function of your business needs and your company’s mechanical skills. Start logging maintenance costs, then try plotting those costs to see if they rise to an uncomfortable level and how accumulated costs compare to buying new more often.
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The year was 1948. Jim Mauget, a southern California man with a background in product packaging, lay confined to a hospital bed recovering from surgery.

His mind wandered to the intravenous drip delivering fluids to his healing body. He struck up a conversation with his hospital roommate, a man who happened to be a local arborist, about whether such a delivery system could work for the vascular system of a tree. The theory was quite plausible, mused arborist Walter Barrows. Mauget decided to find out.

Though its original founder has since passed on, the company known today as J.J. Mauget celebrates its 50th anniversary this month, five decades after Mauget launched his micro-infusion prototype in 1958. The research he conducted following his departure from the hospital led to the creation of what many say was a revolutionary way of treating trees: a capsule that slowly infuses chemicals into a tree, with minimal injury to the living plant and virtually no leaching or drifting to other surrounding organisms, soil or groundwater.

"Not only was it state of the art, it was the only thing (of its kind) available for many years," says Jerry Pulley, owner and operator of Tree Clinic based in Austin, Texas, who has distributed Mauget products since 1983. "And, today, with all the competition, it remains state of the art. You really don’t have to worry about machinery breaking down. You don’t have to clean up instruments. It’s a one-use capsule and it’s very, very simple. For the commercial arborist, one who’s out there trying to make a living, simplicity, effectiveness and economy are extremely valuable."

The business continues to operate today under control of the Dodds family, whose involvement traces back to the company’s early years. Dale Dodds was a chemical engineer who supplied materials to Mauget’s business starting in 1958. It wasn’t long before the two men realized they could do greater things together. Mauget offered Dodds a partnership in the business and Dodds accepted, beginning his work of developing and refining chemical treatments to be used exclusively in Mauget’s capsules. Dodds bought out the company after Mauget succumbed to a heart attack in 1971 and he ran the company for the next 30 years.

"We used to kid my father that it was his hobby," says Nate Dodds, current president and CEO, who took the helm when his father, Dale Dodds, died of congestive heart failure in 2001. When Nate Dodds first started working with his father, there was one other shop employee who ran the production line and a part-time worker on the payroll. Today, J.J. Mauget employs four full-time sales representatives and 13 additional workers at the company’s home base of Arcadia, California.

His father’s mind was always focused on
protecting and caring for the environment, Dodds says.

“He was actually a scientist; not a businessman. He loved creating these applications for trees. He had propane-powered vehicles back in the 1960s. He knew oil reserves were going to be depleted and we should look for alternate sources of power. He just had a mindset to be kind to the earth, to try and protect the earth. This application fit into his mindset.”

Brother Charlie Dodds, current vice president of research and development for Mauget, started his work with the company more than 30 years ago.

“I started out when I was in high school doing odd jobs and working on the production line when the company was definitely much smaller and more like a mom and pop-type business,” he remembers. “The fact that we’ve been around 50 years is quite an accomplishment in itself.”

Mauget’s original launch product was an insecticide called Inject-A-Cide B, designed to kill the elm bark beetle (Hylurgopinus rufipes) that carried Dutch elm disease, which was sweeping the East and Midwest regions of the country. The product - an insecticide called bidrin, manufactured originally by the Shell Chemical Co. and repacked into Mauget’s micro-infusion capsule - continues to be the company’s second-most popular insecticide today, marketed for control of insects feeding on cotton.

The company has since gone on to market a variety of insecticides, fungicides, antibiotics and fertilizers, all deliverable through micro-infusion. M auget’s flagship product today is Imicide, a 10 percent concentration product the company formulated from Bayer’s imidacloprid, which Dodds says is the most popular insecticide following DDT in the world. Imidacloprid, he adds, is responsible for bringing under control the Asian long-horned beetle, brought into the U.S. via packing materials used in shipping goods from countries including China and Korea.

Chicago and New York especially were hit with infestations of their ornamental hardwood trees in the 1990s. The U.S. Department of Agriculture launched a search for a solution and turned to Mauget’s Imicide capsules, according to Dodds.

“We were identified as the only treatment of choice for tree injection application,” says Dodds, adding that M auget has supplied the product under contract with the USDA for the past seven years. “There were other tree injection formulations that were tested that failed to bring about the control (the USDA) was looking for.”

The same product is being used for a more recently identified problem, the emerald ash borer, which was originally found in Detroit and is also indigenous to Asian countries. While no chemical has been proven to be 100 percent effective in larval control of the insect, M auget’s Imicide has been tested effectively into the 80th percentile, Dodds says.

M auget has recently introduced a new product line, the O120 delivery system, to satisfy the market need for delivering a higher volume of treatment at a faster rate, Dodds says. The new system, unveiled in December, provides a maximum of 40 psi, which Dodds says is the optimum pressure that chemicals can be safely introduced into a tree’s tissue.

**Right technology, right time**

It’s possible that today’s market is growing more favorable for a line of products like the M auget capsule, given a public that is increasingly concerned about the health of the environment. People are sensitive to the fact that chemicals sprayed on trees or administered into soil can run off into streams. With the micro-infusion capsule, 100 percent of the chemical goes into the tree.

“Everybody is becoming chemical-phobic,” says Dodds. “So, through public awareness, this is becoming a much, much
more acceptable method of applying chemicals.

"It's one way of (showing people) that it is not a danger to them," Pulley agrees. "(This method) has no environmental contamination whatsoever."

That advantage could open up an area of the market that has largely remained untapped, says Charlie Dodds.

"As more people and more entities become aware of this way of treating trees and applying pesticides, this has become

companies can benefit.

To reach a larger public, Mauget has unveiled a new Web site at www.mauget.com and is working to revamp its marketing and research and development methods, says Marianne Waindle. Hired two years ago as a regional sales representative for the western region of the country, the company recently added product development management to her responsibilities. Mauget will begin outsourcing more of its field trials to independent researchers as it continues looking for new products to tackle the next pest or problem.

Staying on top takes more than just having a good history to back a company up, Waindle says. "If you're the original, you might be the pioneer. But if you're not on the leading edge, then you're old news."

Dale Dodds dreamt big, says son Charlie, and the family has continued living and breathing the business since their father's passing.

"Like all family issues, you go through various phases, and sometimes you hate it and sometimes you love it," he says. "My father ... believed in the technology. Even if we were to stop at this point, just the concept and the whole (method) of tree injection - that's going to continue on. We've left the mark."

44 TREE CARE INDUSTRY - JANUARY 2008
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By Pat Kerr

Popular literature often portrays evil and danger as ugly, while heroes are beautiful. The emerald ash borer is more like a character from C. S. Lewis’s books or Steven Spielberg’s “Men in Black” movies, because the best fiction is based on truth. Remember Will Smith’s line about attacking the world’s most feared alien with three worms and a mailman? The USDA is starting an attack on one of the most beautiful and dangerous invasive alien species with three insects and a handful of researchers and technicians.

