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It’s 1938, and we’ve just passed through unprecedented economic times for our industry. Our business needs and the opportunity to focus on them and our government’s response to our environment has never been more critical. What did we do? We came together and formed the first trade association for the tree care industry.

In the coming decade, we would face a devastating World War that killed many of our employees and potential future employees. The need for identifying and developing qualified workers has been with us through the decades. The development of the line clearance tree trimming was a key part of our world and provided a needed lifeline. What was the common thread as we worked through this and the subsequent decade of rebuilding?

Your trade association.

And here we are today, having managed through tough times in the ’70s, ’80s, ’90s and ’00s – multiple times. Though many are telling us we haven’t seen a crippling time of this magnitude for 70 years, we have some facts we can counter with on what this means for us.

First – Our industry formed during the toughest of times and helped each other through. We were smart enough to know that coming together would make us stronger; that spending time together was a way to short-cut finding solutions to our challenges; and that not feeling alone is key to keeping our leadership skills on the cutting edge, so we could run our businesses in a way that positioned us and our teams for future success.

Second – We have generations of experience that show how tough, creative and determined our grandparents and parents were in addressing times like these. We’re made of the right stuff. Those stories our families treasure, of how they got through difficulties, will simply be the same for us. We are living the new family legends, and we need to show our grandkids what we’re made of.

Third – Times of great challenge also bring some of the greatest innovations and leaps forward for industry and humankind. How many times have you heard people say in recent years that our industry has changed phenomenally in the last 20 years? And that was despite three substantial bumps in the road in those same years. We not only survive, we get better.

So imagine what we’re capable of now, with the advances we’ve already made. We can go to the core of what we do best, keep our “A” players on our teams and focus them on what could be; test out some new concepts and efficiencies, and consider the next generation of tree care customer. Keep grooming them for what they need to do on their properties for the future. Build the expectation so when the money flows a little easier, the groundwork is done.

Stay engaged with your customers, industry and colleagues. TCIA – you – started in tough times and will persevere through tough times, as long as we stick together.

History shows, just as we did in the beginning, we need each other now more than ever.

Cynthia Mills, CAE, CMC
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Features

8 Right of Way Storm Clean-up Challenges
   By Rick Howland

24 Tree Roots Enhance Water Infiltration
   By Susan Day, Ph.D.

26 Diversifying Your Business With Crane Use
   By Tchukki Andersen

48 Self-Propelled Stump Grinders Power to the
   Front of the Pack
   By Rebecca Fater

54 Dr. Treeworkian’s 10 Step Process to Tree Decline
   By Jim Chatfield

Departments

2 Outlook
   By Cynthia Mills
   Just as at the start, TCIA members need each other now more than ever.

16 Cutting Edge
   New products and services, and news in the tree care industry.

20 Industry Almanac
   Important regional and national meetings and activities.

22 Washington in Review
   OSHA clarifies the employer duty to provide personal protective equipment and train each employee with a final rule.

   (Continued on page 6)
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February

Departments

30 Letters & E-mails

34 Safety Corner
By Thomas M. Stohler
Making the business case for safety and health.

36 Accident Briefs

38 Management Exchange
By Robert Stevenson
Building client loyalty.

42 Classified Advertising

58 TCIA Reporter
Safety and training products, news, commentary and benefits of membership with the TCIA

62 Tree News Digest

63 Advertiser Listing

64 From the Field
By John A. Keslick, Jr.
Appreciating tree associates.

Abetting tree decline


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However, things change when Mother Nature steps in with what meteorologists like to call a “weather event”: Hurricanes, tornadoes, snow, ice, hail and severe thunder storms.

All of a sudden, there’s a LOT of tree cleanup work to be done in a hurry. No longer vegetation overgrowth, you’re now dealing with chaos and debris punctuated by downed power lines, poles and transformers and possible damage to other ROW infrastructure such as oil and gas pipelines. And for good measure, the elements themselves. You and your crews are looking at long days, maybe weeks, and working in at least less than optimal, often dangerous conditions.

Still look good to you?

The ROW business takes knowledgeable management, inter-company cooperation, experienced crews, highly functioning equipment and a commitment to safety to succeed. Most commercial tree care companies lack the capital equipment or managerial experience, leaving most of the work to a small number of very large companies, such as Asplundh, Davey, Wright, ABC, Nelson and Lewis.

When people talk of right-of-way maintenance, they are usually describing the overland, off-road transmission routes that utilities and transportation (trains) take. But to the utilities and companies that deal with it every day, and pay the bills, ROW maintenance and cleanup also means distribution lines and off-street [rural to residential to urban] areas, each with its own set of challenges.

Before you go jumping into the ROW business because residential work is slow, you think new regulations on utilities have forced more trimming than in the past, or because unusual weather events have made cleanup jobs seem more plentiful and easier to get, stop right there.

Two things we heard over and over while researching this article are:
First, a contractor or subcontractor working around power lines needs to be trained and certified before the owner of a right of way will even consider you for the job.

Second, most ROW work is contracted far ahead of time. That means you can’t just drive up to a major tree-fall and hope to get work, even if you DO have electrical hazard training. To add a bit of insult to injury, work associated with ROW maintenance and clearing generally pays less than commercial or residential work. Why? Because it is considered to be regular, steady and reliable contract work.

That doesn’t mean one shouldn’t give it consideration. Far from it. It means that you have to make a conscious decision as to the direction in which you want your business to go, then PLAN for the training and safety, and have your deals in place so that when the next event occurs, such as the pre-Christmas 2008 ice storm that crippled parts of the Northeast, you’re ready to go.

If your business is largely seasonal or highly specialized, leaving you free for this kind of work, setting up for ROW work can be a solid investment. We found one tree care company that, after making emergency clearances for utilities to restore power following that December ice storm, kept more than 40 crews working steadily in 12-hour shifts for up to a month mopping up split, broken, leaning and otherwise compromised trees and branches. And utilities were taking advantage of the crews’ appearance to get routine work done simultaneously.

When it comes to a weather event itself, two forces other than Mother Nature are at work – the utility company that is the owner or manager of the right of way, and the contracted or subcontracted tree care company that is generally under the direction of the utility company.

Lewis Tree Service is a large operation covering most of the East Coast, from Maine to Florida and roughly Cincinnati east. According to Tom Rogers, chief operations officer, “After an event of the magnitude of the December storm, the first step is to gather resources to meet utilities’ need to mitigate the disaster. That can mean working on mutual aid agreements..."
and moving resources to the affected area to increase the number of people required to clear damage and debris so utilities can put people back in service.”

That can mean reaching out to utilities outside the damage area where Lewis, which specializes in ROW maintenance, had other crews working. In the most recent example, Lewis crews from as far away as Cincinnati and Baltimore responded to New Hampshire and other hard hit areas.

“Once we put mobilization into place, the issue becomes the safety of our employees going into areas where roads are still covered with ice and trees and where breakage of trees continues,” Rogers says, adding that moving debris around on the ground, slipping and falling, and getting struck by “widow makers” is part of the concern. Before any work begins, however, coordination with the utility is a must, he explains.

“Our guys are pros and know the obstacles, but they still need to receive (in the case of an electricity ROW) a circuit map to patrol that circuit to clear vegetation necessary to restore power,” Rogers says. That’s important because of broken poles and downed or sagging wires that may still be “hot” despite nearby outages. “Our guys have to be trained and focused all the time. Our main line of business is vegetation management, working around energized conductors every day. How to perform tree removal or release line tension with fallen trees takes a skilled employee to make the first cut to release that tension without putting anyone in harm’s way.”

Storm events, Rogers says, pose unique, discrete problems. “Generally, a utility has a team doing assessments prior to and during restoration. They will design a plan, usually attacking critical assignments first, such as hospitals, hotels, shelters and safety agencies.” Then it’s up to the Lewis crews to make the first sweep, doing only what is necessary to rebuild infrastructure, such as getting trees off wires or off downed lines to create a clear row for utility crews to work in as they rebuild the system.
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On the second sweep, crews take down the broken limbs that have not fallen and trees that might cause additional, subsequent outages. “Some utilities,” Rogers says, “may want a third sweep as part of its planned maintenance program once power is up.”

The tool chest for this kind of work is usually a bucket truck with full hydraulics for street-side and residential settings, plus conventional power saws, roping and rigging. Off-road ROW cleanup usually requires skidders with mounted aerial lifts to minimize climbing.

Safety is always a major concern in this business, but even more so in an ROW storm environment. Danny Raines spent 18 years as a utility crew foreman and 10 in safety, health and contract management running crews well familiar with storm conditions. After 40 years with Georgia Power, he now runs Raines Utility Safety Solutions in Atlanta, serving as a safety expert, speaker, instructor, OSHA trainer and consultant.

“The main concern is always safety,” Raines says of post-storm ROW work.

There were times in days gone by when cleanup crews might go into a damage area and start cutting without regard to the local power condition, he says. Now, there are procedures in place to ensure that lines are de-energized and grounded section by section. Utility operators cannot make a line section “hot” without making site crews aware. Therefore, tree crews don’t go into areas without a utility person assigned to that crew, and lines cannot be made hot again without checking in first with an area supervisor.

“Only then do we proceed to get trees out,” Raines says.

That does not eliminate the danger, Raines explains. Crews need to be aware secondarily of what’s called back-feed. Just because a system is cleared by the utility as being de-energized and grounded doesn’t mean there isn’t juice in the lines. Danger lurks in each line as people start hooking up generators at home.

As good as you and your guys might be, Raines says “Most trimmers are not qualified for this kind of work. They need to be trained in CPR and first aid and in operation in and around electrical distribution systems.”

“Most are not qualified and therefore not allowed to get within 10 feet of an electrical conductor without direct supervision. Even so, they can only get within a minimum approach distance,” he warns.

Communication and, thus, safety issues can be especially critical among non-English-speaking crews, Raines says.

“You just can’t go in and cut trees. You need supervisory and safety oversight, especially in a storm (or post-storm) situation where there is already a lot of confusion. People tend to hurry and get...
subject to making mistakes. The bottom line is diligence.”

Workers aren’t the only ones needing protection from the elements and dangerous conditions. Bruce McQueen, safety supervisor with Davey Tree Expert Company working in North Carolina, agrees that hazard assessment is the first order of business, then assigning equipment and manpower necessary and appropriate to do the job.

“There are some off road cases where you can only use manpower. For on street, we use bucket trucks,” McQueen says.

His approach is to ensure a versatile fleet of trucks and tree care tools, but sometimes specialty pieces are needed. He recalls one case where crews had to get in with a Hydro-Ax type of equipment to trim around a transmission line. The rig was rented for a short time, but crews were hit with heavy rains. It did a good job but literally got bogged down.

“I know of instances where guys did not bring equipment back out to the road for
the weekend only to come back to find storm waters had risen and their equipment was now under water.” Warning? “At least leave equipment on higher ground,” he says.

Matt Randi, former owner of Tamarack Forestry Service in upstate New York, near the Canadian border, specializes in line clearance (the company recently was sold to Lewis) and covers New England, New York and New Jersey in the U.S., plus Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia in Canada. A tree care veteran with more than three decades of experience, Randi says, “Depending on the right of way, after storms we would attack using skidders with buckets (aerial lifts on log skidders). First, we secure the sides of the right of way and anything leaning in, handling anything that has or might develop into a hazardous tree.”

Because rights of way are better maintained today, it is not the floor of the right of way but the edges that are most subject to hazards, Randi says. “You’ll see brush, but not limbs and wires, so we focus on the tree lines. For cross-country, we’ll use tracked vehicles and for side-road rights of way, bucket trucks.”

“Most of our guys are journeymen tree trimmers, and everyone is electrical hazard certified. Storm jobs will vary by customer, but the approach begins with the most efficient trimming and evaluation of potential hazards. The guy in the air has the best view of hazards, such as splits, leaners and (electrical) faults that we may have to get permission to fix or report for a later time.”

David A. Goodson, manager of vegetation management for Northeast Utilities out of Connecticut, is responsible for ROW maintenance in a corridor from Long Island Sound to the Canadian border. “Right-of-way maintenance is a broad term,” he says, “taking in those running through woods and along roadways.” Most right-of-way problems with the last Northeast ice storm were along roadways where there is more overhang. “We spend as much on cleanup in a week to 10 days as we might (normally spend) in six to 12 months,” he says.

