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emember when you were a little kid, and you wondered if you would ever be big enough to stay up and watch the big peoples’ shows? Remember, when you couldn’t imagine what it would be like to be able to drive; and then to own your own car? Remember how far away junior high felt and high school didn’t even seem on the radar? Remember how frustrating it was when your curfew was earlier than your friend’s or your big brother’s, and you didn’t think you’d EVER be considered a grown-up? As you get older and time goes by more quickly, you wonder what the hurry was – because now you’re there. It’s a reality. Time has passed, you’ve matured, and what you just couldn’t wait for is part of your normal life.

When I think about the tree care industry, I think about an industry that is maturing tremendously. We have a steadily growing body of knowledge. We have equipment that has made unbelievable technological strides in the last 15 years. We have professional designations for individuals. We have companies who are employing best business practices and becoming accredited. We have consumers who are beginning to learn to hire a professional arborist. We have a political action committee helping to carry our voice to Washington. We have products and services delivered by CDs and DVDs. We have Action Alerts for state and federal legislative issues delivered at a moment’s notice by e-mail blasts or fax blasts. We have Web sites that keep us up to date on the latest events, research developments, and meetings. We have branding that sets us apart from other organizations and green industries. We have an endowed Chair at a leading University. We can talk to each other by wireless blackberries that weren’t even around three years ago.

Do you realize that the majority of these changes have occurred in the last decade; many in the last three to five years? Think back to 30 years ago. I wonder if we could imagine that our industry would have all these pieces in place; that we would now be called upon by government for help in building new, reasonable regulation and interpreting existing regulation properly? I wonder if we could have imagined a partnership with OSHA where we would be in an Alliance to build programming and educational materials to help lower the accident and fatality rate? I wonder if we could even imagine that our membership would be in the thousands instead of the hundreds?

I see a future for this industry where credibility is a given. I see a world where consumers know to seek an accredited tree care company and where that designation is recognized by all 50 states. I see a world where insurance premiums are lower for those companies who are accredited, because they are meeting best safety practices AND best business practices. I see a world where arborists are consulted by landscape architects BEFORE designs are created; where partnerships exist across green industry professionals for the best outcome for a landscape. I see a world where a tree care company could not conceive of being in this industry without participating in the only trade association to represent their interests and establish best practices – TCIA. I see a world where arborists are respected for the unique knowledge that they bring to the table and where our behavior is consistently professional and ethical.

The reason that I can see this world is because I see the evolution that has been occurring in recent years, and I see the gleam in arborists’ eyes when you paint this picture for them. There is a hunger for knowledge; a hunger for credibility; and a hunger to be recognized as professionals. Our community is recognizing that it takes action on our part, not waiting for others to recognize us. We are stepping up to the plate by establishing and adhering to best practices and are now willing to show proof of that to the consumer. We are taking our rightful place among industry on Capitol Hill. We are recognizing that to be valued by others, we must first put in place all the pieces of a true profession and be willing to be monitored by that.

The rewards are indescribable for our businesses and for us as individuals. I’m watching you step up to the plate. I know you can do this, and I’m here to help you continue to take even bigger leaps than you have in the last decade.

It’s time. You’re worth it. And I believe in you.

Cynthia Mills, CAE
Publisher
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Tree Care Industry Volume XVI Number 3

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Advanced rigging gear and software at Sherrill.

ISC Spring Lock Aluminum Blocks
Spring lock blocks are popular among riggers for their high strength-to-weight ratio and quick-twist rope access. Solid aluminum alloy cheek plates, bushing, and sheave are supported by stainless steel axles. These blocks were designed by Denny McMoorehouse of Where, founder of the popular work, rock, and rescue tool manufacturer DMM. Denny is often referred to as "The Wizard of Iron" and is well known for his attention to quality and toughness. For those concerned about aluminum not withstand the punishment of steel, we have no record of a fracture complaint in 3 years of production. Spring lock blocks have bead check plates to protect running lines, and large sheaves to minimize bend in rigging lines (providing 4:1 up to 9:1 ratios).

EYE SLING
The eye sling is perhaps the most versatile tether for rigging hardware. A block or other device is secured within the sling’s eye and a chokes hitch such as running bowline, cow hitch, or timber hitch is tied using the other end. Although one must know knots to use an eye sling, there’s no arguing its efficient simplicity.

TENEX (A) - This rope’s construction is stronger and more flexible than others because of its braid woven, hollow construction knots and hitches can be tied and untied quickly. Since there’s no core to this rope, abrasion wear can be easily monitored.

DOUBLE BRAID (B) - The tightly woven outer jacket of this rope helps protect the load-bearing inner core from abrasion. Although long used by arborists for eye slings, we find the double braids use dwindling compared to its stronger and easily tied Tenex cousins.

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By Jeff Pfeil

It all started with a call from one of the biggest custom homebuilders in our area. He asked if I would serve as a consultant on a construction project where some trees needed to be moved because they were located in the proposed site for a home. They wanted me to decide which of the trees could be moved successfully using a tree spade. When I asked for directions, the project manager told me that it was at the top of Andesite Ridge, (elevation 9,000 ft.) in the Yellowstone Club, Big Sky, Mont., just an hour and a half from my office.

Upon arrival, I was greeted by the construction company’s project manager and three architects. I instantly knew these were very important trees. As the project manager showed me the trees, I realized that there was no way a tree spade was going to be of help. The trees were densely grouped in a forest. They were growing in 18 inches of reddish sandy topsoil, with rock below that. The trees were mostly Engelmann spruce and limber pine. When I told the group that a traditional tree spade was not a viable option, I lost the attention of the architects. I kept talking anyway. I mentioned that we had an air spade and I began to describe the notion of boxing up the tree balls and using a crane to lift the trees to their new locations. The architects were mesmerized, and said they’ve never heard of anything like that.

However, there was a problem with boxing up the tree balls. First, there was no crane access to almost half of the trees. Secondly, the trees ranged between 4 and 30 feet in height, growing within a few feet of each other. In order to keep enough root system to move one tree I would have to kill the four or five surrounding it.

After giving it some thought and reviewing integrated management of trees, shrubs and vines, I decided that I would propose using the air spades to expose the root systems of the forest floor and then carefully untangle the roots. We would prune where necessary and then transplant them bare root. I would transport them using a Gradall telehandler. I also included a temporary irrigation system in my proposal that would be used throughout the two-year long construction of the house.

We had about 40 trees to move, and of those eight to 10 of them were 20- to 30-feet tall. We rented two air compressors for a month and parked them on-site, filling them with a fuel tank that we installed in

Employees handle one of the nearly 40 trees that were cleared of soil, moved and replanted. Unless otherwise noted, all photos by Ross Lynne of Lynne Light Productions.
our service truck. I also called Rick Sweet at the manufacturer, Air Spade, and requested a random parts kit in case we had any problems with our spades.