Barry Lyons of the Great Lakes Forestry Centre in Sault St. Marie, Ontario, Canada, says that when EAB was discovered in North America they had half a sheet of data about the insect. It was written in Chinese and much of the material did not apply to North America. Today volumes could be written about what we know about this beetle. There are charts to predict the range when the adults will emerge according to the temperature. We also know the males have hairier chests, and that this hair acts like “Velcro” during copulation. Ken Marchant, an EAB specialist, has learned to watch for ash trees that change color early, without wilting, to monitor its spread. And, possibly most importantly, we now know EAB has enemies or parasitoids.

With 100 years of experience dealing with alien invasive insects, scientists on both sides of the U.S/Canada border collaborated on the workload and went in search of solutions. Some worked in the confined space of quarantine facilities, others in all weather, and still others crossed the globe. Following here is a sample of what a couple of them are doing to “save our plant” from EAB.

North America lacks a native beneficial insect specialized to attack and consume EAB. As a result, when the insect became established in North America, its population exploded and the sheer numbers of healthy EAB feeding on trees decimated the ash population in infested areas. Dr. Leah Bauer is a research entomologist with the USDA Forest Service. Part of her work is in China searching for natural beneficial insects that control EAB in its home range. Working with colleagues, Leah discovered two enemies – Tetrastichus planipennisi and Oobius agrili.

Since no one else is nicknaming these insects, let’s call them Tetra and Oobi. Tetra lays its eggs in EAB larvae (properly called a larval endoparasitoid), while Oobi lays its eggs in the EAB egg (an egg parasitoid). Thus they live and reproduce by killing EAB. Without EAB, Tetra and Oobi can’t survive. In China, Tetra and Oobi produce several generations each year, consuming 74 percent of the EAB population. As a comparison, in North America, beneficial insects consume about 2 percent. (Other studies indicate the total consumption by squirrels and woodpeckers are another 2 percent.)

As specialists, Tetra and Oobi are a necessary part of the EAB’s world. If quarantine, chipping and eradication had worked, we could live without the associated beneficial insects. But they failed. This was due in part to our inability to find EAB in an area before it is completely
infested and the lack of public cooperation with the quarantine regulations.

After five years of field and lab studies, public consultation and regulatory investigations, Tetra started feeding in North America in the summer of 2007 and the larvae are expected to overwinter inside ash trees in the larvae they were feeding on the previous summer. Oobi, with its higher rate of parasitism than Tetra, consumes about 60 percent of EAB eggs in its home range during July and August. If its release was successful, the Oobi’s larvae is spending the winter of 2007/2008 in EAB eggs awaiting a new crop of EAB eggs before emerging in June or July. Oobi successfully reproduce females without a mate, so field collections find female to male ratios of 15:1. Researchers hope to know by this spring if the specialists were successful in establishing in EAB populations in North America.

Juli Gould is with USDA Plant Health Science and Technology Laboratories. She’s working with a third parasitoid, Spathius agrili. (We’ll call it Spath.) Spath lays its eggs on EAB larvae, so it is a larval ectoparasitoid. It is a cousin of the tomato horn worm parasitoid and its life cycle is similar. (The tomato worm wasp lays its eggs on the green tomato worms found in gardens on tomatoes. The wasp eggs look like white hairs on the back of the green worms.) Gardeners know never to kill a tomato worm carrying eggs because, like Spath, the larvae will burrow into the host and consume it. Later in its life cycle they will emerge as a wasp and lay more eggs to consume more tomato worms. Arborists may be familiar with other Spath relatives, including the wasps that consume bronze birch borer and two lined chestnut borer.

Gould says she can’t predict what percentage of the EAB the three new insects will control in North America. “The first step is to get the insects to establish. You wouldn’t think it by all the exotic insects that establish in the U.S., but the probability of getting an insect to establish in a non-native country is actually quite low.” Many factors influence the amount of control they will achieve, including hyperparasitoids or other predators that will attack the wasps.

A few years ago, a couple of types of beetles were released in the Ontario area to control purple loosestrife, an invasive alien plant that is harming wetlands. The purple loosestrife in the test field died. However, purple loosestrife continues in the area, but it no longer occupies whole wetlands. If the new insects released to control EAB survive in North America, in time the EAB, the wasps and the ash trees will reach levels where they can coexist as they do in East Asia. How long this transition will take is not known. Sometimes releases have to be done more then once. Monitoring after release is a huge part of the project.

Michel Cusson and the Laurentian Forestry Center in Quebec, Canada, have started testing a United Kingdom invention. It is at the proof of concept stage, but a hand-held portable version is under development.

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In Sault St. Marie, Ontario, Dr. Blair Helson and his colleagues did extensive testing with Neem on various insects and different modes of inoculation, including aerial spraying. Neem is a trade name for an oil extracted from neem trees in East India. You can buy neem products in health food stores. It has insecticidal, antifungal and antibacterial properties. It can be used as a mosquito repellent. In East India, it is used in soap and toothpaste. If it works on EAB, customers will love this organic, tree-based product.

Dr. Barry Lyons, also of Sault St. Marie, Ontario, took the active ingredient from Neem, azadirachtin, and injected it into ash trees in one of the quarantine areas. The public response was so positive homeowners begged for “their” tree to be included in the experiment. Follow-up studies are ongoing to determine if residual material was in the leaves when they fell in the fall (to determine if there are environmental issues), the latency period and the health of the trees. Tape was also applied to the tree’s bark to establish EAB landing. Results are expected in the fall of 2008.

The blue ash is an endangered species in development. The goal is to acoustically identify what species of bark beetle is chewing a specific tree. The current testing is geared toward EAB.
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### Problem-Action-Result (PAR) Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aphids (A)</td>
<td>Fireblight (F)</td>
<td>Bronze Birch Borer (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chlorosis (C)</td>
<td>Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (H)</td>
<td>K Deficiency (K)</td>
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<td>Dutch Elm Disease (D)</td>
<td>Injured Roots (I)</td>
<td>Lepidoptera (L)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Key:</td>
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<td>Xylella Fastidiosa (W)</td>
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### Key
- **Application Method**
  - Foliar Spray
  - Soil Applied
  - Tree Injection
- **Recommended Method**
- **Product Solution**
- **Expectations**
- **Tree Health Problem**

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Canada. Observers note EAB seems to prefer green ash foliage before blue ash foliage. In order to determine if any chemical differences exist between the two tree species, extracts from the leaves and bark of both trees were performed; the extracts were tested against the EAB. An experiment known as choice feeding was conducted. In this experiment, known amounts of both extracts (green ash vs. blue ash) as solutions are applied to separate green ash leaves. Then EAB is allowed to choose between the two food sources. This helps the scientist determine if there is potentially some compound or compounds in the blue ash extract that will deter EAB feeding. An electronic scanner measured the amount of leaves eaten by the EAB on each leaf. A ditional choice feeding experiments were put on hold until spring 2008, when additional fresh green ash foliage is available. Once the numerous tests are conducted, the results will be analyzed and recommendations for further work implemented. The process is mind numbing and tedious, but when complete it should provide another tool for arborists in the battle with the EAB.