“We use our own crews and OSHA and ANSI-qualified contractors to do line clearance. We do not hire private tree care companies that do not do line clearance. They try to offer their services, but we have to turn them away for safety reasons. If they had certifications, we would consider them, but we generally do not have the ability to vet their qualifications during a storm,” he explains.
Goodson warns that, “We pay less than you might pay for private tree care. Driving that is that we do 52 weeks of clearing per year. There’s no slowing down, no carrying overhead of equipment, sales or advertising. No layoffs in winter, no salary for downtime. This is year-round work.”

“This last ice storm looked like a bomb went off in some places,” Goodson says. Roads had to be cleared before we could even get crews in – wires and poles were broken, transformers knocked down. Resources we used were monumental. Mostly we dealt with roadside right-of-way problems and used bucket trucks with 55- and 80-foot lifts, climbing crews and buckets mounted on skidders.”

As America grows and with a new president promising a rebuild of infrastructure, we can be pretty much assured existing and new rights of way will need attention. The more there are, the more population sprawls, and the more work there is likely to be in this area. Throw in a good storm once a year and you have the makings of a good business. But it will require trained staff and an equipment fleet tailored to your region and the ROW customer demands.

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Man and Material 78-foot spider lift

Man and Material Lift Engineering now offers a dielectric A70TD-46kV spider lift with a working height of 78 feet and side reach of 35 feet. The A70TD-46kV combines the accessibility of a spider-type lift with the safety of a 46kV unit, which makes the unit a great fit for utility and tree maintenance around power lines. Standard features include a stowed width of 34½ inches, (fits through a 35-inch door/gate); track drive, with 8 psi contact pressure to allow driving up stairs and maneuvering over grass without damage; and high-strength, steel booms (vs. aluminum). Display panels at platform and ground locations provide continuous feedback on everything from position to whether parts are working correctly. Electrically insulated features are a 5-foot fiberglass boom tip, fiberglass bucket, radio controls, non-conductive hydraulic hoses and an ANSI A92.2 46kV rating. The A70TD-46kV is designed, built and serviced in the USA. Contact Man & Material Lift Engineering via www.manliftengineering.com.

Companion fungicide gets new EPA label

Growth Products, Ltd.’s Companion liquid biological fungicide received a new EPA label for all turfgrass and landscape use, allowing turf and landscape professionals to use it as part of a sound disease management program. Companion effectively prevents, controls and suppresses a broad range of root and foliar diseases, including anthracnose, brown patch, dollar spot, summer patch, fusarium patch, pythium and phytophthora. Companion’s GB03 strain of Bacillus subtilis has multiple modes of action in preventing and controlling plant diseases. It produces a broad-spectrum antibiotic (Iturin) that disrupts pathogen cell-wall formation. It is a competitive and fast colonizing rhizobacterium that crowds out pathogens preventing their growth and antagonistic effects. In addition, GB03 triggers Induced System Resistance (ISR) in plants, by activating a plant’s natural immune system to fight disease. Trials at Rutgers and UMass have shown it can be used in combination with lower rates of chemical fungicides for improved efficacy and/or in rotation with chemical fungicides, thereby reducing chemical applications and costs. Contact Growth Products, Ltd. at 1-800-648-7626 or via www.GrowthProducts.com.

Rayco portable horizontal grinder

Rayco Manufacturing, Inc.’s new RH7154 is a horizontal grinder within reach of the small contractor. The RH7154 is designed to be both compact and affordable. At 14,000 pounds, 9 1/2-feet tall, 27 1/2-feet long and 7 1/2-feet wide, this unit is easily transported from job to job and can be maneuvered and operated on small jobsites that might be inaccessible to larger machines. With an infed opening of 17- by 54-inches, this highly productive unit is capable of grinding a wide variety of wood waste materials, including tree limbs and brush, sawmill waste, dimensional lumber scraps and pallets, and re-grinding wood chips. It offers an economical solution for reducing wood waste, lowering dumping costs and creating high quality mulch. Contact Rayco at 1-800-392-2686 or via www.raycomfg.com.

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All Gear Inc.’s Branch Saver line

All Gear Inc.’s new Branch Saver is a ¾-inch, 24-strand, hollow braid cabling line designed for holding damaged limbs in place. It is water resistant, and comes in black to blend in with the tree. Unlike wire, it won’t rust or rot and its hollow braid construction makes it easily spliced or knotted. The Branch Saver, which has an average tensile strength of 10,600 pounds, comes in a 300-foot spool. Contact All Gear via www.allgearinc.com.

PLP’s cabling Wedge-Grip Dead-end

Preformed Line Products’ new Wedge-Grip Dead-end simplifies tree cabling installation by reducing the labor and time involved with terminating strand in cable bracing applications. Designed for both EHS and Common Grade strand sizes, from 3/16-inch through 3/8-inch, it makes for a creative and simple housing and wedge assembly. The Wedge-Grip simply slides over the strand and clamps with the turn of a cap. While taking only seconds to install, it results in a reliable termination designed to develop 100 percent of the published rated breaking strength of the strand. Features include: easily installed and adjusted – pre-assembled housing unit and wedges simply slide over the strand and may be repositioned anywhere along the strand for easy field adjustments; no tools required – simply hand tighten the knurled cap; reliable design – maintains strand integrity by eliminating the need to open, bend or alter the strand; compact – ideal for tree-crotch and other applications with tight working spaces. Contact PLP communications solutions at 1-440-461-5200 or via www.preformed.com/communications.
**Altec acquires Lift-All**

Altec, LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Altec, Inc., acquired Lift-All, a division of Hydra-Tech, Inc., in December 2008. Lift-All is a manufacturer of bucket-truck style aerial lifts. Altec has acquired Lift-All’s products along with their manufacturing assets and facilities. In addition, Altec has acquired certain other assets and real estate as part of the purchase agreement.

“This acquisition provides Altec with a unique opportunity to broaden our product line and offer additional choice and value to our customers,” said Lee Styslinger, III, President and CEO of Altec, Inc. “Lift-All has had a well-established reputation for producing reliable, quality products for nearly 30 years. Their equipment will be an excellent complement to Altec’s products and services.”

Altec, Inc. is the holding company for the manufacturer of aerial lifts, digger derricks, truck-mounted cranes and specialty equipment for the electric utility, telecommunication and contractor industries. Altec has manufacturing, sales and service facilities located throughout North America and provides products and services in over 100 countries.

**MORBARK adds NORTRAX in north central states**

Morbark, Inc., has awarded Nortrax an exclusive dealership to serve the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of Michigan. Nortrax will carry Morbark’s complete industrial product line which includes recycling, forestry and whole tree chipping equipment.

Nortrax has eight locations across the region where it also represents John Deere Construction, John Deere Forestry and Hitachi Construction Equipment lines. Nortrax will handle sales, service and parts for Morbark at its locations in Bemidji, Grand Rapids and Duluth MN; Eau Claire, Ashland, Monico, and Wausau WI; and Escanaba MI.

“Our relationship with Nortrax will allow us to serve the region locally with the exceptional sales, parts and service capabilities delivered by Nortrax people who know their customers’ business,” said Barry DeLau, Morbark’s Midwest regional sales manager.

**Vermeer appoints Vander Wilt director of marketing**

Vermeer Corporation has appointed Glenda Vander Wilt director of marketing for its corporate marketing efforts.

Vander Wilt has been with Vermeer for 20 years and brings an impressive track record of managing people and projects to the Vermeer corporate marketing effort. In her most recent role, Vander Wilt served as the market-based strategy manager, oversaw the voice-of-customer research efforts, customer satisfaction initiatives and helped Vermeer expand its bio and green initiatives.

In her new role, Vander Wilt will be responsible for both the market-based strategy and corporate marketing groups. Strategically, this move allows Vermeer to better utilize the resources within both groups while allowing the company to better capture customer insight and integrate this information into product positioning and marketing activities.

**Lambert Landscape takes PLANET Environmental Improvement awards**

Lambert Landscape Company of Dallas, Texas, won the most prestigious award and was named one of the premier winners at the 39th Annual Environmental Improvement Awards Program, sponsored by the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), in November.

The firm was honored with the Judges Award for 2008, the highest award given in the contest, for its submission of a French Neo-Classical Garden. Lambert Landscape, 25-year TCIA member, also took two Grand Awards.

Representing Lambert’s at the awards ceremony in Kentucky were Paul Fields, ASLA, president and director of design; Daniel L. Morgan, CEO and director of garden services; Lara Moffat, marketing & recruiting manager; and Mary Beth Riddle, enhancement manager.

For the dual Judges and Grand Awards project, Lambert’s worked with a high-profile client who “deserves, expects and appreciates a perfectly maintained exterior garden that reflects the grace, glamour and orderly appointment of the home’s interior,” said Mr. Fields, who was the designer of the one-acre garden. The goal was to create a French Impressionist landscape scene for the client to view from each window.

**UMass selects TreeWorks software for tree inventory**

The University of Massachusetts began a comprehensive tree inventory project on its campus in Amherst, Mass., in January using Topcon’s GMS-2 Pro GIS data recorder and TreeWorks software.

The UMass inventory is a benchmark project aimed at gathering a comprehensive inventory, including photographs of notable trees in different seasons.

The Kenerson Group’s TreeWorks tree inventory management software was specified as the platform for the initial inventory and ongoing management activities. TCIA-member Trees New England won the bid to conduct the inventory and Melissa LeVangie, owner and consulting arborist, began the inventory.

“Photography was a sticking point for the data collection and field operations. Having to record photo numbers on secondary equipment or worse, on paper logs was a logistical nightmare. The capability

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to collect pictures on the same hand-held unit was a huge benefit. The smooth transition of syncing individual or multiple photos with same tree file relieved major data logistic headaches and eliminated post data processing,” said LeVangie.

“The Topcon GMS-2 Pro handheld device supplied to us after we began the project changed all that. It was so easy to capture photographs as part of the inventory collection process that it no longer made sense not to do it.” The built-in laser range finder, coupled with the onboard digital camera also allowed the unit to be used to gather accurate height, crown-spread and trunk diameter (DBH) and instantly integrate that data with the tree record.

Topcon’s Richard Rybka, GIS partner development manager, said, “Topcon and the Kenerson Group formed a strategic GIS OEM partnership for urban forestry and arboriculture applications in 2008 as part of the Topcon GIS Business Partnership program. The UMass tree inventory project is a perfect example of why the partnership was formed.”

Morton Arboretum testing woodland restoration

The Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois, has begun testing a new approach to woodland restoration, having set up a 60-acre demonstration project that will “take woodland restoration to the next level,” according to Kurt Dreisilker, Arboretum manager of natural resources.

“If we’re to preserve our natural areas for future generations, we need to make sure they are healthy and feature a diverse array of species. We believe this project will yield a blueprint, so to speak, on how to achieve that,” Dreisilker said, adding the findings will be useful for those managing oak woodlands anywhere in the Midwest.

Workers planted almost 500 trees and approximately 600 shrubs in a section of the Arboretum’s East Woods area. The project’s goal is to improve the woodlands’ biodiversity and composition, that is, to create a healthy and sustainable mixture of trees, shrubs, grasses, wildflowers and sedges. This, in turn, will allow increased numbers of trees, other plants, and animals to inhabit the natural areas and flourish.

Restoration work began in October 2007, and later Arboretum crews began clearing overstocked native trees. “We’re experimenting with a new approach to thin the canopy, to allow enough sunlight through, enabling saplings to grow,” Dreisilker explained.

Crews continue to remove invasive plants, many small enough to be pulled by hand, others needing chain saws. In 2008, the Arboretum planted native species strategically to create a sustainable environment – trees such as white oak, red oak, bur oak; and shrubs such as American hazelnut, buttonbush, viburnums, elderberry and dogwood.