Once my employees, Ross and Whit, began, the work went very smoothly. The sandy consistency of the soil allowed it to break apart quickly. The guys developed a technique for using two spades in tandem, which proved to be very efficient. One man would specifically excavate the root system of the tree, holding the tip of the lead spade 6 to 12 inches from the surface. The other would focus on evacuating the debris created by the leader. The tip of the second spade was held 18 to 24 inches from the surface and was focused more on clearing the surrounding area.

As anticipated, upon clearing the surface soil and exposing the root system of the first small tree, we saw a web of roots from the neighboring trees and everything was intertwined. To separate them, one man gently pulled the tree while the other two untangled the roots – pruning only when necessary. It worked beautifully. We continued for several days and eventually reached the section of 20- and 30-foot Engelmann spruce. Although the trees were tall, they were not broad. Since it was a forest setting, the broadest tree was approximately six feet in width with a dbh of 8 inches.

Once we reached the big trees, we brought in the Gradall. This was a crucial piece of equipment for this project. It was self-leveling, four-wheel drive, and four-wheel steering, so it could maneuver almost anywhere we wanted. It also had a 45-foot boom with forks and a man basket.

What we decided to try was primitive, but logical.

We tied a thick towel around the stem of the subject tree two-thirds from the top. Next we put a large tow strap in the choke position around the towel. We then applied light upward pressure to prevent the tree from falling over as we air excavated below. Once a tree became loose, we would apply a little more upward pressure to re-tighten the strap and then excavate some more. This was repeated until the tree was free from the entanglement of roots.

It surprised me how light the trees were without topsoil. Our choker strap idea worked perfectly. I was also surprised to see that the density of root systems in the forest floor had caused competition, limiting the amount of root system per tree to much less than that of a tree in an open setting. This may have also been a result of the soil and altitude.

After the trees were plucked out of the ground, it was imperative to replant them...
quickly so the roots didn't dry up. The architects wanted to use the trees to eliminate an old dirt road leading to the site. The road was only a few hundred feet from where the trees were, so we didn’t have far to go. The construction company had already scraped a few feet of topsoil from the site where the future pond would go, making a pile for us to use to plant the trees.

We couldn’t plant in the old roadway because the soil was just too compacted and there was rock just below the surface. I wanted to plant on top of the roadway, but the architects didn’t want a mounded look. Instead, we raised the grade of the whole area until it blended into the natural landscape. The roots were so fragile that we couldn’t just dig a hole and plant them as usual. We had to plant them as we brought the soil in, not after.

Using the Gradall, we left the tree that we were working on suspended, with the base of the root system about three inches from the ground. Then we used a skid steer and shovels to carefully backfill the prepared soil around the root ball. During the backfilling process, we watered the soil and poked into the air pockets for several
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minutes with the handles of our shovels to make sure that the soil was worked into the spider web of roots as much as possible. Then we braced the trees in place.

The roadway became a forest over a three week period. We successfully moved approximately 40 trees. We even moved some of the dead ones just to make it look natural. (The architects loved that one).

After the transplanting was complete, we began building the irrigation system.

We had a functioning well, but nothing else. We also knew this was going to be a temporary system that would only be used until the house was finished. First we erected four poles, each 12 feet in height, around the perimeter of the trees. We mounted broadcast sprinklers at the top of each pole and set them up on battery-operated timers programmed to run for half an hour, three times a day.

Next we installed a drip irrigation system above ground. We purchased a skid mounted lawn sprayer with a 150 gallon tank and hooked it up to the drip system. This allowed us to add vitamin supplements (Super thrive) each time the trees were watered. It also allowed us to gauge exactly how much water the trees were receiving. We created a log book to document when the trees were watered. This was one of the most important parts of the entire project because the success of any tree transplant depends heavily on the after care. The irrigation system took about a week to get installed and dialed in.

We completed the transplanting and irrigation about three weeks before the trees pushed their spring growth. Then we went on to air excavate and prune the roots of the remaining trees next to the future foundation of the house. All told the job took two men about five-and-a-half weeks with some help from a part-timer.

The pricing for this job was a sensitive area of consideration because I really wanted the job but I had no idea how long it was going to take. I decided that time and materials would be a safe and profitable approach. All of the heavy equipment was provided by the construction company. Each air spade would be billed out at $125 per hour, including an operator and fuel. Anytime the guys were on site but not operating the spades we charged our normal hourly labor rate, $55 per man, per hour. We did not charge for drive time. In an effort to reduce the number of trips, we...
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worked 10 hours on site per trip. This made for long days but the guys enjoyed three-day weekends as well as paid drive time one way. If I visited the site there was a $150 minimum fee for my trip and $75 for every hour thereafter.

I have been back to the site a few times to check the watering log book and soil moisture levels as well as the overall condition of the trees. They look good, and with any luck we will have a success rate of at least 75 percent. In the spring we will go back and do deep root injections on all the trees with mycorrhizal stimulant.

Jeff Pfeil is the owner of Bozeman Tree Service Inc. and Christmas Décor, both in Bozeman Mont, and a member of the Tree Care Industry Association.

During the backfilling process, workers watered the soil and poked into the air pockets for several minutes with the shovel handles to make sure that the soil was worked into the spade web root as much as possible.

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A.R.E. Inc. has developed a specialized program to customize its popular DCU (Deluxe Commercial Unit) truck cap for use in forestry and park service environments. Called The Forester, it allows fast and organized access to equipment and tools. Lambert consulted with Stihl, The Supply Cache Inc. and Forestry Suppliers, Inc., for technical advice on creating a DCU configuration. In addition to chainsaws, ladders and shovels, The Forester can accommodate - via its tool boxes and rack systems - specialized gear and equipment for emergency, traffic control and disaster support activities. The Forester can also be modified with special emergency or auxiliary lighting, aerial identification lettering, GPS unit mounts and secure areas for added communication equipment needs.

**Timberwolf introduces the TW-S3 skidsteer splitter**

Timberwolf’s new log splitter for the skid steer market, the S3 splitter, fills a void for contractors who will now be able to use their existing skid steer to manage their logs – and split them – using a simple attachment. Built to rugged commercial standards in the United States, the TW-S3 easily grips whole logs, and splits logs up to 30 inches long. The operator moves and splits logs without leaving his seat. The TW-S3 is powered by a single hydraulic cylinder, has a compact design, and has simple mechanical systems that make service quick and painless. Contact Timberwolf at 1-800-340-4386 or visit www.timberwolfcorp.com.

**Greyhound Insecticide now for mites**

Greyhound Insecticide is now labeled for mites, a significant hardwood and evergreen pest, especially in dry or drought-stricken climates. Greyhound, a Wedgle Direct-Inject chemical from ArborSystems, controls mites, elm leaf beetles, lace bugs, and lepidoptera insects such as gypsy moth, sphinx and tent caterpillars, and mimosa webworm. Greyhound is applied with the Wedgle Direct-Inject unit and trunk injections should be made in the spring and late summer. The Wedgle Direct-Inject Tree Treatment System is a quick, closed delivery system. Almost any tree can be treated in five minutes or less, with no guarding or posting necessary. Chemicals are injected directly through the bark, right into the active layer of the tree where they are quickly absorbed. With no drilling required, you can treat trees year after year without harming tree health. Contact ArborSystems at www.arborsystems.com or call 1-800-698-4641.