Mamdouh Abou-Zaid, a natural products research scientist from the Great Lakes Forestry Centre, is also working on the fact that EAB attack vigorous trees in North America. As with the other researchers, he has a number of different projects on the go. One is to establish the biochemical profiles of host trees. Assuming Bauer’s and Gould’s wasps do their jobs, this will be necessary information for arborists. He is also establishing the characteristics of the host tree crowns under stress that could predict an EAB attack.

Stephen Marshal of Guelph University in Ontario is monitoring the crabronid wasp, Cerceris fumipennis. This native wasp collects beetles from the EAB’s family as food for its young. He is using the wasp to monitor the EAB’s spread. This program has one problem – the crabronid wasp is not common. But it does prove that one native wasp species is adapting to the EAB. Juli Gould also says Spathius floridanus, another native wasp, is also consuming EAB, but again not in high enough numbers.

The best guess is that is has been 17 years since EAB arrived in North America, though only five years since we found out about it. Millions of ash trees have died. The slash and chip program was not as successful at slowing the spread as was originally hoped, but it appears researchers are now so very close to at least some partial solutions for ash trees. A little more patience is needed.

Pat Kerr is a freelance writer living in Fraserville, Ontario, Canada.
## Vermeer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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## Asplundh

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<td>16” Drum</td>
<td>KCH30002</td>
<td>Single Edge 16” x 3” x 3/8”</td>
<td>$21.50</td>
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Weighing in on one-handed use of a chain saw


Top-handled chain saw use has always been an interest of mine. Everything in the business is dangerous, but there are tools that are extremely dangerous. The top-handled chain saw is one of these tools.

The tree care industry depends upon people willing to take a calculated risk to accomplish their job. Those of us who do this work know that sometimes our calculations are not accurate and the risks are not properly assessed. The resulting accidents, near misses, close calls and fatalities are primarily a result of being willing to take the risk of the job in the first place. It is a service that has to be done by somebody; those people are the ones who are going to get hurt, cut and killed – they are the ones who have the greater stake.

Safety is everybody’s responsibility on the job. The decision to be safe has to be made by the person doing the work, the person taking the risk, and the clearest motivator in this decision is the danger of the job that is being attempted. We have to trust that person’s judgment in the situation. When their education and training gives them confidence in the safety equipment and or the safety technique, then they will use it.

The operative word is education and training. Nobody wants to be safer than the guy who is in the tree or in the brush making the cuts and climbing. If he knew of a safer way to do it, almost always he would do it that way rather than risk getting cut with a saw or falling to the ground. He will work with the tools and techniques that he feels comfortable with; he won’t use the tools and techniques that he does not feel comfortable with. Supervised education is the single best deterrent to compromising safety.

The men and women doing the work are often thought of as daredevils looking for another thrill, looking for one more death defying trick to exhibit. The reality is often far from this, they are hard-working individuals who would rather do anything than get hurt or cause anyone else pain and suffering. They get in the dangerous situation because they are willing to take the risk and apply as much knowledge as they can to reduce the risk to a safe working level. The only way that they would ever eliminate all the risk is to climb out of the tree and take up safety consulting.

Which brings me back to Mr. Elcoat’s article. Mr. Elcoat is a regulator who is attempting to control a dangerous practice by restriction. This is a sure sign that he does not understand the environment in which he is trying to control.

The regulators internal struggle is revealed in the title. The only stake regulators have to acknowledge is restriction, yet they want the authority that can only come from experience. Restriction can never replace training and education. “One-handed chain saw use is dangerous – don’t do it,” is not appropriate instruction for one preparing to work in the trees with a top-handled chain saw. Let’s go back to the case histories that Mr. Elcoat uses in his article.

Case 1: The trainee climber who tried to maintain position with his left arm and cut with his right. The saw followed through the cut and caught his left forearm, which was inappropriately positioned under the cut he was making on the branch. He sums this case with “Poor positioning in the trees is not an excuse for one-handed use.” This conclusion is in opposition to the guideline that he cites in the article. AFAG-308: “Top-handed chain saws; One handed use should be restricted to circumstances where one hand is required to maintain a stable working position…”

Case 1 was following this guideline. His system failure occurred with the next portion of the guideline. “… and the saw is used at extended reach with the other hand.”

Poor positioning in the tree is the exception when one handed use of a top-handled chain saw is appropriate. I would venture to say that if Case 1 had been trained in positioning skills, he would have been able to eliminate the need to cut with one hand or to do it in a safe manner. With the proper techniques, he would have been able to use the top-handled saw one handed without mishap. The safety issue was not the one-handed use of the top-handled chain saw as much as it was the failure to aquire the proper climbing skills to attain a secure cutting position, or should I say, the proper poor position, if we were to follow the guidelines.

Case 2 is the arborist who was cut when he tripped and fell on his saw while he was limbing a felled tree. He was using a top-handled saw one handed. This is an interesting case in that the arborist is faulted for using the top-handled saw with one hand but nothing is mentioned of the greater safety risk of tripping hazards. An arborist cannot trip and fall down while using any saw, one handed or two, without risking serious injury. The type of saw is irrelevant in the context of tripping and falling down. The top-handled saw is inculcated (blamed) when it was the tripping hazard of loose clothing, inappropriate footwear or not clearing the cut branches from the working area that should be addressed. Cases 1 and 2 have the common thread of the author pointing to a dangerous tool as the threat at the neglect of the more serious threat of the improper training and tripping hazards.

The only trend that I identify from these two cases is that of a regulator wanting to blame every safety issue on the scariest tool on the job. They show an inappropriate fear of a certain technique that is allowed for in the guidelines cited. This is a trend that plagues all industries - shotgun regulations. They know there is something unsafe because of the end result, but they don’t know what to do about it so they regulate the only people who are willing to do the work. It reminds me of the guys who would go in after the battles have been fought and bayonet the wounded soldiers.

The regulator feels justified appropriating
blame correctly or incorrectly, he does not have to deal with the additional stress on an already stressful job because of his misguided consultation. This stress can cause an unsafe working environment. (I can just see that report: “A crew foreman was hit by a branch when he started to argue with the climber about how to use his top-handled chain saw...”)  

There are no safe chain saws; there are only safe chain saw operators. The amount of risk that we can eliminate is dependent upon the amount of skill that we can appropriate in the given situation. Safety is enhanced when the crew members are aware of the safety issues and can acquire the proper techniques to complete the job with out incident. I am looking forward to an article on, “The appropriate way to use a top-handled chain saw in the tree.”