Dreisilker’s team will closely monitor the project, looking for natural canopy regeneration in general, and among oaks in particular. The team will also see if the species being planted will flourish.
Events & Seminars

February 1-3, 2009
Wisconsin Arborist Association Annual Conference
Green Bay, WI
Contact: Josh DePouw www.waa.isa.org

February 2-3, 2009
Great Plains Tree Conference & Workshop
Nebraska Arborist Association, Lincoln, NE
Contact: www.NEArborists.org; NAA@Asscoffice.net; (402) 476-3865

February 4-6, 2009*
New England Growers
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, Boston, MA
Contact: (508) 653-3009; www.NEGrows.org

February 5, 2009
MGIA 5th Annual Job Fair
Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992, www.landscape.org

February 5-6, 2009
The Soul of the Plant photography exhibit
David Schwartz Tree Care
BankRI Gallery, Turks Head branch, Providence, RI
Contact: www.ivoryhalo.com; www.bankri.com

February 7, 2009
Long Island Arboricultural Assoc. Annual Tree Conf.
Farmingdale State College, Farmingdale, NY
Contact: (516) 454-6550; liaatrees@aol.com

February 8-12, 2009*
Winter Management Conference 2009
Westin & Sheraton Grand Bahama Island Our Lucaya Resort, Bahamas
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; cyr@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

February 10-12, 2009
Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Conference
Penn State Conf. Center Hotel, State College, PA
Contact: 1-800-898-3411; www.plna.org

February 11-13, 2009
ISA Ontario Annual Meeting
London, ON
Contact: www.ISAONTARIO.com; 1-888-463-2316; info@isaontario.com

February 17, 2009
Tree Pruning
Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education
Contact: www.cpe.rutgers.edu; (732) 932-9271 x625

February 18, 2009
Hazardous Tree Identification
Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education
Contact: www.cpe.rutgers.edu; (732) 932-9271 x625

February 19, 2009
Municipal Shade Tree Management
Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education
Contact: www.cpe.rutgers.edu; (732) 932-9271 x625

February 20, 2009
Woody Plants for Midwest Landscapes Symposium
Aldorff Auditorium, Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, IL
Contact: (847) 635-6261; www.chicagobotanic.org/school

February 22-27, 2009
2009 Municipal Forester Institute
Palm Key Center, Ridgeland, SC
Contact: SMA at www.urban-forestry.org

February 22-24, 2009
Ohio Tree Care Conference
Columbus, OH
Contact: www.ohiochapterisa.org

February 24-27, 2009
ASCA 2009 Consulting Academy
American Society of Consulting Arborists
Omni Jacksonville Hotel, Jacksonville, FL
Contact: www.ascasconsulting.org; (301) 947-0483

February 25, 2009
New Jersey Landscape Contractors Annual Trade Show & Conference
Meadowlands Exposition Center, Secaucus, NJ
Contact: www.NJUCA.org; (201) 730-3600

March 2-3, 2009*
Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop
Novi, MI
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

March 3-4, 2009
MGIA’s 22nd Annual Trade Show & Convention
Rock Financial Showplace, Novi, Michigan
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

March 4-6, 2009
The Work Truck Show
McCormick Place, West Building, Chicago, IL
Contact: www.ntea.com

March 7-10, 2009
Southern Chapter ISA 67th Annual Conference
Shreveport Convention Center, Shreveport, LA
Contact: www.isasouthern.org; (888) 339-8733

March 11-12, 2009*
Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop
Manchester, NH
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

March 12-14, 2009
Forever Green Trees, Our Vanishing Urban Forests
The Resort & Club at Little Harbor, Tampa Bay, FL
Contact: Samnik Seminars (727) 781-1212; www.etcsamnikseminars.com

March 14-15, 2009
2nd Annual Spring Splicing Symposium
Louisville, KY
Contact: richardhattrier@yahoo.com

March 17-19, 2009
16th Annual Urban & Community Forestry Conference
Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, Columbia, MO
Contact: Josh Behounek, (573) 673-7530, MO Comm. Forestry Council; www.mocommunitytrees.com

March 18, 2009
Advanced Pruning Techniques
Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education
Contact: www.cpe.rutgers.edu; (732) 932-9271 x625

March 19, 2009
Garden State Tree Conf./ANJAISA Conf. & Cert. Exam
Cook Campus Ctr, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com

March 20, 2009
Roadside & Right-of-Way Management
Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education
Contact: www.cpe.rutgers.edu; (732) 932-9271 x625

April 7, 2009
Comm. Forestry Mgt - Working Through 5-Year Plan
Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education
Contact: www.cpe.rutgers.edu; (732) 932-9271 x625

April 22-23, 2009
Timber, Mutton or Fuel? Economics of land use & forestry
Inst. of Chartered Foresters (ICF) National Conf. 2009
Barceló Cardiff Angel Hotel, Wales, UK
Contact: www.charteredforesters.org; 0131-240-1425

May 4-8, 2009
Western Chapter ISA 75th Annual Conference & Trade Show; Reno, NV
Contact: www.WCISA.net; (866) 785-8960

July 22-23, 2009*
Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop
Providenc, RI
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

July 24-29, 2009*
ISA Annual Conference & Trade Show
Providence, RI
Contact: ISA@ISA-Arbor.com; (217) 355-9411

August 7, 2009
Southwest Horticulture Annual Day of Education
The Buttes Resort, Tempe, AZ
Contact: (480) 966-1610; www.azna.org

October 5-7, 2009*
TCI EXPO 2009
Baltimore, MD
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; cyr@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

* Indicates that TCIA staff will be in attendance

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OSHA clarifies the employer duty to provide personal protective equipment and train each employee with a final rule

In a rulemaking effective January 12, OSHA clarified that any personal protective equipment (PPE) or training requirement, found in any of its standards, imposes a compliance duty to each and every affected employee. In other words, non-compliance may expose the employer to liability on a per-employee basis. The amendments consist of new paragraphs added to the introductory sections of various OSHA standards, including the General Industry (Part 1910) standards affecting tree care companies.

The lengthy Federal Register notice, submitted comments, the hearing transcript and post hearing submissions can be accessed electronically at www.regulations.gov, docket No. OSHA-2008-0031.

This action, which is in accord with OSHA’s longstanding position, is being taken in response to recent decisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission (OSHRC) indicating that differences in wording among the various PPE and training provisions in OSHA safety and health standards affect the Agency’s ability to treat an employer’s failure to provide PPE or training to each covered employee as a separate violation. The amendments add no new compliance obligations.

Employers are not required to provide any new type of PPE or training, to provide PPE or training to any employee not already covered by the existing requirements, or to provide PPE or training in a different manner than that already required. The amendments simply clarify that the standards apply to each employee.

As evidenced by its long-standing rules, OSHA deems the use of personal protective equipment to be necessary to protect employees from injury or illness caused by exposure to toxic substances and other workplace hazards. Many OSHA standards in Parts 1910 through 1926 require employers to provide PPE to their employees and ensure the use of PPE. Some standards do so with general statements that require the employer to provide appropriate PPE wherever necessary to protect employees from hazards. Other standards require the employer to provide specific types of PPE or to provide PPE in specific circumstances. For example, the logging standard requires employers to provide cut-resistant leg protection to employees operating a chain saw (29 CFR 1910.266(d)(1)(iv)).

Training is also an important component of many OSHA standards. Training is necessary to enable employees to recognize the hazards posed by toxic substances and dangerous work practices and protect themselves from these hazards. Many safety standards contain training requirements. The lockout/tagout standard, for example, requires the employer to provide training on the purpose and function of the energy control program (Sec. 1910.147(c)(7)), and the electric power generation standard requires that employees be trained in and familiar with pertinent safety requirements and procedures (Sec. 1910.269(a)(2)).

The Agency interprets its PPE and training provisions to impose a duty upon the employer to comply for each and every employee subject to the requirement regardless of whether the provision expressly states that PPE or training must be provided to “each employee.” Neither the Commission nor any court has ever suggested that an employer can comply with the PPE and training provisions in safety and health standards by providing PPE to some employees covered by the requirement but not others, or that the employer can train some employees covered by the training requirement but not others. The basic nature of the employer’s obligation is the same in all of these provisions – each and every employee must receive the required protection.

Barring any legal injunction, the agency proposes to amend its standards to make it unmistakably clear that each covered employee is required to receive PPE and training, and that each instance when an employee subject to a PPE or training requirement does not receive the required PPE or training may be considered a separate violation subject to a separate penalty.

Up until now, it was much more common for OSHA to “group” the violations of a single standard and propose a single penalty.

We urge all affected employers that have not already done so to implement documented training and strict PPE use policies as soon as possible.

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for Safety, Compliance & Standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.
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Investment in landscape trees pays – through improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gasses, lower air conditioning bills, increased property values, feelings of well-being, and more. Water, however, may be the most significant global environmental crisis coming our way in the future – and trees play a pivotal role there as well. As one storm-water engineer put it to me recently, “when it comes to storm-water management, forests rock!”

New research continues to demonstrate that urban forests rock, too, and individual trees are the members of the band. The considerable potential of trees to intercept rainfall, especially in leaf, has been incorporated into urban forest benefit calculations such as those produced by CityGreen (American Forests) and into cost-benefit analyses such as those performed by the Center for Urban Forest Research (www.fs.fed.us/psw/programs/cufr/). Now the potential of tree roots to help the soil perform its hydrologic function is beginning to be understood as well.

Controlling urban runoff – water that runs over the ground surface into streams and other water bodies – has traditionally been viewed as primarily a flood control issue. Roads, buildings, driveways and even compacted soils shunt rainfall quickly into storm sewers and then waterways. Runoff damages water quality not only by washing contaminants and sediment into streams, but also because it makes stream levels rise very quickly when it rains, scouring the banks and washing even more sediment downstream.

By definition, runoff is not infiltrating into the ground. This means stream baseflows are not replenished and streams can run excessively low during dry spells. This feast or famine cycle damages water quality and supplies as well as aquatic habitat. When water infiltrates into the soil, many pollutants can be filtered out, and groundwater is recharged.

Storm-water engineers are now trying to get away from management techniques that focus primarily on regulating flow and instead develop techniques that will contribute to infiltration and “evapotranspiration,” the sum of evaporation and plant transpiration. Plants are an essential component in these new storm-water management approaches, often called “BMPs” (best management practices). Landscape managers are encountering more and more of these storm-water BMPs, including rain gardens and bioswales, which are landscape elements designed to remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water. However, trees may be some of the best storm-water managers of all, whether they are in a BMP, or not.

Our research team at Virginia Tech, along with colleagues at Cornell and the University of California at Davis, has been investigating innovative ways to maximize the potential of trees to address stormwater in a series of studies supported by the...
U.S. Forest Service’s Urban and Community Forestry Grants Program. The overall study looked at the potential to store storm-water below pavement in structural soils.

The structural soils expand the rooting area while simultaneously serving as a stormwater reservoir – something like an underground rain garden. Engineers have recently been storing storm water under pavement in gravel beds to allow for infiltration. Introducing trees into the mix creates some challenges, but there are potentially large payoffs. The challenges: getting trees to thrive in storm-water reservoirs that are flooded one day and empty the next. The benefits: having trees return water to the atmosphere via evapotranspiration and to the groundwater via infiltration.

One of our focus areas at Virginia Tech was soil infiltration. As any arborist knows, urban soils are rarely comparable to undisturbed forest soils. Compaction and poor drainage are commonplace. We asked ourselves, “Could trees improve this situation?”

Compacted soils can restrict or prevent root penetration. However, trees that tolerate poorly drained or bottomland soils can often penetrate compacted soil by taking advantage of times when it is wet and soft. It seems like a perfect marriage: storm water collects in the reservoir and makes the compacted soil below soft and penetrable, flood tolerant tree species penetrate the compacted layer, and the collected storm water has an infiltration path.

Two container experiments established that urban tree roots have the potential to penetrate compacted subsurfaces and increase infiltration rates in reservoirs being used to store storm water. In one study, roots of both black oak (Quercus velutina) and red maple (Acer rubrum) trees penetrated clay loam soil compacted to 1.6 g/cm-3, increasing infiltration rates by an average of 153 percent.

In another study recreating the design of the below-pavement structural soil stormwater detention, green ash trees (Fraxinus pennsylvanica) eventually increased the average infiltration rate 27 fold compared to unplanted controls. In this experiment, a structural soil (CUSoil, Amereq Corp., New York) was separated from compacted clay loam subsoil (1.6 g/cm-3) by a woven geotextile in 102-liter containers. Roots of ash trees planted in the structural soil penetrated both the geotextile and the subsoil within two years. We observed many roots penetrating the geotextile, but roots really proliferated where there was a slight tear in the fabric.