**Corona Clipper's new economy shovels**

Corona Clipper is adding two new economy shovels to its rapidly growing long handle tool line. The economy wooden, long-handle shovel line includes the SS 10000 round point for digging and the SS 11000 square-point for lifting and moving loose materials. Both shovels are perfect for handling all types of general purpose digging and shoveling jobs. The economy shovels have a 48-inch long ash wood handle and feature a varnished 16-gauge steel blade, coated for protection from the elements. The riveted socket connection helps to increase strength of handle connection, while the shovels’ forward-turned step helps prevent the step from getting caught on the side of the hole. Contact Corona Clipper at (800) 847-7863, or visit www.coronaclipper.com.
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Oregon Cutting Systems Group sends aid to schools in Sri Lanka

Oregon Cutting Systems Group of Blount Inc., chainsaw bar and chain manufacturer, sent funds to help schools in Sri Lanka impacted by the December 26 tsunami. The donation was sent through Najeeb Deen of Deen Brothers Imports (Pvt) Ltd., Blount’s distributor for Sri Lanka.

Mr. Deen also serves as president of Paragon Organization for the Matara Province in the southern part of the country. Paragon Organization works to elevate the educational level of children in their region, with a special focus on the less affluent. For the children who survived the disaster, the need is great. “They need books and school materials, uniforms/dress, shoes and most important is their health,” wrote Mr. Deen in a letter to Oregon Cutting Systems Group.

“Blount recognizes the valuable work that Paragon Organization and others do everyday, especially in response to natural disasters,” said James S. Osterman, CEO of Blount, Inc. “We are working through the business partners of our organization who live and work in these regions to provide assistance.”

Bartlett’s Bates earns Master Arborist title; Karp promoted to Vice President

Bartlett Tree Experts' Scott Bates recently earned the Board Certified Master Arborist title, the highest professional certification in arboriculture, after completing an intensive exam administered through the International Society of Arboriculture. Bates, who works in F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company’s Springfield, Va., office, serves customers in the Falls Church, Oakton, Vienna, Fairfax and surrounding areas.

“This certification demonstrates Scott’s advanced knowledge of tree care,” said Greg Daniels, president of Bartlett Tree Experts. “He is a great example of what Bartlett is all about – applying science and knowledge to help both commercial and residential customers maintain beautiful, healthy landscapes.”

There are currently about 15,000 Certified Arborists and only a select few have received the Master Arborist title.

Also, Bartlett Tree Expert Company recently promoted Kenneth J. Karp to vice president, marketing and public relations. Karp joined Bartlett five years ago and has since been working to refine and promote Bartlett’s brand image through the execution of highly targeted direct marketing, launch of a new advertising campaign, development of the company’s Web site and innovative use of other corporate communications vehicles. He brings nearly 20 years of marketing and communications experience to the company.

“By promoting Kenneth to this key role, we are acknowledging the excellent work he has done to date as well as emphasizing the importance we place on effectively communicating with our customers and prospects,” says Daniels.

Karp holds a bachelor’s degree in business management from St. John’s...
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#### 21 Ton National - 4x4 - 6x6 - 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Engine</th>
<th>HP</th>
<th>Speed</th>
<th>GVW</th>
<th>Crane/Crane Specifications</th>
<th>Additional Features</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96 MACK RD688SX</td>
<td>E7-350 diesel</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>8 spd +lo, +lo/lo</td>
<td>80,000 lb GVW</td>
<td>21 ton NATIONAL 800C crane, 90 ft hook ht, cap alert/shutdown, roofers pkg</td>
<td>20½ ft steel flatbed</td>
<td>$79,500.00</td>
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#### Hook Lift

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<th>Model</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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### Unmounted Knucklebooms

- HIAB, PALFINGER, FASSI, NATIONAL, IMTCO, ETC...

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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University in New York. Like other Bartlett employees, he is committed to advancement in tree care and, as such, is an active member of the International Society of Arboriculture. He has two children and resides in Danbury, Conn.

**Mike Rook Joins Summit Insurance**

Summit Insurance Services, Inc. recently appointed Mike Rook vice president of Green Industry Programs for the company. In his new position, Rook will be responsible for market development of Summit programs in the tree care and landscape industry.

“Summit specializes in insurance programs for the construction industry,” says Summit CEO Tom Jackson. “When we decided to expand into the green industry, we looked for the best people. Mike has the experience, knowledge and commitment to make our program the best insurance product for the arborist industry.”

Rook has more than 20 years experience in the insurance industry, including 19 years with The Hartford. For 12 years he specialized in the tree care industry as program manager of The Hartford’s Arborist Program. “We started the Arborist Program from scratch and grew it to more than $18 million in premium with more than 700 insureds nationwide,” Rook says. “I look forward to this great opportunity and even greater success with Summit.”

Summit Insurance Services, Inc. is based in Las Vegas, Nev., with offices in East Granby, Conn.

**Bayer Announces Marketing Position Changes**

Bayer Environmental Science recently announced several position changes within the marketing group at the company’s corporate headquarters in Montvale, N.J.

Michael Daly is the new director of marketing for the Chipco Professional Products Division. Formerly manager of the Lawn & Landscape Sales Region, Daly has been with Bayer for four years. Previously, he was marketing director for Bayer Corp. in Kansas City, Mo. A native of Iowa, he also held marketing positions for Novartis T&O (now Syngenta) and has 22 years experience in the green industry.

Jim Fetter is now manager of the Lawn & Landscape Sales Region. Previously, he was director of marketing for the Chipco Professional Products Division for two and a half years. He also was director of marketing for the professional turf and ornamental business for two of Bayer’s predecessor companies, Aventis and Rhone-Poulenc. A native of Ohio, Fetter has more than 25 years experience in the green industry.

Ben Cicora has been named business manager, Herbicides/PGRs for the Chipco Professional Products Division. He was previously a sales representative for the Lawn & Landscape Region, covering Ohio and Michigan. Prior to joining Bayer, Cicora was a field sales representative for Dow AgroSciences in Columbus, Ohio.
Events & Seminars

March 2-3, 2005
MGI 18th Trade Show and Convention
Novi Expo Center, Novi, MI
Contact: (248) 646-4992, 1-800-354-6352; www.landscape.org

March 4, 2005
New Jersey Landscape 2005 Trade Show & Conference Meadowlands Exposition Center Secaucus, NJ
Contact: NJLCA (201) 664-6310; www.njlcasonline.org

March 2-5, 2005
EHAP & CPR-First Aid
Arizona Community Tree Council Inc./Tucson Electric Tucson, AZ
Contact: Doreen Orist (480) 899-9831; www.aztrees.org

March 4-5, 2005
Ecological Landscaping Assoc.
2005 Winter Conference & Workshop Marlborough, MA
Contact: (617) 436-5838; www.ecolandscaping.org

March 5, 2005
NJ Forestry Association’s Annual Meeting
The Conference Center at Mercer County West Windsor, NJ
Contact: Kathy Sfiarappa at (908) 237-0900

March 5-8, 2005
ISA Southern Chapter Annual Conf. & Trade Show Savannah Marriott Riverfront Savannah, GA
Contact: Southern Chapter Office at (336) 789-4747; www.isasouthern.org

March 7, 2005
Hazardous Tree Identification
Rutgers Cook College
New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: (732) 932-9271; ocpe@aesop.rutgers.edu.