Robert Tews  
Owner/Operator, 2’s Tree Service, LLC  
Jacksonville, Fla.

Paul Elcoat replies:  
An interesting response with many ‘perspectives’ that I come across in many organizations.

A professional arborist does not consider himself to be a hero or an emergency service and so does not accept unnecessary levels of risk. 

To me a professional arborist is someone that uses systematic thought processes to tackle the task in hand. With the techniques and equipment available to us nowadays, there is nothing that cannot be done safely. What Robert Tews is saying in my interpretation is that the possibility of dying or being injured is just part of the job and an arborist should accept that.

My reply is absolutely NO – what utter rubbish. In my time being employed to run companies, I quickly got rid of people with attitudes like that because they are a liability. I prefer them to work for the competition. My reply is absolutely NO – what utter rubbish. In my time being employed to run companies, I quickly got rid of people with attitudes like that because they are a liability. I prefer them to work for the competition.

I prefer them to work for the competition. My reply is absolutely NO – what utter rubbish. In my time being employed to run companies, I quickly got rid of people with attitudes like that because they are a liability. I prefer them to work for the competition.

I am not a regulator but I know about UK regulation and my job now is to help companies to comply and sell more effectively. I was once a climbing arborist and I think I was quite good; my interest was practical problem solving and improving safety and efficiency on the worksite. As Peter Gerstenberger, TCIA knows from our work on crane best practices, I am equally as likely to challenge the enforcing authorities on technical points as I am to instruct arborists. Mr. Tews and I could have fun debating this.

Peter Gerstenberger, senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry Association, also responds:

I believe Mr. Tews and I would agree on most aspects of how to climb or how to operate a chain saw safely and efficiently. It is clear from what he writes that he’s been at the top of more than a few trees, and he articulates that experience quite clearly. There is one important area I think we disagree, or at best we are in “violent agreement,” as the saying goes. That is in the arborist’s acceptance of risk. I quote from Mr. Tews’ letter:

“Top-handled chain saw use has always been an interest of mine. Everything in the business is dangerous, but there are tools that are extremely dangerous. The top-handled chain saw is one of these tools.

The tree care industry depends upon people willing to take a calculated risk to accomplish their job. Those of us who do this work know that some times our calculations are not accurate and the risks are not properly assessed. The resulting accidents, near misses, close calls and fatalities are primarily a result of being
willing to take the risk of the job in the first place. It is a service that has to be done by somebody; those people are the ones who are going to get hurt, cut and killed, they are the ones who have the greater stake."

I reject the idea that an arborist has to accept risk or take calculated risks. On the contrary, the arborist must use all his knowledge and skill to detect and assess risk, and then mitigate or eliminate it. If risk cannot be mitigated to an acceptable level, walk away! I know that the arborist reading this is probably thinking, “If I walk away, some poor soul is going to attempt the work and get hurt or even killed!” While I can sympathize with that thought, they have the same opportunity you do to be educated. If there has to be a victim, don’t let it be you.

I think it is important to realize that the standard for two-handed chain saw use in the U.S., as well as the standard that narrowly prescribes when a saw can be used one-handed for the U.K., were both written with substantial input from arborists.

Let me elaborate on the situation here in the states. Virtually everything in our standard, ANSI Z133.1, is based upon the collective, historic experience of the people who wrote it and, by extension, the people who worked for or with them. I’ve served on that committee for 20 years, so at this point I can say that’s an objective observation, not simply what I believe. There are a couple of exceptions – language inserted simply to be harmonious with OSHA standards and for no other reason – but that doesn’t comprise much of the standard. And it certainly doesn’t apply to how the standard comes down on the subject of one-handed chain saw use.

The committee’s recent decision to completely ban one-handed chain saw use rather than to list exceptions where it might be acceptable was prefaced by one of the most heated debates among committee members I can recall. I don’t recall the exact tally on that vote, but it was by no means unanimous.

Both sides in the argument agreed 100 percent that one-handed chain saw use could be dangerous. Neither side wanted to see one-handed chain saw use. They simply disagreed on the best way to achieve the highest level of compliance.

One camp felt there had to be stated exceptions to two hands, where attempts to keep two hands on the saw would unavoidably create a greater hazard for the operator. They were acknowledging what they saw as a reality of human nature: if one can’t always comply with a law, it will lead to broader and more frequent, willful disregard of the law.

The two-hands-on-the-saw-at-all-times camp, in my opinion, was also acknowledging certain realities of tree work and human nature:

Any rule that can be stretched will be stretched.

A hard and fast rule should be thought of as a goal. Given a clear goal, arborists can generally find creative ways of attaining it. Any rule that isn’t absolute is always going to be subject to interpretation, misinterpretation, argument and even confusion.

There is absolutely no question that a skilled arborist can operate a top-handled chain saw one-handed without incident. However, that same operator, in a moment of inattentiveness, can end his career or worse.

I will admit, I was middle-of-the-road in the whole one-handed debate. I could see both sides of the argument. The two-hands-with-certain-exceptions rule seems to be working in the U.K., but of course they require any arborist who would operate a saw to pass a fairly rigorous certification. I know that Mr. Tews and Mr. Elcoat will agree: one cannot allow just anyone to run a chain saw one-handed.

One person finally convinced me that we, as an industry, have to find a way around one-handed chain saw use completely. He was Hispanic, in his late-twenties, a career arborist and top climber. He had been operating his saw one-handed, against his company’s policy, and in that moment of inattentiveness he reached across the top of the bar with his left hand, severing eight tendons, a nerve trunk and an artery.

He might have died right then and there, but quick thinking and prompt action saved him safely to the hospital. It’s more than a year after the surgery and he is still in rehab, suffering pain and discomfort, trying to regain the skill he once possessed and struggling with whether he can even do this work anymore.

I’ve been up a few trees in my lifetime. I know that it can seem more convenient, more efficient, and even less risky to operate a saw with one hand. I also know that even the most competent arborist makes critical errors in behavior every so often. I am convinced that one-handing a saw is an unacceptable risk. Given the goal of always keeping two hands on the saw, we arborists will find creative ways to achieve production, quality and most important, safety.

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By Margot Morrell

Last year I bought a palm tree for my New York apartment and before leaving the shop was sternly told to water it once a week. For months I followed the prescribed instructions and watched the plant see-saw between waterlogged and parched. Roots rotted and leaves shriveled up turning brown at the ends. The flagging plant wilted to the point that I was about to haul it down to the trash room. Then, on a visit to my father, I noticed him water a gloriously thriving plant with a few ice cubes. The pitiful palm tree was promptly put on a daily regime of a handful of ice cubes. Today it’s flourishing.