Geotextile strength tests assume that a certain amount of perforation will occur during compaction of gravel base courses under the pavement section. Compaction of structural soils can have the same effect. If a geotextile is used, these tears in the fabric are beneficial to root penetration. Geotextiles are often not necessary under structural soil stormwater reservoirs, however, giving roots even better access to lower soil regions. The structural soil sections are typically about 2 feet deep, which spreads the load out over the subsoil.

Whether or not a tree is part of a stormwater management installation, the roots can play their role in improving soil infiltration, while the canopy captures rainfall and gives us the cooling shade we love.

This study was published in the November-December 2008 issue of the Journal of Environmental Quality (Bartens, et al.). Companion studies have been presented at several meetings including the American Society of Civil Engineers’ “Geocongress 2008” held in March in New Orleans, Louisiana; at New Forests After Old Industries: Tenth European Forum on Urban Forestry held in May 2007 in Gelsenkirchen, Germany; and at Emerging Issues Along Urban/Rural Interfaces II: Linking Landuse Science and Society, held in Atlanta, Georgia in 2007. Monitoring continues at four demonstration sites around the country and updated information is posted as it becomes available at www.cnr.vt.edu/urbanforestry/stormwater.

Dr. Susan D. Day is an assistant professor of urban forestry at Virginia Tech with a joint appointment in the departments of Forestry and Horticulture (www.forestry.vt.edu and www.hort.vt.edu).

Who can argue with a tree?
Some of us have learned all too clearly lately that one way to stay fluid would have been to diversify investments. Your employees, your equipment and your time are all resources you have right now that can be applied to crane work to bring in additional revenue. As with investments, you don’t want to charge forward blindly. But, with a little assistance, you might begin to look at crane use in tree care as an extension of your business that can carry its own weight.

Perhaps you’ve been in tree care for a long time and are starting to consider crane use. There are a ton of questions: How do I start? How big of a crane do I need? Should I rent one or buy one? Who’s going to run the crane? What else do I need to know?

Many of these questions are answered in “Best Management Practices for Crane Use in Arboriculture,” a manual recently produced by the Tree Care Industry Association.

This guide uses important information from both the general crane and arboriculture industries to provide the user with a combined best practices reference. It is meant to assist qualified general industry crane operators with transitioning into tree work as well as transitioning qualified arborists into crane work.

It is designed to be a user’s guide and to eliminate the drawback of overwhelming the reader that often detracts from the value in detailed manuals. It contains more than the basics, but is to-the-point and easy to follow. Navigating through the manual is assisted by a table of contents organized by topic, which include: crane safety in tree work; crane operator qualifications; crane capacity, soil capacity and set up; fundamental rules of crane rigging; basic tree lift factors; hoisting a climber, and more.

What this manual does NOT do is teach how to operate a crane. Only qualified crane operators should be used in tree care operations, and information about crane operator certifications is available through the National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (NCCCO). As with many certifications, crane certification is a voluntary program in which operators are recognized for their knowledge and skill.

Licensing is more restrictive and usually refers to mandatory governmental requirements based on a combination of examination, testing and demonstration of the appropriate knowledge and skill. There are currently 12 states and six cities that require crane operators to be licensed.

The manual includes key factors an arborist needs to consider when first working with a crane, such as ground capacity (where and how to set up the crane for safe operations), load and radius chart interpre-
In tree care, the BMPs can guide the user through the how-to’s and, if followed, reduce the number of costly mistakes that could ruin your bottom line. The next step in your business could be large returns from a safe and efficient crane operation, and the “Best Management Practices for Crane Use in Arboriculture” will make this process go more smoothly.

The following excerpt is from Chapter 6 of the BMPs for Crane Use in Arboriculture: “Crane Capacity, Soil Capacity and Set-Up,” and is a good representation of the type of information the manual provides.

**Lifting Principles/Handling the Load**

Three basic lifting principles govern a truck-mounted crane’s mobility and safety during lifting operations. These are Leverage, Stability and Structural Integrity.

**Principle No. 1: Leverage**

Cranes use the principle of leverage to lift loads. Rotation of the upper works (cab, boom, counterweight, load) causes the crane’s center of gravity to change, which causes the distance between the crane’s center of gravity and its tipping axis to change. Stability can be affected by the fluctuating leverage the load exerts on the crane as it swings. The crane’s rated capacity is, therefore, altered in the load chart to compensate for those changes in leverage.

**Principle No. 2: Stability**

The load weight, angle of the boom and its radius (distance from the crane’s center of rotation to the center of load) are in relationship to the center of gravity of the load. The stability of a crane could also be affected by the support on which the crane is resting. A crane’s load rating is generally developed for operations under ideal conditions, i.e. a level firm surface. Excessively sloping surfaces or soft ground therefore must be avoided. In areas where soft ground poses a support problem for stability, mats and or blocking should be used to distribute a crane’s load and maintain a level, stable condition.

The calculations used to determine the crane’s capacities in its load chart are based on the crane being within 1 percent of level. What does this mean? Simply, if the machine is not within 1 percent of level, the load chart is invalid and cannot be relied upon. You cannot operate the crane with any degree of certainty. For this reason, it is imperative that the crane is properly set up level and on stable ground. When possible, work with the crane in an orientation (boom direction) that gives the most stability.

Stability and ground support are not discussed in OSHA standards, but in the operator’s manual for the machine. Most manufacturers state in their operating manual that the outrigger supports supplied with the crane may not be of sufficient size to support the crane under all soil conditions. It is left to the operator to determine the soil conditions, and provide additional “cribbing” under the outrigger pads to provide the necessary support.

**INCREASED STABILITY = MORE LOAD**

**Principle No. 3: Structural Integrity**

The crane’s main frame, wheels/axles and/or outrigger supports, boom sections and attachments are all considered part of the structural integrity of lifting.

In addition to overturning (stability failure), cranes can fail structurally if overloaded enough. As loads are added beyond its rated capacity, a crane may fail structurally before there is any sign of tipping. Structural failure is not limited to total fracture; it includes all permanent damage such as overstressing, bending and twisting of any of the components. When a crane is overstressed, the damage may not be apparent. Nevertheless, a structural fail-
ure has occurred and over-stressed components are then subject to catastrophic failure at some future time.

Stability failures are foreseeable, but in structural failure it is almost impossible to predict what component will fail at any given time. No matter what the cause, if the crane is overloaded, structural failure can occur.

The following are just a few of the structural components that may fail:
- Outrigger pads, beams or cylinder
- Boom
- Load line
- Boom rigging
- Any weld on any part of the crane
- Sheave
- Hydraulic hose or other components
- Stable Ground Setup and Lift Capacity
- Soil-Bearing Capacity Charts

Reference ASME B30.5 - 2004, 5-1.1.1 Load Ratings – Where Stability Governs Lifting Performance

ASME B30.5 - 2004, 5-1.1.2 Load Ratings – Where Structural Competence Governs Lifting Performance

Crane Location Relative to the Tree

Set up the crane as close to the tree as possible. Closer is better because the boom is higher and extended less. Generally, the higher the angle and shorter the boom is, the greater the lifting capacity is.

No matter where the pick is or what it is, the crane itself will only be as stable as the ground surrounding it. Because of this, sound and level footing is a must.

A crane is properly set up to perform only after a thorough site inspection is performed. Setting up on stable ground is imperative to ensure safe tree/crane operations. A solid concrete surface may appear to be the ideal place to set up a crane, but concrete is not always a good supported surface. It is possible to inadvertently punch through the surface when making a pick. Be aware that ground which is frozen solid in the morn-
ing or overnight may become soft and unstable as the temperatures warm throughout the day.

Also watch out for hidden dangers, such as drainage ditches, culverts, septic tanks and other underground structures that can collapse under the outriggers if they go unnoticed. The crane operator should take the lead responsibility for ensuring there is stable ground to allow set up. The operator may need to consult with local soil charts for the work site area to identify stable soils types.

**Ground Conditions**

Sand, rock or backfill (wet or dry ground) all come into play when considering soil stability. Here is a list of general soil types from more stable to less stable:

**Most Stable**
- Hard sound rock
- Soft rock, hardpan overlaying rock
- Very compact, sandy gravel
- Compact sandy gravel; very compact clay; sand and gravel; very compact coarse or medium sand
- Firm, sandy gravel; compact clay; sand and gravel; compact coarse or medium sand; very compact sand-clay soils; hard clay
- Loose sandy gravel, firm coarse or medium sand,
- Loose coarse or medium sand, compact fine sand, compact sand-clay soils, and stiff clay
- Firm, fine sand, compact inorganic silt

**Least Stable**
- Loose sand-clay soils, inorganic silt, soft clay

It is also essential to understand how proper setup can have a profound effect on load capacities. Once a lift occurs, it is too late to remedy crane setup problems.

**Ground-Bearing Pressure**

Ground-bearing capacity is a measure of the supporting surface’s ability to withstand the downward force exerted by the crane or its individual outriggers, usually expressed in pounds per square inch. Ground-bearing capacity is basically a matter of how much settlement can be tolerated for a lift and/or if any differential settlement can be allowed.

**Differential Settlement**

The uneven settling of the crane, causing it to become out of level because of differences in the supporting surface under the outriggers, is called differential settlement. It causes side loading on the boom and also impairs the smooth operation of the crane by having to swing uphill, etc. Therefore, the supporting surface may have to be amended or designed so that differential settlement is minimal, usually through the use of crushed rock or limestone with crane mats over it.

*Tchukki Andersen is staff arborist for the Tree Care Industry Association and compiled the “Best Management Practices for Crane Use in Arboriculture” manual.*
TLC program shows unsafe tree care practices

Every day we all get spam and junk e-mail that gets deleted by a click of the mouse. Along with the junk we also find that a friend has passed along a chain mail, request to sign an online poll or some other call to action. I have no clue how effective or annoying any of these e-mails are to people. Some of the “forwards” are entertaining, I have to admit.

The profession of arboriculture is going through an identity crisis because of the way a couple of shows on the Discovery channel have portrayed tree workers. The first, “Ax Men,” (History channel) isn’t about arborists, but the public lumps us with loggers and thinks that we do the same work. If you’ve ever watched “Ax Men,” I know that you’ve cringed when you see the unsafe work practices. Right now all of the companies have OSHA investigations going on and will face fines totaling thousands of dollars. The owners should face real jail time, I think, on charges of attempted manslaughter/murder.

There is another show that just started airing that is closer to home for arborists. It’s called “Saw for Hire.” (TLC/Discovery channel) The fellow made a splash on the Internet in the last year when he put up his videos. All of the arborist discussion forums around the world, including the U.S., Australia and UK, have condemned his attitude and disregard for safety. In one of the episodes, he lifts his crane off the ground, fortunately it doesn’t tip over!

Please take the time to write to Discovery channel and express your dissatisfaction with how the arboriculture profession is portrayed. Even if you haven’t seen the show, I would like to see Discovery be spammed with bad reviews. If you care to take the time to find the original videos, visit www.nosakraw.com. You’ll cringe, I guarantee! This isn’t Hollywood special effects; these are day-to-day tree workers being put in harm’s way.

The work TCIA and ISA have done to put a positive image of professional arborists in the public eye will be damaged if programs like this aren’t challenged.

For years, I’ve heard the complaints about less than professional tree work being done. The hand wringing and complaining goes on in discussion forums and arborist meetings. Until we, as the professionals, take action outside of the profession, the public is not likely to change their perception of what an arborist does. We can’t rely on professional organizations to take action on the street.

A few years ago I decided that I couldn’t drive by job sites where I see blatant, unsafe actions. Now, I stop and talk with the crew for a little while. Many times I’m greeted with pretty negative energy, which I expect and am prepared for. But, I feel an obligation to take action that could possibly prevent an accident or death. If we all do this, we can carry the message to people that have never heard of ANSI standards, TCIA or ISA. (Talking to tree workers about proper tree care is another topic to broach.)

It’s our responsibility to do what we can to promote a professional impression on the public. Allowing Discovery to continue airing this without giving them negative reviews makes us complicit.