March 8-10, 2005
Certified Applicators or Registered Techs training
MGI & Michigan Department of Agriculture
Novi Expo Center, Novi, MI
Contact: (248) 646-4992

March 9, 2005
Solving Landscape Plant Problems
MGI, Double Tree Hotel & Conf Center
Novi, MI
Contact: (248) 646-4992

March 10, 2005
Modern Techniques: Large Tree Climbing and Rigging
Rutgers Cook College, New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: (732) 932-9271; ocpe@aesop.rutgers.edu.

March 10-12, 2005
TCI EXPO Spring
Tree Care Industry Association
EXPO March 10-11; Outdoor Demo Day March 12
Long Beach, CA
Contact: Carol Crossland, 1-800-733-2622, Ext. 106;
crossland@treecareindustry.org; www.tcia.org

March 15, 2005
Pesticides: Environment, Your Company & the Applicator
MGI, Double Tree Hotel & Conference Center
Novi, MI
Contact: (248) 646-4992

March 17, 2005
Large Tree Pruning and the ANSI A 300 Standards
Rutgers Cook College, New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: (732) 932-9271; ocpe@aesop.rutgers.edu.

March 17-18, 2005
Pennsylvania Floral Industry Association 15th Annual Mid-Atlantic Interior Landscape Conference Penn State University Great Valley Campus, Malvern, Pa.
Contact: www.pafloral.org.

March 19, 2005
Aerial Rescue: A Closer Look - Modern Climbing Techniques - Climbing in the 21st Century
Arizona Community Tree Council Inc., Tempe, AZ
Contact: Doreen Orist (480) 899-9831; www.aztrees.org

March 21-22, 2005
Spanish Cert. Applicators/Registered Techs training
MGI & Mich. Dept. of Agriculture Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: (248) 646-4992

March 25, 2005
Tree Biology and Tree Identification - Tree Selection, Installation and Establishment - Pruning
Arizona Community Tree Council Inc., Chandler, AZ
Contact: Doreen Orist (480) 899-9831; www.aztrees.org

March 26, 2005
Climbing and Working in Trees - Safety - Tree Support and Protection Systems
Arizona Community Tree Council Inc., Tempe, AZ
Contact: Doreen Orist (480) 899-9831; www.aztrees.org

March 31, 2005
Garden State Tree Conference/
NJ Arborists Chapter ISA Annual Meeting
Cook College Campus Center, Rutgers Univ.
New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: (732) 574-9100; www.NJArboristsISA.com

April 1, 2005
Trees and Construction-Tree Assessment and Risk Mgt.
Arizona Community Tree Council Inc., Chandler, AZ
Contact: Doreen Orist (480) 899-9831; www.aztrees.org

April 8, 2005
Diagnosis and Plant Disorders - Plant Health Care
Arizona Community Tree Council Inc.
Chandler, AZ
Contact: Doreen Orist (480) 899-9831; www.aztrees.org

April 9, 2005
NJ Society of Certified Tree Experts 10th Annual Educational Seminar and Exam Preparation Session I: tree bio., insect/disease ID, tree planning strategies
Rutgers Cook College
New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: Gary Lovallo 1-888-873-3034.

April 15, 2005
Tree/Soil Relations-Water Mgt. - Tree Nutrition & Fert.
Arizona Community Tree Council Inc.
Chandler, AZ
Contact: Doreen Orist (480) 899-9831; www.aztrees.org

April 16, 2005
Certification Review Session
Arizona Community Tree Council Inc., Chandler, AZ
Contact: Doreen Orist (480) 899-9831; www.aztrees.org

For the most up to date calendar information, visit www.treecareindustry.org ⇒ news ⇒ industry calendar
April 18-22, 2005
Trees & Utilities National Conference
National Arbor Day Foundation, Omaha, NE
Contact Steve Pearson, (402) 474-5655; conferences@arborday.org

April 22-23, 2005
Capel Manor’s 3rd Celebration of Trees
Capel Manor College, Enfield, Middlesex, England
Contact: Lea Spicer, 020-8366-4442; fax: 01992-717544; www.capel.ac.uk

May 1-3, 2005
Arizona Community Tree Council Inc. and Western Chapter ISA Co-sponsored Annual Conference
Phoenix, AZ
Contact: Doreen Orist (480) 899-9831; www.aztrees.org

May 1-4, 2005
Extreme Arboriculture: Work Hard - Play Hard
Western Chapter ISA/Arizona Community Tree Council
Phoenix, AZ
Contact: www.wcisa.net

May 2-13, 2005
Basic Tree Climbing Committee for Advancement of Arboriculture
Wickatuck, NJ
Contact: (732) 833-0325

May 4, 2005
ISA Cert. Arborist Exam/Municipal Specialist Exam
Arizona Community Tree Council Inc., Phoenix, AZ
Contact: Doreen Orist (480) 899-9831; www.aztrees.org

May 11, 2005
ISA Cert. Exam & NJ Arborists/
ISA Gen. Member Mtg
Northeastern Associates
West Paterson, NJ
Contact: Matt Simons (609) 625-6021;
www.NJArboristsISA.com

May 18, 2005
NJ Society of Certified Tree Experts 10th Annual Educational Seminar and Exam Preparation Session
Monmouth County (location TBA), NJ
Contact: Gary Lovallo 1-888-873-3034

June 4, 2005
NJ Society of Certified Tree Experts 10th Annual Educational Seminar and Exam Preparation Session
Rutgers Cook College
New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: Gary Lovallo 1-888-873-3034.