Teams and working groups are similar to that palm. To prosper and be their best, they need the proper level of care and maintenance. Military leaders and winning coaches recognize the importance nurturing teams. Uniforms, recognition awards and stirring anthems contribute to a feeling of being special and a sense of camaraderie. Most groups, though, get to go home at the end of the day and recharge their batteries with friends and loved ones. But not the long-suffering teams on expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Polar explorers were stuck with each other, week after week, month after month, sometimes even for years. Many endeavors ran into difficulties and teams were wrecked by mayhem, depression, murder, suicide - even cannibalism. The expeditions led by Sir Ernest Shackleton were noteworthy for the harmony among his teams and for their successful, against-all-odds, outcomes - especially his aptly named Endurance expedition.

Shipwrecked in Antarctica, with no hope of rescue, from January 1915 to the end of August in 1916, Sir Ernest Shackleton kept his team happy, healthy and productive by nourishing them with a steady flow of encouragement and rewards.

Before the ship was even trapped in the ice, Thomas Orde Lees, storekeeper, motor-expert and self-described “pessimist,” wrote in his diary, “The corroboree [meaning sing-a-long] did not come off after all, thank goodness. I hate them.”

Eighteen months later, living under two overturned lifeboats on the edge of a rocky island that reeked of penguin guano, desperately short of food and with little hope of rescue, he wrote in his diary, “We had a grand concert tonight of 24 turns and so ended one of the happiest days of my life.”

How did Shackleton do it? What had he done to instill that level of camaraderie in his team? And, most importantly, what lessons can we learn from him to make it easier to achieve our goals?

In the words of Reginald James (physicist), who shared a tent with his boss for five months, Shackleton’s “method was the constant application of small corrections, unnoticed by nearly everyone, yet very potent in their cumulative effect.” Shackleton celebrated birthdays, recognized holidays, gathered his group in the evenings for word games and sing-a-longs and, with only a rapidly dwindling supply of food, served out any tidbit it was in his power to give.

On Feb. 2, 1916, Shackleton sent 19 men to retrieve a lifeboat they’d abandoned five weeks earlier when they’d attempted a march toward land 300 miles away. They’d been forced to give up the effort when the stress of traveling over the rough ice proved too much of a strain on the other two lifeboats they were pulling along with them. In the intervening weeks, due to the erratic movements of the ice, the third boat had drifted to within six miles of their current camp. Trampling over the ice and
hauling the boat was grueling work. As the exhausted group strained toward camp, Shackleton sledged out to meet them with hot tea.

Frank Hurley, the expedition’s photographer, preceded the sledging party as one of the “road preparers.” In his words, it was “an arduous yet interesting occupation of demolishing ridges, hummocks” and bridging cracks. That night he recorded in his diary: “Sir Ernest – thoughtful as usual, sledged out to meet us a mile from camp with two cans of steaming tea … Instantly stimulated, all hauled with renewed vigor and in less than an hour, the craft lay on the floe at Patience Camp. The third boat will enable us to weather the voyage with considerable comfort and safety, as well as mitigating overcrowding.”

An article published by Frederick Herzberg in the September/October 1987 edition of *Harvard Business Review* discussed the principles involved in keeping employees engaged and productive. Herzberg identified them as Motivators and Hygiene Factors.

Herzberg uses the term “hygiene factors” to describe the features of a job – the pay, benefits, rules and procedures, location and commute, working conditions and safety. While these issues are important to employees, Herzberg found they’re not tremendously motivating.

Motivators are intrinsic to the job – the feeling that other people are depending on you, a sense of accomplishment, personal growth, professional development and interesting work. When people are working at jobs with Motivators built into them, they’re likely to be productive and willing to do their best.

In Hurley’s account of a hard day’s work, he conveys a sense of being highly motivated. It was important to him that he was one of the team of “road preparers” assigned to make the way easier for the rest of the team. He appreciated Sir Ernest’s thoughtfulness. The tea was satisfying in itself, but his boss’s effort also implied recognition and served as a reward for accomplishing a difficult task. He describes the job as “interesting” and recognizes that his labors will pay dividends in the months ahead when they reach the edge of the tumultuous polar sea and the third lifeboat will be an important tool in their fight for survival.

Back in Manhattan, I was recently reminded of the importance of motivators when I took my cell phone into a repair shop on the Upper East Side. The receptionist explained that they might have to “reset it,” which would wipe out all stored files and that the charge would be $15 to $55. As I stood there deciding whether to take the time to go home and download the files, a tech guru appeared. Rapidly he diagnosed the problem and fixed the phone without losing any files. I exclaimed “You are my hero!” and asked how much I owed him. He said, “Nothing, a smile is enough.” I walked away thinking about Herzberg’s research, about Shackleton’s leadership strategies, and that sometimes a smile, a thank-you, or a warm cup of tea are payment enough.

Margot Morrell will be one of this year’s WMC presenters.

Margot Morrell is a business veteran and best selling author of Shackleton’s Way: Leadership Lessons form the Great Antarctic Explorer. She will present the keynote education session on leadership at TCIA’s Winter Management Conference, February 10-14, 2008, in Aruba. For more on WMC, visit www.tcia.org or call 1-800-733-2622.
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TCI EXPO 2007 a grand success

Hundreds of eager attendees began to gather outside the doors of TCI EXPO in Hartford, November 8, waiting for the show floor to officially open. They were soon joined by hundreds more spilling out from the keynote address, “Being the Best vs. Being Consistently Chosen,” which jump started the eighteenth and largest TCI EXPO ever in an educational and humorous way.

This crowd of 3,414, the most arborists ever assembled in the United States, couldn’t wait to enter a convention center shining with the most tree care equipment ever assembled on one floor. They came to gawk, kick the tires, talk with manufacturers and, mostly, buy, buy, buy.

TCI EXPO has grown and matured since the first gathering of 624 arborists in Richmond, Virginia, in 1990. The most obvious differences, of course, are the sheer number of attendees and the variety of equipment and services displayed in one place. But there was a lot more going on at this trade show and conference than the founders could have envisioned almost 20 years ago.

From 12 education sessions in 1990, split between business and arboriculture, TCI EXPO has grown to become a full-fledged tree care conference. More than 50 sessions now await arborists, including a dozen live demos, eight hours of programming in Spanish.

1. The show floor was so big David Nordgaard with Top Notch Tree Care navigated the aisles aboard a Segway.
2. Raffles, prizes and a chain saw tear-down head-to-head competition kept the excitement levels high for three days.
3. Even a wide-angle lens couldn’t capture the full scope of the show floor in Hartford.
4. The much-copied but never-equalled TCI EXPO demo tree is always a center of attention for arborists looking for the latest developments in climbing, rigging and felling. Here, Juan Torres, in the tree, shows the crowd how to advance their rigging knowledge.
5. These Certified Treecare Safety Professional candidates demonstrated their commitment to safety.
6. Alaska
7. Massachusetts

Thank you to all, exhibitors and attendees, who made this last
and more than 20 hours of class time focused on safety. Mixed in with all of this activity were a record-breaking 840 students from around the country who took part in their own Student Career Days conference, complete with job skills competitions and a Career Fair. TCIA members had the chance to discuss pressing issues on running a business with fellow owners at three member-only forums.