The next action that is needed is to counter this type of program by contacting any media to have a more professional presentation of arboriculture made to the public. There has to be someone out there who takes care of the trees for major news media. Take some time to develop a contact that can make a better show.

I filed a review with Discovery. Here’s what I wrote:

This program has nothing to do with professional arboriculture. The crew operates without following OSHA and ANSI standards, or accepted trade practices. The workers are faced with injury and possible death every few minutes.

Professional arborists have been aware of this video for many months. All of the professional arborist discussion forums have run lengthy threads since he started his self promotion. There has not been a single post that has condemned what he was doing or how he was working.

Your company has done a huge disservice to the professional arborists who work day after day in all conditions to keep their workers, customers and the trees safe.

Once again, your company has slipped to a low performance mode. Showing sensational and carnival-like programs leaves the public thinking that what is shown is “normal.” This could not be further from the truth in this case.

I’ll be surprised if the company in your show does not get a visit from OSHA. The companies who were shown in “Ax Men” are all being investigated by OSHA now and will face fines totaling thousands of dollars for violating the most basic safety regulations which put their workers in death’s path.

You are not obligated to show the right way to do work. On the other hand, your company is complicit in doing two huge disservices, i.e. leaving the impression with the public and with tree workers that the attitude and skill level of this company are typical.

Tom Dunlap
Canopy Tree
Dallas, Texas

Message from TCIA:

Both TCIA and ISA have collaborated on letters to the corporate leaders of Discovery Communications. We urge all concerned, professional arborists to do the same.

Discovery Communications cannot be expected to know all of the safety regulations and best practices requirements that govern commercial arboriculture. Once the industry makes them aware of the critically dangerous nature of the broadcast,
however, we expect this program to be taken off the air immediately for the benefit of consumers and arborists.

There are a variety of ways to express your views. To see a copy of TCIA’s letter, go to tcia.org.

By phone: Discovery has established a toll-free Ethics Hotline, operated by a third-party provider, The Network. “Saw for Hire” is a constant, ongoing violation of state, federal and industry professional standards and safety practices. In broadcasting this program, the network is complicit in the promotion of the unprofessional and unsafe practices of this company – practices that lead to injuries and fatalities in the tree care industry on a weekly basis. To contact the Ethics Hotline in the U.S., dial 1-800-398-6395.

By E-mail: You can contact Publicity Director Joanna Brahim via e-mail at joanna_brahim@discovery.com or by phone at (212) 548-5005 or the Senior Vice President of Communications Laurie Goldberg via e-mail at Laurie_Goldberg@discovery.com or by phone at (310) 975-1631.

By Internet: Go to http://extweb.discovery.com/viewerrelations. Register, then select “Discovery/TLC” from the drop-down menu. “Saw for hire” isn’t listed in the program names. Scroll down to “Other” and highlight it. There is a comment box to use. Add your comments.

More kudos for ASCA authors

A December 2008 letter to the editor started with my observation that there were two articles in the November issue written by ASCA members. I’d like to correct myself, because there was a third. David Lusk, both a TCIA and ASCA member, authored a description of his crew’s fine work on a champion walnut tree in Winston-Salem, N.C.

I’m grateful to David and the rest who bring their work into TCI magazine. The back page is not the only place that articles “from the field” should be found!

Thanks to TCI for continuing to print real-life stories on tree care, and to active arborists for writing them.

Guy Philip Meilleur
Better Tree Care Associates,
Apex N.C.

Name check

On page 9 of the December 2008 edition of TCI is a photo credited to the photographer Steve Hortmeyer. Might the last name have an “s” in it – Horstmeyer?

If so, he is a friend and meteorologist on Fox 19 here in Cincinnati and I’d like to give him my copy of the magazine – after I read every word in it!

Steve Sandfort
Cincinnati City Forester, retired
Cincinnati, Ohio

The author and photo provider replies:

Yes, it is Horstmeyer, the person your reader refers to.

Thomas W. Schmidlin, Ph.D., CCM
Department of Geography, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.

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Since the Tree Care Industry Association originally signed an Alliance agreement with OSHA in 2003 and again in 2006, we have been working together to reduce workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities. TCIA has consistently demonstrated its commitment to protecting employees, recognizing the fact that the success of any industry depends on the safety and health of the individuals who work in it.

OSHA wants to see the tree care industry and other businesses succeed, and we believe that making employee safety and health a priority should be an essential part of every employer’s business plan. OSHA’s Safety and Health Topics page, “Making the Business Case for Safety and Health”(www.osha.gov/dcsv/products/topics/businesscase/index.html), shows how employers are realizing significant economic benefits while also fulfilling their safety and health responsibilities to their employees.

Compliance with safety and health standards and regulations is not only a legal requirement; it also makes good business sense. Employers who invest in safe and healthful workplace environments improve their bottom line by lowering their workers’ compensation premiums, increasing labor productivity and reducing employee turnover.

A prime example of the financial benefits that a company can obtain through its ongoing commitment to employee safety and health is provided by TCIA member Kappen Tree Service, LLC, in Cass City, Michigan. In December 2007, this company received a Consultation Education and Training Gold Award from the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Kappen Tree earned this honor by going more than 16 years without any of its employees experiencing a lost-time injury. Beyond the obvious and most important benefit of protecting her employees from injuries and illnesses, Kappen Tree co-owner Krystal Kappen pointed out the financial gains that come with maintaining a safe workplace.

“We have an advantage when we bid on proposals because contractors know we are committed to safety,” says Kappen. “Our sales have doubled every year for the past five years, and our profits have increased because we have had zero accidents.”

This significant accomplishment is described in an OSHA and TCIA Alliance-developed success story posted on OSHA’s Web site. It is just one example of how making employee safety and health a priority not only saves lives and prevents injuries and illnesses – it also saves money. OSHA’s Web page on our Alliance with TCIA(www.osha.gov/dcsv/alliances/tcia_new/tcia.html) provides more details on how OSHA and TCIA are working together to help other tree care companies replicate the type of successes we have seen at Kappen Tree Service.

By sharing our experiences and expertise through this successful public-private partnership, representatives from OSHA and TCIA are focusing their efforts on preventing exposure to hazards associated with tree removal, such as electrical, fall and struck-by. OSHA is working closely with TCIA to ensure that its members and others in the tree care industry are aware of the valuable resources we can provide them, while TCIA provides its technical expertise to help OSHA ensure that these resources offer the best information available. Some results of this collaboration include a series of easy reference TCIA quick cards offering health and safety tips related to truck-mounted hydraulic dump bodies, chipper winches, and Lyme disease.

Another excellent resource is the Tree Care Industry Safety and Health Topics Web page (www.osha.gov/SLTC/treecare/index.html). OSHA appreciates the contributions of Alliance Program participants from TCIA who serve on the editorial board. The page
includes information related to personal protective equipment (PPE), lockout/tagout training, hazard communication and other important topics. By frequently visiting this page, TCIA members can stay informed about ways to be safe and healthy on the job. The more you learn about OSHA and our resources, the more you will appreciate how OSHA adds value to business, work and life.

OSHA and TCIA also work through our Alliance to collaborate on and participate in conferences and workshops. At TCI EXPO for the past few years, OSHA and TCIA representatives staffed an Alliance Program exhibit booth, distributed OSHA compliance assistance and cooperative programs publications, and answered attendees’ questions.

TCIA also joins with other Alliance Program participants and takes part in OSHA supported awareness campaigns. Last year, in October, TCIA joined other Alliance Program participants to support the 2008 Drug-Free Work Week. Sponsored annually by the Department of Labor, the week’s focus is on educating employers, employees and the public about the importance of being drug-free as an essential part of a safe and healthful workplace. In May 2008, TCIA and more than 50 other Alliance Program participants supported the annual North American Occupational Safety and Health Week by promoting the message that “Safety is Good Business.”

Of course, safety is more than just good business. Employers who focus on “safety first” recognize the human toll of a single injury or illness. Beyond the harm to the affected individual, these tragedies can also have a devastating impact on fellow employees, families, friends and even whole communities. Even one injury, illness or fatality caused by a workplace hazard is one too many.

Just as government and industry are working together through our Alliance Program to achieve safe and healthful workplaces, employers and employees also should work together in developing, maintaining and improving safety and health management systems. OSHA’s free and confidential On-site Consultation Program helps employers improve their safety and health performance by identifying hazards at their worksites and offering ways to correct them. Specifically designed for small businesses, the program has delivered free safety and health assistance to half a million employers over the past three decades (learn more at www.osha.gov/dcsp/small-business/consult.html).

OSHA will continue seeking opportunities to reach out to the tree care industry with information and advice that can help you promote growing profits and employee safety and health. This is part of OSHA’s commitment to helping achieve significant reductions in workplace injuries and illnesses through a balanced approach that encompasses education, training, and information sharing, as well as inspection, regulation and enforcement.

Thomas M. Stohler is acting assistant secretary of labor for Occupational Safety and Health.
Accident Briefs

Compiled from published reports.

Man killed in trimming fall

A man trimming tree branches died December 23, 2008, when he fell from an extension ladder in his back yard in Pace, Florida. William Edward Yeager, 52, of Pace, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Yeager was cutting oak limbs with a chain saw, according to investigators. At about 3:45 p.m., Yeager was cutting a limb when it fell, knocking him from the ladder to a concrete slab 15 feet below.

Emergency medical workers responded, but Yeager couldn’t be saved, according to a report in the Northwest Florida Daily News in Fort Walton Beach.

Man seriously injured cutting tree limb

A 41-year-old man was flown to a Boston hospital December 29, 2008, after injuring himself while cutting down a tree limb in Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

The man, an employee with a local tree service company, was taking down a tree limb when the limb snapped and hit him, according to a Southcoasttoday.com report.

He was transported to St. Luke’s Hospital in New Bedford before being flown to Beth Israel Hospital with serious injuries.

Man pulled into wood chipper dies

A tree worker died January 4, 2009, after being pulled head-first into a wood chipper in west Maui, Hawaii.

Alfredo Sarian, 63, of Lahaina was found stuck in a commercial wood chipper by fellow workers who heard him yell, according to a Honolulu Star Bulletin report. He tried to grab a branch within the chipper and was pulled into the machine, investigators said.

Sarian had been working with West Maui Land Co. for seven years and was expected to retire this month. Sarian is survived by his wife, Esther; two sons; brothers, sisters and grandchildren.

Man dies in bloody tree-trimming accident

A San Diego, California, man died January 5, 2009, after injuring himself with a chain saw at his home.

Herbert Webster, 64, was found dead at about 1:45 p.m. outside his home in unincorporated East County, according to a report on NBCSanDiego.com.

Webster apparently cut himself while using an electric saw to trim tree branches. His wife found him in a pool of blood and was not able to revive him, nor were paramedics who attempted CPR.

Tree trimmer gets stuck 40-feet up

A novice San Diego, California, tree trimmer became stuck 40 feet up in a tree January 6, 2009.

A construction worker by trade, the man was helping his aunt by trimming her palm trees. But he lost the spike on his boot and couldn’t get down. The fire department came to the rescue, using their ladder truck to give him an escape route.

Neighbors reported that the man had lost the spike the day before doing the same thing, but was able to get down on his own. His aunt had asked him not to do anymore trimming. But apparently he and his partner were up there and the same thing happened again, a neighbor told San Diego Channel 6 News (XETV-TV).

When asked if he’d think twice about doing more tree trimming, the man said “No, I’m going up tomorrow,” according to the report.

Tree trimmer 65 feet up gets tangled in ropes

Fire crews rescued a tree trimmer who was tangled in ropes 65 feet above the ground January 16, 2009, in Marion County, Oregon.

The man was doing work for a tree-trimming business when he became tangled, according to Statesman Journal. Marion County and Salem Fire Department rescue teams were able to cut the ropes and remove the man using a ladder truck. The man was taken to the local hospital and was in stable condition.

Send reports to staruk@tcia.org
What if you lost everything you’ve worked for?

What if it could have been prevented?

It may sound dramatic, but it’s true: one accident could put the entire future of your company in jeopardy. Do you have complete confidence in your company's safety program?

The Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) program from TCIA is designed to help every tree care company achieve a strong safety culture in which all employees are motivated to participate. Key employees are enrolled in the program to become their organization's internal safety trainers. Their education includes instruction in encouraging a company-wide buy-in, teaching and coaching adults, and strategies for building a team-oriented commitment to safe work practices.

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2009 CTSP Workshop Schedule

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Novi, MI
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TCIA Headquarters

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Florida
(Date and location TBA)

July 23 & 23
Providence, RI
ISA Annual Conference

September 2009
Texas
(Date and location TBA)

November 3-4, 2009
Baltimore, MD
TCI EXPO
Loyal clients in America are hard to find. Your competition is just waiting for you to drop the ball so they can scoop it right up and run with it. As I say in my programs; “Don’t tell me what you did for me yesterday, tell me what you are going to do for me tomorrow.” There are two topics I want to address in this article: 1) exceptional service and 2) change.

One of the big problems I see with companies today is that they don’t really know what differentiates them from their competition. If I was conducting a Strategic Planning Session for your organization today, the first thing I would ask you is, what does it take to be great in your industry. I would then ask, where are you excelling – where are you meeting the standard – where are you the weakest?

You’ve got to understand your strengths, especially those that differentiate you from your competitors. But you better fully understand where you need work. The Harvard Business Review stated, “one in 24 customers complain, the other 23 just go somewhere else.” Those are extremely scary numbers. It doesn’t matter if you do or don’t agree with their findings. What matters is how you, your associates, your organization perceives an unhappy customer. Are they perceived as a complainer, bellyacher, griper, villain and/or jerk? If they are perceived that way, you are going to need to do a major paradigm shift in this costly perception.

You need to label your outspoken unhappy customers as customer service consultants. They are unhappy customers who haven’t walked away – yet. They are actually giving you the opportunity to correct a situation. Their complaint can help to serve as a contribution to the future success of your organization.

It is time to start viewing these difficult customers as allies. They can help your organization prosper by identifying areas of discontent. Thank them for their feedback. If you can, figure out ways you can reward them for their feedback. Celebrate in the fact that you have been given a second chance; a chance to fix, adjust, tweak a problem you weren’t aware of. You can’t fix what you don’t know about. Be grateful they came forward, rather than deciding to say nothing and just go somewhere else.

The last time I addressed TCIA (Winter Management Conference 2006), I spoke about one of my clients who is one of the leading property casualty insurance companies in the country. To refresh your memory, they have been in business sense 1950 and now have more than 2,900 associates working at corporate and more than 1,000 working in the field as Field Claims Representatives. From their humble beginnings, they have grown to a $3 billion corporation earning 11 cents on every dollar taken in. I find that to be a pretty amazing number considering the amount of hurricanes we have had in the last few years. After I had presented my programs, one of their senior executives asked me what I found to be the most interesting fact I had discovered about their company while I was doing my research to prepare for the engagements. I replied, “That’s easy – you don’t advertise. You’re doing over $3 billion in sales with no advertising.”

He responded, “Our claims department is our advertising; that is where we shine. Our Field Claims Representatives are our Promise Keepers. An insurance policy is only as good as how well the Promise is backed-up. We believe that if you deliver exceptional service, you don’t need to advertise; people will hear about you.”

The most powerful and trusted advertising in the world is “Word of Mouth.” Everyone in your organization should know the basic rules for delivering exceptional customer service. Right now, put down this article and write down what you expect your people to do every time they go out on a job, point by point. Then after you write it down, go out in the field and ask your people what they feel they should be doing to deliver exceptional customer service. The difference in your list and
their list will astound you. How do you expect your people to fully accomplish something they can’t completely identify?

You are trying to establish a brand that will keep your customers and lead you to more. Before leaving every job, maybe you should have your people pull out a laminated card that they carry in their pocket and mentally check off in their mind that they have delivered on each and every point listed. Maybe you should have them pull out that card each time before reporting to a job to remind them what they will be delivering. Maybe, when you are out on a job site, you should walk up to one of your people and ask them what point number 1, or 2, or 6 is on the card and if they get it right, hand them $20. I can go on and on with suggestions on how to establish a uniform code of excellence in your organization.

What are the simple things to look for that will upset a customer? Is it tire tracks in their yard, trash or debris left behind, crushed flowers, etc., etc. Your people know how to fight the emerald ash borer, the Asian long-horned beetle and sudden oak death – things that will kill or damage a tree. But do they fully understand things that will kill a client?

Successful companies do what unsuccessful companies won’t. Successful companies don’t just arrive at the top of the heap. They have a discipline coupled with boundless energy and decide to make things happen. We are all creatures of habit. The problem is, some of those habits could be greatly improved upon. It’s your daily habits that will determine your future. I’m not going to get into helping you identify your bad and good habits today, though that is an excellent exercise for improving your company. Today, I am going to share with you just one short story that could have a profound, positive effect on your future.

A man approached the late JP Morgan, held up an envelope and said, “Sir, in my hand I hold a guaranteed formula for success, which I will gladly sell you for $25,000.” JP Morgan replied, “Sir, I do not know what is in the envelope, however if you show me, and I like it, I give you my word as a gentleman that I will pay you what you ask.” The man agreed to the terms and handed over the envelope. JP Morgan opened it and took out a single sheet of paper. He gave it one look, just a mere glance, and then handed the single sheet of paper back to the man. JP Morgan then paid the gentleman $25,000.

Here is what was written on the paper.

1. Every morning, write a list of the things that need to be done that day.
2. Do them

Would you pay someone $25,000 for that advice? Most people wouldn’t. The problem is, by not following the advice, it will cost you a great deal more.

Every morning you hand out a list of jobs to be completed by your people. The assumption you have is they will complete those jobs in the manner you feel will be acceptable to your client. The key word in the last sentence is “assumption.” Your people must know and comply with exceptional on every job and they can only do so if they fully understand what exceptional is.

The second point I want to make concerns change. Nobel Laureate and physicist Richard Feynman said that it was no coincidence that virtually all major discoveries in physics were made by those under the age of 25. When he was asked why, he concluded, “…you don’t know what you don’t know.” I guess another way you could put it is, when you are unaware of something that supposedly can’t be done … you go at it with a blind determination to see if it CAN be done.

Any time I do a strategic planning session for a company, I always ask them to make sure they have some of their younger talents in the room. If you want fresh, new ideas, I think it is only appropriate to have fresh, new, young employees in the room sharing their ideas. You won’t hear statements from them like, “that’s the way we’ve always done it,” because they’ve never done it. What you will hear are challenging statements like, “Why?” or “Why not?” or “Why don’t we try?”

I am not saying that the veterans in a company should be “put out to pasture” when it comes to coming up with ideas that will improve it. I think experience is an incredibly powerful resource. Intellectual capital is one of the most valuable assets of any company. What I am saying is, don’t discount an idea from a young associate by saying, “What could they know, they are...
too young to know anything, they haven’t been here long enough to know how we do it at our company.”

In the mid 1800s the head of the Patent Office in Washington recommended that the Patent Office be closed, because everything that could have been invented had already been invented. That same Patent Office rejected the patent applied for by the Wright Brothers for their flying machine, stating they believed machines that were heavier than air could not fly. Someone forgot to tell the Wright Brothers. They just kept asking themselves “Why?” “Why not?” “Why don’t we try?” – and aren’t we glad they did.

Our young ones have grown up in a world of speed, multi-tasking, constantly changing technology where virtually anything is accessible through the Internet. I don’t care what they don’t know, I want to hear what they want to change, don’t like, think is stupid or is a waste of time. If you want to stay young, then stay curious and keep asking WHY, WHY NOT, WHY DON’T WE TRY?

Socrates was once asked by a young man how he could gain wisdom. Socrates asked the young man to accompany him while he took a stroll around a lake and he would discuss the matter with him. Socrates then asked the lad to follow him into the lake where they were standing in water that was chest deep. This seemed odd to the young man, but who was he to question Socrates. Then all of a sudden, Socrates grabbed the young man and pushed him down until his head was fully submerged under the water and held him there. At first, the young man thought this was just a joke, so he didn’t fight back. Socrates held him longer and longer until the lad panicked and started struggling to free himself from Socrates grasp. He was running out of air, his lungs were aching for oxygen, his heart was pounding and his adrenalin was sky-high.

Socrates finally released his grasp so the young man could emerge. Grasping for air, panic-stricken from the ordeal, the young man screamed out in a barely intelligible voice, “What are you doing?” Socrates calmly replied, “When you desire wisdom with the same intensity that you desired to breathe, then nothing will stop you from getting it.”

I can share with you the wisdom of the habits I think are essential to being successful. I can put them in a format that will help make them a part of your daily life. But, until you have the burning desire to learn, change, adapt and commit to them, this will only be a futile exercise. To paraphrase Socrates, “When you have the desire to become successful with the same intensity that you have to breathe, then nothing will stop you from getting it.”

Robert Stevenson is a former All-American athlete in football, having attended Georgia Tech on a full scholarship. He is scheduled to speak this month on “The Leadership Formula” at TCIA’s Winter Management Conference, February 8-12, in the Bahamas.
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By Rebecca Fater

There was a time when customer demand made it well worthwhile for Ohio-based Rayco to manufacture six different tow-behind stump grinders, ranging in size and horsepower. But since the self-propelled stump grinders exploded onto the scene, Rayco’s product lineup has taken quite a different turn.

“The tow-behind is something that’s kind of dying on the vine,” says J.R. Bowling, vice president of the family-operated business, which now offers five self-propelled stump grinders, built with their own engine and power steering. “We’re down to three (tow-behind) models right now, and we’re probably going to stay around that level.”

Bowling tracks the history of this trend back to about 1998, when Rayco introduced its RG50 model and competitors responded with their own new products ranging from 40 to 50 horsepower.

“That’s when tow-behinds really started backing off on their number of unit sales versus self-propelled,” says Bowling. “Once they came on the market strong, they’ve been everybody’s bread and butter since.”

There are many reasons customers are looking for self-propelled units these days, the powertrain being chief among them, naturally, as it allows the grinder to drive directly to the stump without needing a truck or towing vehicle to back them up to location. And unlike tow-behinds, which can require that vehicle to reposition the grinder frequently as the stump is gnawed away, a self-propelled unit can handle the task quickly and easily.

“You can reposition them in a matter of seconds if you need to,” says Morey. “Every time you want to move (a tow-behind) around, you have to get in (the vehicle), pull it ahead or back it up.”

Then there’s the accessibility factor. While your tow-behind grinder may have no trouble squeezing through the client’s garden gate, your truck may be two or three feet too wide to tow the grinder the 50 yards beyond the gate where the stump is located.

“Today’s self-propelled machines are usually pretty compact,” says Bowling. “They can get themselves into a lot of job sites where you couldn’t get a convention-
al tow-behind machine attached to a truck, because of the terrain or access to a gate. So the earning potential is higher, because you can simply get the machine to more stumps.”

Most of Rayco’s self-propelled machines are also sold with an optional lifting bar, which allows the unit to be lifted by a crane and set down in a client’s backyard – particularly useful for those clients who live or work in difficult-to-access urban areas, says Earl Gress, service manager at Rayco. “It’s not so easy (in an urban area) with a towable, because you have to send a tow vehicle in with it,” he says.

Rayco last year unveiled its RG 1645 self-propelled unit, with a 44 hp Kubota turbo diesel engine and a design that has the machine on a small platform with a low center of gravity. Rayco also has two self-propelled models scheduled to debut this year: the RG 70, which will feature a 66 hp Kubota engine, and the RG 100, with a 100 hp Kubota. But their power won’t get in the way of their usefulness, Bowling promises. “They all fit through a 36-inch garden gate,” he says.

Rayco and Bandit both feature a hydrostatic system on some self-propelled models, which Morey describes as a much more efficient method for engaging the cutter wheel.

“It eliminates the belts that need to be maintained, so it reduces maintenance costs,” he says. “The hydraulic system is easy to maintain. And it eliminates the need for a clutch engagement system. Just hit a button… and it engages the cutter wheel.”

Bowling and Morey agree that customers should assess their own needs before making a decision between a tow-behind, self-propelled or even a walk-behind manual unit that is transported from job to job via a truck or trailer bed.