May 1-3, 2005
Arizona Community Tree Council Inc. and Western Chapter ISA Co-sponsored Annual Conference
Phoenix, AZ
Contact: Doreen Orist (480) 899-9831; www.aztrees.org

May 2-13, 2005
Basic Tree Climbing Committee for Advancement of Arboriculture
Wickatuck, NJ
Contact: (732) 833-0325

May 4, 2005
ISA Cert. Arborist Exam/Municipal Specialist Exam
Arizona Community Tree Council Inc., Phoenix, AZ
Contact: Doreen Orist (480) 899-9831; www.aztrees.org

May 11-15, 2005
ISA Florida Chapter Annual Meeting
(Along with TreesFlorida 2005 meeting)
The Westin Innisbrook Golf Resort, Tampa, FL
Contact: floridaisa@comcast.net; floridaisa.org;
www.treesflorida.com

June 25-28, 2005
North Amer. Commercial Real Estate Congress & The Office Building Show, Bldg Owners Mgrs Assoc. Int.
Pre-conference seminars June 23-26
Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA
Contact: (202) 326-6321; www.bomaconvention.org

June 29-July 2, 2005
American Association of Botanical Gardens & Arboretum 2005 Annual Conference
The Fairmont Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
Contact: Sharon Malgine (302) 655-7100, ext. 18;
www.aabga.org

July 18-21, 2005
TCIA Legislative Conference
Washington, D.C.
Contact: Mark Garvin 1-800-733-2622; Ext. 108
garvin@treecareindustry.org; or www.tcia.org

July 26-28, 2005
Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show
Fort Washington Expo Center, Fort Washington, PA
Contact: 1-800-898-3411; www.pantshow.com

August 6-10, 2005
ISA’s 81st Annual Int. Conference & Tradeshow
Gaylord Opryland Hotel,
Nashville, TN
Contact: Jessica Marx, 1-888-472-8733, jm Marx@isa-
arbor.com; www.isaarbor.com/conference.aspx

August 19-21, 2005
Nursery/Landscape Expo 2005
Texas Nursery & Landscape Association
Dallas Convention Center, Dallas, TX
Contact: www.tnlan.org; 1-(800) 880-0343

August 25, 2005
Farwest Show – Oregon Association of Nurserymen
Portland, OR
(503) 682-5089; www.farwestshow.com

November 9-11, 2005
TCI EXPO
Tree Care Industry Association
Columbus Convention Center
Columbus, OH
Contact: Carol Crossland, 1-800-733-2622, Ext. 106;
crossland@treecareindustry.org; or www.tcia.org

Send your event information to:
Tree Care Industry,
3 Perimeter Road Unit 1,
Manchester, NH 03103
or staruk@treecareindustry.org
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Please circle 11 on Reader Service Card
Effective pest management begins before the landscape is planted. Design landscapes to provide an optimal living environment for plants. Minimize pest problems by selecting relatively pest-resistant species and cultivars that are well adapted to local conditions. Group the plants that have similar cultural-requirements.

Determine the expectations

Before preparing and planting the site, decide what aesthetics and functions (such as shading and visual screening) are desired and how much time, money and other resources will be budgeted. If the desires are for high visual appeal, very few pests and almost no plant damage, more effort and inputs will be required to develop and maintain the landscape so that it meets these expectations. Be aware that inadequate site preparation, improper planting, selecting pest-prone cultivars, planting species not adapted to local conditions, or employing inappropriate cultural practices can cause landscapes to perform poorly regardless of pest control efforts.

Choose a good location

Consider drainage, soil characteristics, water quality and availability, and other conditions before selecting a planting site and the species to grow there. Assess how much light and heat occur at that location based on climate, exposure, and the influence of nearby structures, pavement and plants. Determine proximity to pavement, structures, overhead lines and underground utilities that may be damaged by growing limbs or roots.

Select species suited to the site’s conditions by matching the plant to the location. Examine the space available for growth and learn about the mature size of candidate plants. Give limbs and roots plenty of room to grow and use only plants that will fit at maturity. Most small trees should be placed at least six feet from structures and at least three feet from any paved area; larger trees may need to be placed even farther away. Look for overhead obstacles. Do not plant tall-growing species beneath utility lines. Utility companies are required to prune trees that grow into overhead lines, which can severely disfigure trees and promote decay, structural failure and insect attacks, and increase utility costs. For more information, consult resources such as SelectTree: A Tree Selection Guide (Reimer and Mark 2001) and Trees Under Power Lines (Costello et al. 1989) or go to Web sites such as http://selectree.calpoly.edu.

Roots are often neglected because they grow underground and are not seen. Provide roots with proper soil conditions and adequate space. Examine the surrounding soil for barriers to root growth before planting. After the first few years of growth, lateral (horizontally growing) roots of healthy plants often extend well beyond the canopy or drip line to a distance equivalent to two to three times or more the diameter of the drip line. Woody dicotyledonous plants may also have heart (structural) roots that grow downward and can help anchor the tree, and absorbing roots with concentrations of root hairs that...
take up water from the soil. Often about 90 percent of woody plant roots grow in the top three feet of soil, most in the top one foot (Figure 3-2). Actual root systems can vary greatly, depending in part on cultural practices, plant species and soil conditions.

Properly preparing the planting area is important for future root development. Typically the prepared planting area should be at least two to three times the diameter of the root ball, but no deeper than the bottom of the root ball. Additionally, breaking up hardpans or compacted soils deeper than three feet before planting can improve plant growth by increasing drainage and facilitating development of sinker roots, which in some species grow near the trunk and deep into the soil. Although it can be an expensive task, breaking up hardpan can be especially beneficial in arid areas where hard layers often form near the soil surface.

Consider mycorrhizae

Most healthy trees have beneficial fungi growing in or on their absorbing roots; the symbiotic (mutually beneficial) association between a mycorrhizal fungus and the plant is called a mycorrhizae. There are hundreds of different species of mycorrhizal fungi. Some are generalists that associate with many plant species, while other fungi and plants are specialized associates. Mycorrhizal root tips are a primary location where plants absorb nutrients and water. Mycorrhizae can increase growth rates and improve the drought tolerance of plants, and may also help protect plants from pathogenic nematodes and soil microorganisms. Many trees grow poorly and die in the absence of mycorrhizae, especially if plants are stressed from other environmental conditions.

Endomycorrhizae occur mostly within roots, so colonized roots appear normal. Ectomycorrhizae form a sheath or mantle around short lateral roots, so colonized roots are often devoid of root hairs and may appear swollen. Mushrooms growing out of the ground near conifers may be the reproductive structures of certain mycorrhizal fungi. However, spores of the most common types of endomycorrhizae (arbuscular mycorrhizae) are produced in soil next to roots and are microscopic.

Mycorrhizae are common in soils where the plant species with which they associate have grown previously. They disperse in soil, on roots of host plants, or by spores that can be windblown or occur in litter on the soil. Inoculating plants with appropriate mycorrhizal fungi benefits forest conifer seedlings, revegetation of low-quality disturbed soils (such as reclaimed surface mines), and certain plants in nurseries. However, mycorrhizal fungi may not improve growth if plants are fertilized and regularly irrigated. Commercial mycorrhizal inoculants are available, but their quality varies. There is no research showing that applying mycorrhizal inoculants is beneficial in most fertilized and irrigated urban landscapes. Exceptions might be obligately mycorrhizal plants such as conifers and oaks that will receive little fertilization or irrigation and are planted in constructed or highly disturbed soils.
Mycorrhizal fungi are already present in most soils and often naturally colonize nursery plants grown in organic media. Promote mycorrhizal growth and development by providing plants with appropriate growing conditions. Prevent soil compaction and changes in soil grade or drainage. Avoid overwatering or underwatering and do not overfertilize, particularly with phosphorus or quick-release synthetic formulations. Apply organic mulch to moderate soil temperatures and conserve moisture around plants. Avoid fumigating soils or contaminating soils with toxic materials, which kill beneficial fungi.