From the moment the opening ribbon was cut on Thursday to start the show to the minute when hundreds of diesel engines fired up to drive off the convention floor on Saturday at the close of the show, TCI EXPO was a whirlwind of education, conversation and negotiation on some of the best deals found anywhere.

Safety by dedicating almost two full days at EXPO learning to become better safety trainers.

#6. Hunters shot laser bullets at ducks, not politicians, at the Voice for Trees political action committee fund-raiser booth.

#7. Mark Chisholm (center) presents Stihl chain saws to Kwesi Sweeney (left), overall winner of the skills competition for vocational students, and Dan Cohen, overall winner of the skills competition for college students.

#8. Attendees await opening of the trade show floor on Day One.

#9. (left-right) Autumn Tree Care Experts employee Jim Matkovich, joins Bandit Representative Mike Ross, Randy Willis with Autumn, TCIA President & CEO Cynthia Mills, TREE Fund Executive Director Janet Borrancin, and Autumn’s Dan Klindera. Autumn Tree Care Experts President Matt Dziadzic was the high bidder for this Bandit chipper at $40,000, with the proceeds to benefit the TREE Fund.

#10. The more than 3,400 attendees at TCI EXPO 2007 in Hartford had plenty of opportunity to kick tires, or tracks, when they weren’t in education sessions.

#11. A crew from ABC affiliate WTNH-TV News Channel 8 films one of the participants in the Student Career Days job skills competition in Bushnell Park. The skills competition was just one opportunity to get the younger generation involved with the industry at TCI EXPO.

#12. Vendors were well stocked and ready to cut deals.

Latest TCI EXPO our greatest TCI EXPO. See you in Milwaukee!
### #13
So shiny, so new, so many stump grinders to choose from on the massive show floor.

### #14
Jesse Noel, with TCIA Accredited member Hansen’s Tree, Lawn & Landscaping, makes a point at one of three member forums that discussed Ethical Duties of Arborists vs. Demand of Customers, Taking the First Steps to Professionalize Your Business, and Standards and Compliance for Small Companies.

### #15
For some, even kicking the tires or looking under the hood wasn’t quite enough for this Husqvarna utility vehicle.

### #16
Brian Gardner with Lawn & Garden Webvision interviews Scott Packard, president of Wright Tree Service.

### #17
Jim Fiorentino from Shelter Tree demonstrates a splice next to a photo in memory of Longstaff, musician and master splicer, whose presence at TCI EXPO was sorely missed. He donated his skills to raise funds for Longstaff’s family.
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Together, we are transforming the industry. We’re working to increase consumer awareness and appreciation for quality tree care. To improve worker safety overall. To shape legislation and regulation through our voice in Washington. And we’re partnering with industry suppliers to build stronger relationships for member companies. Our shared goal is a bright future for tree care.

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Members enjoy access to business management and arboriculture consultation, members-only publications, marketing to consumers through our online zip code search, and more.
TCIA members also receive deep discounts on employee training programs and materials, including industry renowned credential programs like Certified Treecare Safety Professional and Accreditation, as well as products like Tree Care Academy and EHAP.
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The Accreditation standard is making tree care businesses nationwide more professional, efficient, and profitable. The process helps you improve your business by helping you develop and implement best business practices, first-rate customer satisfaction practices, industry-standard safety training programs and more!
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These are just a few of the TCIA programs that are changing the industry...
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bright future for our industry tomorrow.
The new TCIA Accreditation Standard 2008-2009 (Draft 6 Version 2), an updated version of the original standard, is now available. A free copy was included with the January 2008 Reporter. If you are accredited, you can review changes and additions. If you plan to become accredited, you can use this document as a blueprint to get started. If you are not planning to enroll in the Accreditation program in the near future, the document is still a valuable blueprint for creating a model tree care company.

In this version, the Accreditation Council worked on a number of issues, improving upon the first version of the standard that already provided a solid blueprint. Most of the items Accreditation asks you to have in place can be found in the TCIA Management Guides, which are available online in the members-only section of the TCIA Web site, www.tcia.org.

Visit our Accreditation Web page to learn what your peers are saying about Accreditation and the benefits they receive. Through benchmarking, we have learned that accredited companies have a mean WC (workers’ compensation) experience modification number of .86, well below the industry average of 1.0. This has caught the eye of insurance companies.

For more information on Accreditation, contact Bob Rouse at rouse@tcia.org or 1-800-733-2622.

Matthew Puza, left, owner of TCIA-member Gardens to Imagine & Tree Care, LLC of Bow, N.H., with David Lee, TCIA membership director, at the New England Chapter ISA Annual Meeting in North Conway October 28-30. Tchukki Andersen, TCIA staff arborist, and Dave participated in the Trek des Trees event at the meeting with Mary Sewall West, owner of TCIA’s then newest member company, Tree Diva Inc. of Kennebunkport, Maine.

TCIA has provided a fact sheet on their Web site with more information about the new form. Go to www.uscis.gov/files/prerellease/FormI9FS110707.pdf with questions.
Arizona enters brave new immigration world?

C

omprehensive Immigration Reform failed last spring, leaving employers who seek a level playing field wondering how long the current system of wink-and-nod employment verification would continue. They are about to find out in Arizona.

As a border state, Arizona has a large number of illegal aliens. When comprehensive reform did not happen, the state legislature took matters into their own hands by passing the “Legal Arizona Workers Act,” which is scheduled to take effect on Jan. 1, 2008 unless lawsuits pending at press time succeed in blocking the measure. Arizona businesses were scrambling to be ready at year end to understand its provisions. The legislation imposes the type of obligations on Arizona employers that many immigration hardliners would like to see implemented nationwide.

Specifically, the Act far surpasses current federal law that governs immigration and employment, including the I-9 employment verification process and procedures. Some of the key terms include:

1. Mandatory utilization of the federal E-Verify Program to verify the employment eligibility of all new hires after January 1, 2008.
2. Anyone is now allowed to file a complaint alleging that an employer has hired unauthorized workers. The Attorney General or County Attorney must investigate every complaint by verifying the employee’s documentation with federal immigration authorities. If a determination is made that the complaint is not frivolous, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as well as local law enforcement must be notified. Additionally, they must file a lawsuit against the employer in the county where the unauthorized worker was employed. Courts are required to expedite these lawsuits and employers found to be violators will be identified on the Attorney General’s Web site.