“They need to look at how many stumps they’re going to be grinding a day; what are the sizes of the stumps; and are they going to be out in rough conditions?” says Morey. “Do they want something that’s going to be quick with a little more horsepower, or something smaller that is going to do a lot of stumps but take a little longer?”

For Bowling, the horsepower and the choice between two- or four-wheel drive is a good place for the customer to start asking questions.

“With a four-wheel drive, you have two primary advantages,” he says. “You can deal with difficult terrain. And the four-wheel drive is really handy for pushing your way through that pile of chips you create in grinding the stump.”

The self-propelled units are often much pricier, but for good reason – and for good return, Bowling adds. “You’re absolutely going to spend more on a self-propelled, because the (parts) that make the machine move itself make for more complex electronics. But, at the same time, the machine becomes more versatile and has a higher earning potential for the buyer.”
productivity over the self-propelled,” he says. J.P. Carlton introduced its first high-horsepower self-propelled that year, and that’s when everything started to change, Bird adds. The company now offers nine self-propelled machines, from 27 horsepower through 170, including the SP7015TRX shown here, which is also available in a wheeled version.

Despite the heavier demand for self-propelled units, J.P. Carlton still makes four tow-behind models, ranging from 60 to 100 horsepower.

“We targeted what we thought would be the largest market segment first. People want something that’s versatile and can do it all.”

Mark Rau, Morbark.

“Most of our tow-behind customers are previous loyal customers who are used to that technology and want to stick with it,” Bird says.

The opposite is true at Morbark, the Michigan-based manufacturer who jumped into the stump grinding market as recently as 2005. The company decided – at least for the short-term – not to include a tow-behind model in its offerings at all.

“We did our research prior to entering the market,” says Mark Rau, a commercial regional manager with Morbark. “We targeted what we thought would be the largest market segment first. People want something that’s versatile and can do it all.”

Morbark currently offers four self-propelled units, ranging from 34 hp to 86 hp, two on tracks and two on rubber tires. The D76 SP, a wheeled model, and the D86 SP, on tracks, both feature a hydrostatic motor and transmission and “long-boom technology” that maintains a full-boom arc swing regardless of the cutting depth of the job. Both fit through a 36-inch gate, and both are operated via wireless remote control.

However, the fact there isn’t a tow-behind that carries the Morbark name doesn’t mean there never will be, Rau says.

“I would not say never, but it’s really not a priority at this point in the game,” he says.

Vermeer Manufacturing Co. launched two new self-propelled machines at TCI EXPO in Milwaukee last November: the SC652 and SC1152. With 65 hp and 110 hp engines, respectively, the units “put a bookend” on either side of the SC852 and its 85 hp engine.

“We listened to our customers and heard that they want to get more horsepower into the backyard,” says Todd Roorda of Vermeer. “Now we offer a wider range of productivity as well as price. That’s definitely the direction we’re going.”

Both machines also feature a cutting range greater than any other company’s product in the industry, says Roorda.

But Vermeer, as with Rayco and Bandit, know there are still some customers whose interests do not lie with the self-propelled – whether the reason is budget or need.

“Self-propelleds are gaining more steam, but there are still customers out there who want or need (tow-behinds) – or their job site doesn’t require a self-propelled unit,” Roorda says. “So we still have both in our lineup.”

That attitude sums up the target market behind the single stump grinder offered by Husqvarna Professional Products, Inc. – a manual, operator-propelled grinder that has attracted buyers since 2000.

“We chose to stay in the operator-propelled (units) because we’re more into...
homeowner operations (which often require) a more portable product," says Sean Dwyer, product manager. “You’re going to be somewhat limited in the size of what you do. You wouldn’t want to tackle an 8-foot stump with it.”

Flexible enough for landscapers or tree care crews with only the occasional need for stump grinding, Husky’s SG13H weighs just over 250 pounds, features durable carbide teeth and an adjustable handle that an operator can lower incrementally as the stump is ground away to maintain a stable, comfortable stance throughout the job. Its simplicity is a big selling point, Dwyer says.

“There’s nothing difficult about how it operates,” he says. “Once you get into your position and hit your throttle control, you’ve got a rotating wheel with carbide teeth and you slowly gnaw at your stump. (When you finish) you can throw this into

“We listened to our customers and heard that they want to get more horsepower into the backyard,”

Todd Roorda, Vermeer
the pickup truck. Two people can pick it up.”

Jeff Craft, president of Miller Machine, dba PTO Stump Grinders, in Indiana, has manufactured grinder attachments for tractors since approximately 1992 and has since expanded into attachments for skid steers. The fact his units don’t come with an engine of their own – which, inevitably, have the potential to break down at some point – is simply one less item for the customer to worry about.

“Even if the skid steer died, you can detach it from the stump grinder,” he says. Ultimately, Craft adds, tree care companies and other customers are going to benefit from a stump grinder, whether it’s self-propelled, manual or tow-behind, given the pace of business these days and the economy. “The five-man tree crews are going down the tubes,” he says. “Now, you use a skid steer to pick up a tree, and then put it in the chipper. So a couple of guys with the skid steer and the right (grinder) can do what five men did before.”

But one Illinois manufacturer who has stayed loyal to manual walk-behind grinders is just about to change its ways. USPraxis, Inc. has plans to unveil a 24-horsepower self-propelled unit this summer.

“There are a lot of people who want that (self-propelled) feature in their stump grinders,” says Jim Cornelius, president. “For the market that we serve, we tend to have the more portable units that aren’t that heavy, so they’re pretty easy to move around. That’s probably why (some customers) want a smaller unit that’s a little lighter; if you ever have a problem, you can put it in the back of your truck and take off.”

The new self-propelled grinder will have a 16-inch-diameter flywheel “that will be able to take out a three-foot-diameter stump in about 15 minutes,” Cornelius says. “The bigger the flywheel, the faster you can do it.”

The weight of the new model, however – about 700 pounds – made the jump to self-propelled necessary. “It’s going to be difficult to push into place. The bigger the machine, the more arduous it is to move back and forth,” he says.

The company also features 9 hp and 13 hp units – manual walk-behinds – that have been well received. “They are really smooth operating units and they’re well balanced,” Cornelius says.

But USPraxis hopes to attract more of the commercial market’s interest with its new unit. “You can’t satisfy everybody,” he adds.

Even Rayco, which has turned its focus to self-propelled models, saw enough value in the tow-behind market to come out recently with the new RG 140DXH tow-behind, which features a hydrostatic cutter wheel drive with “Quick-Stop” cutter wheel and more.

Ultimately, the company’s lineup is driven by what the customer wants, Bowling says. We’d venture to say the same goes for the entire industry.
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When it comes to horticulture, it is not one darn thing after another that makes good plants go bad, but often the same darn thing over and over. These common mistakes are so familiar that we often despair as to whether customers will ever listen to us when we try to explain the best plant health care management practices. So, let’s turn it upside down to get their (and our) attention. This 10-step program for assisted herbicide would please Dr. Treevorkian, as he helps trees die, and just maybe it will make the point about good horticulture by perversely focusing on what we should NOT be doing.

Plant in the wrong site
This is one of Dr. Treevorkian’s favorites and he apparently has many converts. How else can we explain the widespread planting of Taxus (yew) in heavy clay soils with poor internal soil drainage? Talk about death and Taxus!

Give Dr. T. that grim reaper grin by planting acid-loving pin oak and river birch in high pH alkaline soils, and watch that hardscape budget go up in smoke years later when you have to tear the trees out once the roots explore beyond the root ball into the native soil. Choose mountain ash for parking lot deserts instead of the cool soils it prefers Japanese maples? The next “grate” street tree – I once saw them on a San Antonio street, in pots, sizzling away.

Plant pestiferous trees
A linden allee that leads up to a rose garden? A dual paradise for Japanese beetles, but more like “The Other Place” for a plant health manager forbidden to use insecticides. Crabapples defoliated year after year by apple scab in Midwest landscapes with moist springs? ‘Hopa’ crabapple is more like “No Hopa’ due to scab susceptibility. Collectively, we all know a lot about which landscape plants are highly susceptible to pests and diseases in our landscapes and streetscapes, so let’s share and learn and teach each other so that our ignorance does not become Dr. Treevorkian’s bliss. American elms and ashes and chestnuts, oh my!

Change that grade: Use my D9 Biotype
Years ago, a prominent green industry organization illustrated the cover of their membership manual with a picture of a mature tree with its canopy mirrored in size and shape by its root system. Dr. T howled with glee! This was obviously a disconnect between plant people and printers. It reminds us, though, of the common misconception of the depth of the feeding roots of trees.

They are indeed quite shallow, with one science-based estimate that a 70-foot tree typically has more than 50 percent of its roots within 6 to 12 inches of the soil surface and more than 90 percent of the roots
within three feet of the surface. That reality, based on the requirement of oxygen for root metabolism, means that adding soil over the roots or burying the root system when planting is bad news, unless, we want to help the plant to die an unnecessary early death from decline, stem-girdling roots and all.

**Squeeze the trees!**

Pay me now or pay me later. Imagine a row of towering spruce for a future screen on each side of a property. Make a big splash early and plant them, say three feet apart – your job looks tidy and full. You have good intentions of thinning over time, but who has the time? Fast forward a few decades and see what happened. All too often, the root systems are competing, the spruce are declining and everyone asks why. Cytospora canker and other stress diseases are there to be sure, but “confusing you is just the nature of his game.” The root of the problem is not providing enough room for development in those childhood and teenage years, and you reap Dr. T’s harvest in the long run.

**pHooey!**

pH matters. But don’t worry – be happy. That’s for the next guy – and Dr. T. – to deal with. All too often we plant living time bombs. For want of a simple and inexpensive soil test and an even simpler reading of the soils in terms of which kinds of plants are thriving in an area, we end up planting acid-loving plants in alkaline soils. Later we make all sorts of efforts to undo the problem, from soil and stem injections and implants, to foliar iron sprays to green the plant up for the few days it takes for a big event, all because we would not spend a few bucks on a pH test on a five- or six-fig-

**pH-related manganese chlorosis on maple.**

ure landscape job. Don’t guess – soil test!

**Salts are the spice of death: Season until well-done**

Dr. T. works in many ways. Over fertilizing is just one; road salts is another. If a little is good, then doubling and tripling the right amount must be twice or thrice better, right? Water works in wondrous ways, and if fertilizer salts are too high, root cells regulate water by literally losing it. Burn, baby burn. And those road salts: we all know that white pines are not for the white lines (of high-speed freeways and projectile salt spray), so Dr. T should never fool us on this one. But take a look as you drive home; white pine coffins to come.

**Tree topping for sale**

We still see ads in Yellow Pages and now on the Web touting this Treeworkian-esque practice. Not too inspiring, and good for a few yucks at a bygone age of misguided arboricultural understanding. We laugh – until we cry. Until we look around and see that the habits that led to this practice live on tree by tree, street by street. Horticulturists, cure thyselfs!

**Girdles ‘R Us!**

Often plant diagnosticians slave to come up with explanations as to why a young tree has declined and died. We cycle through everything from herbicide injury to a raised water table, from contrails to flooding the market with bad loans. Then someone thinks to get a little dirty, notes that the non-degradable wire that held the root ball together, once loose, has tightened as the stem grew in girth and now is blocking that singular way that roots get food – from the living connection that ties the food-producing leaves to the food-requiring roots. The roots decline, the top then dies and we are left with the fact that simple removal of these wires when planting could have helped the tree to live instead of die.

**Employ Dr. Treeworkians of the soil**

One of the myths regarding fungal pathogens that cause root diseases of plants
is that it is an either/or situation. In fact, it
is more complex. In landscape situations,
for example, water mold fungi such as
Pythium and Phytophthora are likely pres-
ent. The question is whether or not they
hold the balance of power over the root
system.

It is a constant tug of war between these
pathogens that love low-oxygen environ-
ments and the roots of plants with variable
tolerance of such conditions, and of course
the entire physical, chemical and biological
milieu of the soil. The meaning of this is
that whether or not root disease becomes
significant to overall root system and over-
all plant health depends, in a way, on
everything you have done to date, from
your first matching plant to site selection
decision to your most recent maintenance
practice. Limit stress and you and your
customers, rather than Dr. Treevorkian,
will have the last laugh.