Choose the right tree or shrub

Proper plant selection is one of the best ways to avoid pest problems. Problems often occur because plants are poorly suited to local conditions. Each plant species or cultivar grows best under specific environmental conditions and is affected by local soil, temperature, sunlight and water. Some plants tolerate a wide range of conditions while other species survive only within a narrow range. Many of the plants that thrive in the eastern states or other areas of the world with summer rainfall do not do well in most of California unless they are irrigated regularly. Likewise, a plant that does well along California’s coast may grow poorly in the warmer, drier interior valleys. Plants poorly adapted to their planting sites are more likely to perform poorly or die due to environmental stress and pests.

Learn which species or cultivars are adapted to local conditions. For example, look in nearby parks or botanical gardens and choose from among plants performing well there. Many local park agencies and public utilities will provide a list of trees recommended for planting in that community. Seek advice from local experts such as Cooperative Extension advisors, certified arborists, or certified nurserypersons. Guidelines for plant selection are also available on the Web, such as at http://selectree.calpoly.edu.

Soil. Determine the key chemical and physical properties of the soil where you
**Vermeer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Number</th>
<th>Part No.</th>
<th>Knife Description &amp; Size</th>
<th>SALE Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>BC1000</td>
<td>KCH20109</td>
<td>Double Edge 9&quot; x 4-1/2&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC1220-BC1250</td>
<td>KCH20002</td>
<td>Single Edge 8&quot; x 3-1/2&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
<td>$19.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC1400</td>
<td>KCH20110</td>
<td>Double Edge 8&quot; x 5&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
<td>$33.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC1800-BC2000</td>
<td>KCH20103</td>
<td>Double Edge 10&quot; x 5-1/2&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
<td>$38.95</td>
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**Morbark**

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<td>KCH10001</td>
<td>Double Edge 7-1/4&quot; x 4&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
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<td>10, 13, 17, 2050</td>
<td>KCH40001</td>
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**Brush Bandit**

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<td>Double Edge 5-3/32&quot; x 4&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
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<td>Model 90XP, 280XP</td>
<td>KCH10004</td>
<td>Double Edge 5-3/32&quot; x 4&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
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<td>Model 100XP-250XP</td>
<td>KCH10003</td>
<td>Double Edge 7-1/4&quot; x 4&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 250XP, 254XP after '01</td>
<td>KCH10101</td>
<td>Double Edge 7-1/4&quot; x 4-1/2&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
<td>$25.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 1890 Intimidator</td>
<td>KCH20103</td>
<td>Double Edge 10&quot; x 5-1/2&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
<td>$38.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 1290 Drum</td>
<td>KCH30001</td>
<td>Single Edge 12&quot; x 3&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
<td>$19.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 1690 Drum</td>
<td>KCH30002</td>
<td>Single Edge 16&quot; x 3&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
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**Asplundh**

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<td>Timberwolf</td>
<td>KCH10001</td>
<td>Double Edge 7-1/4&quot; x 4&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>12&quot; Drum</td>
<td>KCH30001</td>
<td>Single Edge 12&quot; x 3&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
<td>$19.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>16&quot; Drum</td>
<td>KCH30002</td>
<td>Single Edge 16&quot; x 3&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
<td>$21.95</td>
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**Mitts & Merrill**

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<td>Drum Style</td>
<td>KCH60001</td>
<td>Double Edge 4-1/4&quot; x 2-3/8&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
<td>$10.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To receive this special pricing, you must use this code: 03395

Offer ends March 31, 2005

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Please circle 90 on Reader Service Card
Many California soils are alkaline, compacted and poorly drained, especially in urban areas. Local Cooperative Extension personnel, certified arborists, and nursery professionals may know the common soil types in your area. Consider having soils tested by a laboratory for bulk density, organic matter, pH, salinity and texture. Learn which plants tolerate local soil conditions and choose from among those species and cultivars. If necessary for that site, aerate, change grade, provide for surface drainage or install drain pipe or drain tile before planting. Seek professional advice on which measures are appropriate for your situation.

Water. Choose plants that thrive within the water limitations at the site. Most species in California will need some irrigation during plant establishment. If species that are adapted to summer rainfall are planted, they will need regular irrigation throughout their life or they will perform poorly and be plagued with problems. If drought-adapted species are planted in areas provided with irrigation (such as in lawns), watering may need to be modified because frequent summer irrigation can damage or kill drought-adapted plants.

Consider water quality in addition to irrigation frequency and quantity. For example, certain plants grow poorly if water mineral content is high, as it is in some irrigation well water.

Climate. Most landscape plants are adapted to either summer drought or summer rainfall. Summer rainfall-adapted species are generally those native to the eastern United States, northern Europe or eastern Asia, where summer rainfall occurs. Most of California has a Mediterranean climate. Winters are cool and wet, summers are hot and dry, and much of the state receives little or no precipitation from late spring through early fall. Californians should consider planting native California species or exotics from other parts of the world that also have a Mediterranean climate; these species should require significant irrigation only during establishment and perhaps during years when rainfall is below normal. Be aware that some of these plants are dormant or do not have lush foliage during summer, so expectations for their appearance should differ in comparison with frequently irrigated species that are adapted to summer rainfall.

California encompasses many different climate zones. Within each climate zone
are microclimates where conditions vary over distances ranging from several miles (for example, due to hills and valleys) or within a few feet (because of buildings, pavement, and surrounding vegetation). Even native plants must be matched to local site conditions and provided with the cultural care to which they are adapted. For example, Monterey pine and Monterey cypress from the coast and giant sequoia from the Sierra do poorly in hot, dry, interior areas of the state regardless of how much water they are given.

Cold, heat, light and wind. Consider the local climate and the environmental conditions expected at the site. Determine the direct and reflected light conditions, range of temperatures, and windiness at the site and choose species that tolerate those conditions. For example, species especially susceptible to mechanical injury or moisture stress from hot or cold winds should be planted where they will be sheltered from prevailing winds.

Light, temperature and wind can vary dramatically in urban areas between locations only a few feet apart due to the influence of buildings, pavement and surrounding vegetation. Wind dehydrates and tatters leaves and breaks limbs. Too much or too little sunlight causes foliage of susceptible species to discolor, die and drop. Excess cold or heat or light that converts to heat when it contacts surfaces, cause cracked and sunken bark. These wounds promote wood-boring insects, bark cankers, and decay fungi.