Penalties for employers found guilty of “knowingly hiring” unauthorized workers are steep, including:

- Employer is placed on a three year probation period during which the employer must file quarterly reports regarding all new hires at the location where the unauthorized worker(s) performed services;
- Possible suspension of the employer’s business license for up to 10 days;
- Most importantly and most drastically, if an employer is found to have committed a second violation during the probationary period it will lose its business license permanently, forcing it to close its doors.

E-Verify ready?

E-Verify works by allowing employers to compare employee information taken from the Form I-9 electronically against records in the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) and Department of Homeland Security immigration databases. Results are returned within seconds. Employers using E-Verify fill out an online form with the new employee’s name, date of birth and Social Security number (SSN), and if the new hire states she is not a U.S. citizen, the new hire’s A Number or I-94 number must be provided to the employer within three days of the employee’s hire date. That information is then checked against SSA databases to verify the name, SSN and date of birth of the new hire. The SSA maintains a record of each Social Security card in a database called the Numerical Identification File. This file includes all data connected to the issuance of the Social Security card, including the appropriate codes related to citizenship status and the type of Social Security card issued.

If the work authorization cannot be determined by the data in the SSA databases or if the employee is a non-citizen, their data is then checked against the DHS databases to verify employment eligibility. If eligibility cannot be confirmed, E-Verify sends a tentative non-confirmation of work authorization status issued.

The employer must then inform the employee of the tentative non-confirmation, and the employee has eight business days to contest this decision. If the employee contests the determination then the SSA and/or DHS are required to determine the new hire’s work authorization status within 10 federal working days. If the review by DHS or SSA still cannot determine if the employee is eligible to work in the United States, a final non-confirmation is issued. A final Non-confirmation also is issued if the employee does not contest the tentative non-confirmation. A final non-confirmation means the employee must be terminated.

Governor Napolitano termed the new law “the most aggressive action in the country against employers who knowingly or intentionally hire undocumented workers,” because of a provision that would suspend or permanently revoke employers’ businesses licenses for violation of the Act.

This is the type of crackdown on employers that many advocated on the federal level. While state-by-state immigration reform is hardly ideal for what should be a federal issue, the success or failure of the law will be watched closely around the country.
MAA celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Mass. Certified Arborist MCA program

The Massachusetts Arborists Association celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Massachusetts Certified Arborist (MCA) program in 2008. The oldest state-wide voluntary certification program in the nation, the MCA has become the symbol of professionalism in arboriculture in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The MAA celebrated a half century of the MCA program at its November 27 Annual Meeting in Natick, Mass. It will also be recognized at New England Grows in Boston in February 2008. The first MCA examination was administered on February 13, 1958, at the Waltham Field Station of the University of Massachusetts. By 1960, a list of 25 MCA-certified arborists was published. Since then, the ranks of Massachusetts tree care professionals carrying the MCA designation have swelled to more than 800.

“We are proud of the long and successful history of the MCA program,” said MAA president Dan Mayer, MCA, of Mayer Tree Service in Essex, Mass., and a TCIA member. “The MCA has truly become the gold standard for tree care in Massachusetts. We look forward to continuing to enhance this important program and further expanding the skills and knowledge of Massachusetts tree care professionals.”

Since the early 1930s, the MAA has supported the business growth of tree care professionals throughout the state. By the 1950s, MAA members came to believe certification was necessary to promote the preservation and care of trees, to protect consumers and to establish tree care standards in the Commonwealth. The repeated defeat of a proposed bill to license arborists in Massachusetts precipitated the launch of the MCA program. A special meeting of the MAA executive committee was held in December 1956 to sanction the development of a voluntary certification program.

The first MCA examination consisted of 100 written questions compiled by scientists at the Waltham Field Station and the University of Massachusetts. The exam also included a practical field component. Today’s MCA candidates prepare for the exam using comprehensive, electronic study material and must pass an extensive 200-question test including intensive tree, insect and disease identification, as well as in-depth problem solving case studies. To maintain their MCA designation, arborists must also accumulate five continuing education credits each calendar year.

Thanks to the forethought of the MAA leadership of the late 1950s, the MCA program is a vibrant part of today’s tree care profession. A recent survey of the MCA ranks posed this question: “What does being an MCA mean to you?” Responses from current MCAs poured into the MAA office and included sentiments about the program such as: “A sense of pride,” “Puts me on a level with the best arborists in the world,” “Inspires me to work toward a higher standard,” and “Represents a major achievement in my professional life.”

Board nomination forms available

Who will help TCIA lead this industry forward over the next three years?

We are currently accepting nominations for TCIA’s Board of Directors. We need your commitment to serve and your support in identifying others who have talents we should bring into leadership. Enclosed with the January 2008 Reporter you will find a nomination form along with a listing of the qualifications we seek in Board members. If you would like to serve with us from 2009-2012 as a TCIA Board member, please fill out the enclosed “Candidate for TCIA Board of Directors Nominator Form” and return it to TCIA by April 1, 2008.

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Example: If your company purchases $2,000 in products/services (does not include monthly service charges), Market Hardware, Inc. will send TCIA a credit of $50 to be deposited into your membership account. Credits accumulate throughout the 12 months of membership and when you receive your annual renewal statement, the total credits will be subtracted from your membership dues. Thanks to the support of Market Hardware, Inc., your company can reduce its annual dues and help offset the costs involved with keeping the industry safe.

Requirements: In order to receive a dues credit, you must let Market Hardware, Inc. know you are a member of TCIA and want to take advantage of the Affinity Program to reduce your dues. Visit www.tcia.markethardware.com or call 1-888-262-8761 to learn how they can give your business the credibility it deserves.

To learn more about how your company can benefit from this and other TCIA Affinity Programs, please call 1-800-733-2622.
Helping to build a stronger marketplace can have significant benefits for your company. To learn about the many branding and marketing opportunities available, contact Deborah Johnson, Director of Development; johnson@tcia.org or call 1-800-733-2622.
Extreme Youth Safety Day in Michigan

The Michigan Green Industry Association (MGIA), with the support of their members, hosted Extreme Youth Safety Day at Theodore Roosevelt High School in Wyandotte, Michigan, October 16, 2007. Extreme Youth Safety Day was held in cooperation with the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) and sponsored by John Deere Landscapes and Accident Fund Insurance Company of America.

In MGIA’s continued effort to connect Michigan high school students with Green Industry leaders, Extreme Youth Safety provided participating students with a valuable tool to find a job.

“There are many great career opportunities in the green industry that offer good pay, with many benefits, including financial aid and support with education,” says Diane Andrews, MGIA’s executive director. In late spring and early summer, many high school and college youth start summer jobs. Green industry employers who hire young people for outdoor work realize the risk of injury from a variety of potential hazards. Extreme Youth Safety Day identified potential hazards and provided solutions to specific work activities within the green industry. It provided students information on personal protective equipment necessary for performing specific jobs, in addition to safety procedures when working around various equipment for any green industry entry level job. More than 150 participating students were provided with hearing protection and safety glasses, provided by Midwest Arborist Supplies. Students received safety training for landscape, lawn maintenance, tree care, pesticide use, planting, lifting, emergency response and first aid.