**Death eating a cracker**

Imagine such a thing. And make sure
you provide adequate water for plantings.
Proper irrigation practices are the ultimate
green thumb – or in the case of Dr.
Treevorkian – brown thumb kill.

So it goes, as ways to kill a tree go on,
you might say, ad infinitum. And ad nause-
um, when we think of other
Treevorkianisms. His “Sure Fire Rules of
Plant Selection,” which include the
Companion Plant Tip of the Day – walnuts
and tomatoes. Or one of Dr. Treevorkian’s
Secrets of the Soil recommendations of
gypsum to break up clay soils in the
Midwest and Northeast. Gyps-um – exact-
ly as it sounds, Or, Dr. T’s Rules of Squirt
Gun Botany: “Read one Pesticide Label –
You’ve Read ‘Em All.”

Jim Chatfield is an associate professor
in Horticulture and Crop Science,
Department of Plant Pathology, at Ohio
State University Extension.

For more on Dr. Treevorkian, join
Chatfield for this talk and other focusing
on proper horticultural practices at the
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- Honey Locust treated with one application of Lepitect (left) and untreated control with significant damage from Bagworms.

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- Linden treated with one application of Lepitect (left) adjacent to two untreated Linden trees with severe Japanese beetle defoliation.

photo courtesy of Jas Horva, Ohio State University

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TCIA launches webinar series

TCIA is pleased to offer the convenience and flexibility of a new learning tool – the TCIA Webinar Series.

These educational and training webinars will enable companies to educate a large number of employees at once, reduce travel expenses, and maintain consistent levels of productivity by eliminating time out of the office. All you need to participate is a computer with an Internet connection for the visuals and a phone to call in for the audio portion. As an added benefit, TCIA members receive reduced pricing for all sessions.

What is a webinar?

Short for Web-based seminar, a webinar is a presentation, lecture, workshop or seminar that is transmitted over the Web. A key feature of a webinar is its interactive elements – the ability to give, receive and discuss information. Contrast this with a webcast, which is just a transmission over the Web similar to a TV transmission that does not allow interaction between the presenter and the audience.

The TCIA Webinar Series allows viewers to ask questions, see others ask questions, and follow up on points with the presenter.

Upcoming TCIA webinars

- **Feb. 3** Guy Gruenberg – Surviving Tough Economic Times
- **Feb. 24** John O’Shay – Writing Simple Contracts
- **Feb. 26** Brian Hanson – Migrating Customers from Spray to Plant Health Care
- **March 3** John Iurka – Knowing Your Cost Drivers
- **March 11** Tim Walsh – Setting Up an Employee Orientation Program
- **March 18** John Iurka – How to Price by Knowing Costs
- **April 8** Tim Walsh – Setting Up a Safety Program
- **April 21** Mary McVicker – Developing a Monthly Operating Budget for Your Tree Business

TCIA webinars are offered in two formats: Live and On Demand. When you “attend” live, you can learn and participate in the discussion as it occurs. You can type questions during and after the presentation. On-Demand webinars allow you to access the education anytime, anywhere, at your convenience.

For those of you who missed the January webinars, Itmar Chalif with Atlantic Capital Solutions gave an informative presentation on “Financing Your Business Expansion” and Tim Ard with Forest Applications Training used all of his high tech tools for an interactive session on “Chain Saw Maintenance.” Both are available for viewing on the TCIA webinar series archived Web site.

For upcoming seminars, see the list in the box at left.

Enrollment is limited and registration is required.

Some will be presented free of charge. Most will be available for $24.95 for TCIA members and $44.95 for non-members.

Additional dates and courses will be added on an on-going basis, so check tcia.org regularly for updates and changes.

To sign up, go to the “Meetings” tab on the www.tcia.org home page and click on “Webinar Series.”

Robert Felix Memorial Scholarship deadline is May 1

The Robert Felix Memorial Scholarship applications for 2009 are now available. This scholarship is one of several programs supported by the Robert Felix Memorial Fund, a named fund within the endowment of the Tree Research and Education Endowment (TREE) Fund, established and supported by TCIA and its members.

The Robert Felix Memorial Scholarship is non-repeating, but can be applied for annually. The award, in the amount of $3,000, will be paid one half in each semester of the 2009-2010 school year.

A successful scholarship candidate must be pursuing a career in arboriculture or urban forestry, be enrolled in a bachelor’s or an associate’s degree program and meet all the criteria listed with the online application form.

Complete the online application at www.treefund.org/scholarships.htm and return all requested letters in one packet by May 1 to: Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund, 552 S. Washington St. Suite 109, Naperville, IL 60540 or Bduke@treefund.org.
Altec/OSHA Alliance in news

TCIA Associate Member Altec Industries, Inc. made the front page of OSHA’s December 2008 quarterly newsletter “Alliance Quarterly Review.”

Through an Alliance with OSHA, Altec provided training seminars on “Safe Operation of Insulated Aerial Devices,” “Digger Derrick Safety Training” and “Mobile Crane Training” to more than 180 OSHA staff and other safety and health professionals throughout the U.S. during 2007-2008. Altec created the seminars, which are based on the training materials developed for Altec’s own Sentry Program.

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Member Benefit: Elavon provides credit card processing services at a reduced rate for TCIA members. Also, for every transaction, Elavon sends a .05 percent royalty to TCIA to help offset the costs of developing new safety products and services.

Requirements: To begin taking advantage of this member benefit, contact Elavon at 1-800-546-1831 or e-mail Elavon at merchantinquiry@elavon.com. Please make sure you let them know you are a TCIA member in order to receive your special member pricing.

To learn more about how your company can benefit from this and other TCIA Affinity Programs, please call 1-800-733-2622.
TCIA invites all its members to gather in Washington, D.C., July 12-14, 2009, for the 2009 Legislative Day on the Hill. TCIA has once again teamed with The Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) as hosts of the 2009 Legislative Day on the Hill. PLANET represents approximately 4,400 green industry service provider companies and suppliers nationwide that specialize in lawn care, landscape installation and management, and interior plantscaping. Together, TCIA and PLANET hope to strengthen the impact its members have in raising awareness of crucial green industry issues to Washington lawmakers.

The event provides tree and landscape professionals with an opportunity to unite their efforts and their message as they visit with their congressional representatives on Capitol Hill to discuss issues that affect the industry. Attendees will receive an issues briefing before their Hill visits, and first-time participants receive special attention and assistance from veterans of the event. There is also a limited need for tree work at Historic Congressional Cemetery.

For more information, contact Mark Garvin at 1-800-733-2622 or garvin@tcia.org.

TCIA lobbyist Josh Ulman (left) presents the 2008 TCIA Legislator of the Year Award to Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC). Wilson has been a tireless advocate on behalf of worker safety in the tree care industry. As a member of the House Education and Workforce Committee, he has partnered with TCIA to convince OSHA that arborists aren’t loggers and arboriculture deserves its own safety standard. He personally called the head of OSHA to express worker safety concerns, and his staff led the way on two bipartisan letters from House members to OSHA that requested immediate action. In addition, he has been a strong supporter of our position on the ongoing issue of exemptions for returning H-2B visa workers.
2009

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ALB quarantine expands in Massachusetts

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in January expanded the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) quarantine area in Massachusetts to include additional portions of Worcester County. The expanded ALB quarantine area in Worcester includes an additional two square miles, now totaling 64 square miles. The move came after tree crews clearing downed trees after the December ice storm found infested trees outside the quarantine area.

On a separate but related note, state and local politicians, including Lt. Governor Timothy Murray, have begun to ask citizens for help in organizing a tree planting movement to replace the more than 20,000 trees the U.S. Forestry Service is planning to cut down in the area.

“Government can’t do this alone,” Murray and James P. McGovern, U.S. Representative for the 3rd Massachusetts District, said in a letter to the Worcester Telegram and Gazette January 14, 2009. “These are difficult economic times. Government budgets at all levels are tight and will get tighter. Cities and towns are struggling just to maintain basic public services and don’t have the resources the reforestation will require.”

They pointed to similar reforestation efforts, first in the middle of the 19th century to mitigate the impact of the Industrial Revolution, again in the 20th century to replace thousands of trees lost to Dutch elm disease and in the wake of the devastating hurricane of 1938 and a tornado in 1953.

“We challenge the community to commit itself to planting 30,000 trees over the next five years,” they wrote.

On August 5, 2008, APHIS confirmed the first state identification of ALB in Worcester County. On September 4, 2008, a Federal Order was issued, which established a quarantine area of 33 square miles. On November 10, 2008, a second Federal Order was issued, adding an additional 29 square miles to the quarantine area.

Crews began cutting the infested trees in early January, after the ALB larvae went dormant for the winter.

Three sections of the city were the initial focus for tree removal as workers from Northern Tree Service of Palmer, Mass., and Mayer Tree Service of Essex, Mass., both TCIA member companies, began removing trees in a 2.2-square-mile area in hopes of halting the beetle’s spread.

National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week Feb. 22-27

Land managers, aquatic specialists, scientists, educators and public policy officials are gathering in the nation’s capital February 22-27 for the 10th annual National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week (NIWAW) – a series of meetings focused on educating federal policy makers and elected officials about the devastating impact of invasive weeds on the environment and economy.

Across the nation, the most significant invasive weeds are spreading at approximately 15 percent per year. This rate of spread will result in a doubling of infested acres in less than five years. According to a recent Cornell University report, the economic impact of invasive plants and weeds in the U.S. is estimated at $34.7 billion annually.

National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week is coordinated by the Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition, a broad-based group of public and private stakeholders concerned with the prevention and management of noxious and invasive weeds.

Featured sessions, presentations and meetings that may be of interest to tree care companies include:

- Invasive species management and the federal budget process;
- An overview of pending invasive species bills and policies;
- The outlook for the new Administration and the 111th Congress;
- Federal and private grants for invasive species management.

For more information, visit http://niwaw.allenmm.com or www.wssa.net.

National Tree Trust founder Trammell Crow dies at 94

Trammell Crow, a poor bookkeeper’s son who became the world’s biggest commercial real estate developer, died Jan 15, 2009 at age 94 after a long illness.

Crow died on his family farm in East Texas. No cause of death was given, but his
family had announced in 2002 that he had Alzheimer’s disease.

In its founder’s lifetime, the Trammell Crow Co. built more than 100 million square feet of commercial buildings. His company’s skyscrapers reshaped skylines in the 1980s in cities stretching from Charlotte, N.C., to Atlanta, San Francisco and San Diego.

He also founded the National Tree Trust and turned the family farm in East Texas into a tree nursery.

Founded in 1990, the mission of the National Tree Trust is to promote healthy communities by providing resources that educate and empower people to grow and care for urban and community forests. By partnering our neighborhoods, businesses, environmental agencies and conservation groups, the National Tree Trust helps communities use trees to improve our homes, our health and the quality of our lives.
Recently I was fortunate to have a lesson in the ecological stages of trees with respect to some of their associates.

One day while collecting photos of tree cavities, I came across a white pine. As I understand it, this pine among pines had suffered a serious wound to the trunk many years ago. The tree then set boundaries separating wood present at the time of the wounding and wood that would form after the time of the wounding.

With respect to those boundaries, carpenter ants must have created galleries within the boundaries of compartmentalization. The work of the ants reduced the moisture content, thus stalling rot.

Then one day, pileated woodpeckers, looking for the ants, created many cavities. I was amazed of the fine workmanship of the birds.

My client and I agreed to make a snag out of the tree. Then one day it happened. While looking at the tree, three flying squirrels came from inside the tree. Turns out they love to be photographed! I now have at least five new friends, which I feed regularly – pecans. They love pecans. Just recently, five came out, a pecan in each of their mouths.

It’s wonderful to understand these complex interactions between trees and their associates. It feels good to understand how a wound to a tree, through some highly ordered processes, can someday be a condominium for flying squirrels. I hope to be able to see and understand other features with the respect to the ecological stages of trees and compartmentalization. We will continue to manage the ecological stages of trees with respect for their associates in mind.

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**Portle & Palm** Injection Tips
FOR CONIFERS AND PALMS
Two additional injection tips, the Portle Tip (for conifers) and the new Palm Tip, are designed to work with the unique vascular structure of conifers and palms. Now you can effectively protect conifers against Pine Wilt, treat Palms for manganese deficiencies, and more.

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