Select healthy plants. Choose good-quality nursery stock. Investment in better-quality plants can pay great dividends in lower maintenance costs and better performance. Avoid improperly pruned trees. Nurseries sometimes clip the main terminal to produce more compact lateral growth that appears attractive when plants are young; improper pruning of young trees can lead to serious structural problems once the plants mature. Consult

Shrubs and trees have different irrigation requirements than turf. Use sidewalks, driveways or headers to separate plants, and irrigate them differently according to their cultural needs.
resources such as *Training Young Trees for Structure and Form* (Costello 1999).

Check roots in container-grown plants. Feel below the soil surface or use a hose to wash away topsoil close to the trunk (this soil can be replaced); examine smaller plants by temporarily removing them from the container. Avoid plants with major roots that are kinked or circling near the trunk; these will eventually become girdled by their own root system and grow poorly, break off, or die. Trees and shrubs in containers should be well-rooted in the soil mix. When the trunk is carefully lifted, both the trunk and root ball should move as one; if the trunk can be raised 1 or 2 inches before the container moves, roots may be poorly developed or extensively circling. Smaller roots circling the container periphery can be spread or cut before planting, but if larger roots or roots near the trunk are kinked, reject the plant. If possible, select trees that are not staked and have a noticeably tapered trunk; they will have sturdier trunks.

Root and crown rots, such as Phytophthora root rot, may develop in certain susceptible nursery plants and lead to poor growth and death after transplanting. Avoid plants infested with insects or diseases that may cause problems in landscapes. Consult *Arboriculture: Integrated Management of Landscape Trees, Shrubs, and Vines* (Harris, Clark, and Matheny 1999) and *Specification Guidelines for Container-Grown Trees* (Harris et al. 2002) for more detailed suggestions.

Pest Resistance. In some cases, pest-resistant cultivars or species can be selected that otherwise perform and look similar to susceptible plants. Avoid planting species or cultivars known to be prone to serious problems in your area. Do not replant in locations where plants have been killed or severely damaged by pathogens unless you select a species or cultivar highly resistant to that cause of disease. Do not plant species highly susceptible to root and crown diseases in poorly drained, compacted soils. Improve drainage or plant high, such as on a mound or soil berm.

Resistance is not the same as immunity. Plants may become affected by problems to which they are resistant if plants are stressed because of poor cultural care or other factors. New plant cultivars and better information are constantly being developed; consult a knowledgeable Cooperative Extension advisor, certified arborist, or certified nurseryperson for assistance in selecting pest-resistant plants.

Plant Compatibility. Group together plants having compatible growth characteristics and similar needs for irrigation and other cultural care. For example, some ground cover and turf species can spread rapidly and overgrow nearby shrubs and young trees. Turf and trees have different soil moisture and irrigation requirements. Grow incompatible species apart from each other or separate them with structures, pavement, or headers, which are wood, plastic, metal, or concrete barriers extending well below ground.

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Can you save my tree! This is what we hear all too often from clients who don’t want to lose a stressed or declining tree on their property. A lot of the concern comes from owners of new or fairly new homes. Unfortunately for these homeowners, most builders and contractors do not understand the physiology of trees and tree root systems.

Not only the house contractors, but the homeowners themselves usually have little or no understanding of the impact that house construction can have on trees. In our region of the country, new construction is up 17 percent over the national average. This, of course is great for the economy, but can be tough on our trees. Fortunately for the trees and their owners there is help. Remember the client has called on us because we are the experts. Having the knowledge to solve their problem is our job as professionals. It is also our duty to educate our clients (and anyone else who will listen). In doing so, we promote greater awareness of proper tree care and, you guessed it, the need for our services.

The problem with trees on construction sites is primarily related to soil compaction. Compaction pressure creates a change in the physical properties of soils by changing its bulk density and reducing the amount of pore space in the soil. The change may cause reduced availability of water and oxygen to roots (Handreck and Black 1994). Soil compaction has been documented to reduce the growth of woody plants by inhibiting root growth (Patterson 1976, Jim 1998).

Soil coating of just a few inches on an existing root zone can also cause a similar effect by suffocating the root zone. The situation should be avoided as much as possible to eliminate potential permanent damage to tree roots. If avoidance is not possible, then the goal is to loosen or aerate the soil in the root zone as soon as possible.

There are several techniques being used today to aerate root zones. They include radial trenching, high-pressure air or gas soil injections, and vertical mulching. Radial trenching is the method by which narrow trenches are dug in a radial pattern in the root zone. These trenches extend past the drip line creating a wagon wheel pattern. The trench can be filled with mulch material, thus encouraging root growth.

High pressure soil injections of air or gas are designed to fracture soil and create air pockets and reduce bulk density. Some argue that these systems do not create the desired effect, but it still is a widely accept-
Vertical mulching is effective in decreasing compaction, increasing soil porosity, and penetrating soil-coated root zones. The drilled holes may be filled with sand, vermiculite, peat moss, humus, beneficial fungi and soil nutrients to achieve the desired effect of promoting new feeder root growth.

Vertical mulching utilizes a gas-powered auger with a 2-inch diameter bit that is 2 feet long. Holes are drilled 2 to 3 feet on center in an alternating concentric pattern. Drilling starts from 6 to 8 feet from the root crown (This varies by tree size. The objective is not to drill in the main portion of the structural root area) to just past the drip line of the tree to a minimum of 12 inches deep.
When encountering roots during drilling, try to move the drill over a few inches to avoid damage to the root. It is a good idea to have underground utilities located prior to drilling. Any underground low voltage wires or irrigation should also be spotted. Clients should be made aware of potential damage to these systems and a discussion of liabilities should ensue.

After drilling, you may fill the holes with mulch allowing for continuous water and air exchange in the root zone. If you use a product called Vertimulch, you can drill the mulch product directly into the ground. The homeowner should be made aware that it is normal for the areas of surrounding grass to be greener and healthier.

Vertical mulching is effective in enhancing new fibrous feeder root growth in most any situation. This is a great add-on service with obvious benefit to the client and is especially attractive in instances of highly stressed trees.

Vertical mulching offers another avenue to differentiate ourselves from other tree care companies. We are constantly striving to be on the forward edge of the industry offering service and products that help our clients and our profit margin. We can offer this as an add-on service in almost every situation, but it really gets attention from people with problem trees. All plants can benefit from increased fibrous root growth, especially problem trees. The key is presenting the service as part of a comprehensive approach to helping the client save their tree or trees.

Combining vertical mulching with pruning and other treatments can provide added value for the client and added sales for the professional. After the sale, fully trained, uniformed personnel should perform the service followed by thorough clean up. We always recommend a follow-up inspection at a minimum of one-year intervals. This provides a great opportunity to get in front of your client again and assess present and future needs.

Helping the client solve their tree care problems is what we do. Vertical mulching is another tool to help save or enhance trees. Educating people on what we can do for them is the first step in solving tree problems as well as our sales problems.