After some initial instruction, students proceeded in groups of 30 to safety stations demonstrating use of equipment such as skid steers, commercial lawn mowers, chippers, chain saws and blowers. One station, tree planting, included demonstration of proper lifting techniques. Students completed worksheets that were validated by safety instructors. Worksheets were then attached to Certificates of Participation in “Extreme Youth Safety” and were presented to students by MGIA. These certificates will be deemed by potential employers as an excellent qualification to aid students in attaining a job.

Companies providing support and/or safety apparel, equipment and instructors included Ecoscape Environmental Design, J.H. Hart Urban Forestry, John Deere Landscapes, J.H. Hart Urban Forestry, John Deere Landscapes/LESCO, Landscape Supply, Michigan Landscape Design Service, Midwest Arborist Supplies and Weingartz Supply Co.

Anne Frank’s tree wins reprieve

The chestnut tree that comforted Anne Frank as she hid from the Nazis in Amsterdam during World War II has won a reprieve from being felled.

A Amsterdam city council ruled in March that the rotting 150-year-old tree must be felled as a danger to the public.

Following protests, the council then gave those who want to save the tree until this month, January 2008, to come up with a plan.

The tree was a ray of hope for the
problems related to abiotic disorders.

"Over and over, we are asked about the same plant problems, but we've had no comprehensive bulletin to teach people about those problems," Cregg said. "We wanted to teach them how to identify the problems and included recommendations, such as proper planting techniques, to help avoid some problems."

The booklet includes information on non-living factors such as plant genetics, environmental conditions such as weather, soil problems, chemicals, animal damage and cultural practices that can cause problems for trees, shrubs and other woody plants.

A questionnaire is included that guides a grower through a systematic process to help him or her identify the cause of a plant problem. Growers can send the questionnaire and plant samples to their local MSU office or to MSU Diagnostic Services for help in identifying plant problems.

"Identifying the problem usually takes some detective work," Cregg said. "The questionnaire has people go through the steps that we would do to help figure out the problem. We are trying to give people a way to understand what's going on in their landscape."

To purchase the publication, contact the MSU Bulletin Office by calling (517) 353-6740 or visit www.emdc_msue_msue.edu. Discounts are available if bulletins are purchased for use with M SUE programming.

Project GREEEN (Generating Research and Extension to meet Economic and Environmental Needs), Michigan's plant agriculture initiative at MSU, provided funding for Cregg and Schutzki's publication. Founded in 1997, Project GREEEN is a cooperative effort between plant-based commodities and businesses, together with the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, MSU Extension and the Michigan Department of Agriculture, to advance Michigan's economy through its plant-based agriculture.

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Sometimes You Should Just Say “No”

By Marie Hawkins

It was the day concrete was to be poured for the new combination garage/shop.

We were finally getting our garage, which in reality was going to be the workshop for our tree company. Our house was about finished and I informed Rodney that he was to be here for the pouring of the concrete. Rodney was going to stop by the concrete plant and delay the truck arrival for three hours. But unknown to me, that didn’t happen and the truck was due on time. It’s not that I couldn’t handle it, but, after dealing with contractors for the house we were almost divorced over this project. Funny thing, we weren’t married yet!

Well, Rodney left for the take-down of a red maple at the French Lick Springs Golf and Tennis Resort (the name at that time) in French Lick, Indiana. The tree was at the front door of the hotel, behind the valet parking building.

They roped off the area with yellow danger ribbons and orange cones to show the guests that they must stay away from the work area.

The hotel had received a grant to re-do the hotel to its grandeur of old. There were approximately 50 trees that we had removed, and this was the last one to take down.

We knew it was a bee tree, and Rodney had worked around many bee trees without problems. Honeybees normally don’t bother you.

Rodney cautioned the hotel manager that Memorial Day weekend might not be the best time to remove this tree, since there would be lots of people about, but the hotel manager insisted that it had to be done quickly.

Rodney was going to stop by the concrete plant and delay the truck arrival for three hours. But unknown to me, that didn’t happen and the truck was due on time. It’s not that I couldn’t handle it, but, after dealing with contractors for the house we were almost divorced over this project. Funny thing, we weren’t married yet!

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Rodney cautioned the hotel manager that Memorial Day weekend might not be the best time to remove this tree, since there would be lots of people about, but the hotel manager insisted that it had to be done quickly.

Rodney told the trimmer to put his rope down the back side of the tree and when he cut the limb it would be swinging away from him. When it was time to come down, the trimmer would be at least 15 feet away from the bees and on the back side, so he should have no problem.

The trimmer jump-cut the limb. It fell to the ground and burst open. The bees were swarming all around. The tree work was going as planned until near the end when the trimmer decided, after seeing the grand audience watching him from the balcony above, that he would hot dog it down the tree. Well, that put him out and over top of the bees. He was hanging upside down with his hands over his eyes and screaming for help because he was covered with honeybees. Rodney realized that something had to be done quickly.

He pulled the taut-line hitch and let the trimmer to the ground. He then quickly took out his pocketknife, which he’d just happened to sharpen that morning, and cut his brand new climbing rope. He carried the trimmer 50 yards away until the bees quit chasing them.

Rodney started pulling the stingers out of the trimmer’s head and, after a 50 count, quit counting. He then realized he had 30-plus stingers himself. He helped the trimmer up and found out there was no doctor in town and went to the local drugstore. The pharmacist recommended three or four antihistamine tablets for the trimmer and one for Rodney. He also advised they stay awake throughout the day.

While all this was going on, back at the club a man in a suit crossed through the orange cones and over the yellow “caution” rope, even though he was warned not to. The bees swarmed all over him. A worker got a can of wasp and hornet spray from the truck (his own idea) and started spraying the man in his expensive suit!

While all this was going on, I called Rodney to ask him why the concrete truck hadn’t been delayed by the phone call. After several calls, he told me about the incident and let me know he couldn’t come to the shop. The concrete truck soon appeared and none of the men who were supposed to help were there. I finally begged the framing crew to help do something with the cement. When the truck was finished unloading the cement the driver informed me we still had a yard left and where would I want it.

Of course, instant decisions are not usually smart! I finally said, “put it in the end of our new pond.” Twenty years later I still regret that decision.

The moral of this story is: As arborists and owners in a customer service business, we always like to please our customers. There are times, however, when you should go with your gut instinct and just say, “Not today!” The second moral is: Don’t pour concrete the same day you do a bee tree.

Marie B. Hawkins is president, and her husband, Rodney K. Wright, vice president, of American Tree Experts, Inc. in Loogootee, Indiana.

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