Literature Cited:

Timothy Costley is president of Southeast Arbor Management Inc. in Dahlonega, Ga., and a member of the Tree Care Industry Association.
Imagine this scenario: you’re looking at a letter on your desk from the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC). Apparently, an applicant who indicated she was not hired because she is a minority filed a complaint against your firm. According to the letter, the EEOC has no intention of making a personal visit to your office for a full-fledged investigation, but they are looking for an appropriate reply regarding the accusation. As the owner or manager of a commercial tree care company, you are the ultimate authority on human resources (HR) matters, and you know you have no intentions of discriminating against anyone. Things had gone smoothly for years, so you’re asking yourself “why now?”

Though you may never have had an official complaint filed against your company, this scenario may sound somewhat familiar. Unless you’re with a very large tree care firm, you probably don’t have a full time, degreed, experienced HR professional on staff.

If this is you, then once each quarter, an HR audit of your business should be conducted, ensuring that all practices are in compliance and that nothing slips through the cracks. It doesn’t take very long, and the implications for assuming that everything is rolling along smoothly can result in a very costly lesson learned.

Your HR audit can be broken down into five major categories: recruiting, selection, performance reviews, safety, and discipline and termination. Each has its own set of guidelines and peculiarities. The following information should provide you the basics of each category so you can make a quick assessment of your current HR practices.

**Recruiting**

Attracting the right people to work in your company is often harder than keeping them aboard. For the last few years, it has been an employees’ market with many opportunities right down the street for a little more money than what they currently have. Even in a post-September 11th environment, that doesn’t seem to be waning.

One item many tree care operators are missing is job specifications. These are very different from job descriptions in that they don’t describe the job; instead, they detail the specific requirements needed to perform the job. For example, a field laborer may not require a high school diploma, but you probably expect a bookkeeper/accountant to have a bachelor’s degree. There’s no need to spend a lot of energy on this document—just list the
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Figure 1
Job Descriptions should possess each of the following:
► Job title
► Exempt/Nonexempt status
► Reporting relationships (i.e., who reports to this person, and whom does this person report to)
► Brief overview of the job
duties and responsibilities (be sure to include a phrase such as "performs other duties as assigned")
► Knowledge and skills required for the job
(from your Job Specifications)
► Special requirements (such as travel, heavy lifting, Saturday hours, etc.)

Selection
As applicants begin responding to your ad, you’ll narrow down the list of candidates and set up interviews. Again, your primary concern is to avoid any semblance of discrimination. Your line of questioning must be job related. Even though during the initial phase of the interview, you may engage in small talk about the weather, making sure the candidate was able to locate your office without any problems,

Minimum requirements of every existing job you have (education, years of experience, special skills, ability to handle confidential information and money, etc.). Also, include at the top of the page a job title, which department it falls in, whom it reports to, whether it’s an exempt (i.e., salaried) position or nonexempt (in its simplest form, hourly), and the date the job specifications were created. You’ll use this document to prepare your recruitment ads, but most importantly, it serves as a preventive defense if you do find yourself in the midst of an EEOC investigation because it demonstrates effort to recruit based on the specific bona fide requirements of the position.

You’re not alone if you haven’t updated your job descriptions in the last few years, but it’s definitely time to do so. Job descriptions provide you with a snapshot of each job. They list the major duties and responsibilities as well as other pertinent information about the job. Hopefully, you’ve updated them since the Americans with Disabilities Act was instituted in 1990. For job description purposes, the Act means detailing lifting requirements of jobs. Obviously, writing job descriptions is more involved than we have room to devote here, but Figure 1 lists items that should be in every job description.

Once you have job specifications and descriptions in order, you can begin your recruitment process. Whether you attract employees through newspapers, internet, or other means, avoid any indication that you’re looking for a particular demographic. For example, don’t say, “seeking YOUNG energetic MEN for tree care positions.” This is very discriminatory against older applicants and could be viewed as a violation of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. Specifying “men” is also a violation of EEOC legislation. Some firms include at the bottom of their ads a statement such as “we are an equal opportunity employer.” Though this does not preclude you from legal action, it is once again a preventive step. Your nearest EEOC office can provide you with free information on ensuring your advertisements are compliant.

Please circle 23 on Reader Service Card

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etc., once the actual interview begins, your questions must be pertinent to the candidate’s ability to perform the job. Figure 2 lists questions which are considered inappropriate and potentially discriminating according to the EEOC, court cases, and various federal regulations. Even though you may know not to ask these questions, make certain that everyone involved in the interview process in your company is also aware these questions must be avoided.

As you’re auditing the selection part of the HR function, this is a good time to check over your pre-employment applications. Ensure that the questions listed in Figure 2 do not appear there either.

**Performance reviews**

Take a close look at your performance review documents. Are they still valid? Do they continue to accurately evaluate their jobs? Or, are they outdated and you find yourself crossing through certain sections to make them more applicable? Do you even use reviews to assess performance?

Though often considered an annual drudgery, it should at least be a correct reflection of the job it assesses. The best place to start an audit is with the job descriptions you’ve already examined. How close is the performance review to the job description? If you see a disparity, change it. Of course, any alterations made to the performance review should be made known to the employee.

In addition, ensure that your supervisors are trained on how to complete annual performance reviews. If you use rating scales (i.e., rating the employee between 1 and 5, or 1 and 10, etc.), look over recently completed reviews to see if you or your managers are evaluating individuals accurately and not simply rating each employee “right down the middle” so they don’t have to justify outstanding performance or less than average performance.

**Safety**

As experienced arborists know, safety is key to keeping the business running smoothly. However, as contracting deadlines approach and you find yourself shorthanded with staff, be careful that safety does not take a backseat. Major safety audits should occur on a quarterly basis, while spot checks definitely should take place daily.

Figure 3 provides a checklist to assess the safety of your business. Workers’ compensation costs are becoming higher every year, and without a fulltime HR professional experienced in case management, it’s far more prudent to prevent accidents from occurring than to try and learn the intricacies of workers’ compensation in a couple of days.

**Discipline & termination**

In every management seminar you’ve sat in and every book you’ve read, you have heard countless times to document everything. There’s a reason for this. Though the odds are in your favor that you’ll not need them in a case defense, you will find yourself referring back to your documents for various situations. When it comes to disciplinary procedures, and ultimately termination of a problem employee, accurate and timely documentation is the key.

Whether it’s excessive absenteeism, theft, sexual harassment, or just simply an employee who can’t seem to be a productive member of the team, a progressive disciplinary policy is a must. Figure 4 illustrates a sample policy.

In cases of alleged wrongful discharge, courts look for several items. First, did adequate warnings take place that were documented in detail? They want to see that the defendant has a progressive disciplinary process in place, it’s used consistently, and employees are made aware of the policy. Second, documentation of counseling sessions should include the date of the infraction, the nature of the incident, and what actions were taken. Third, some acknowledgement of the counseling from the employee’s standpoint must be evidenced. A space for the employee to sign the disciplinary note should be present.

To prevent employees from saying “I don’t want to sign that because I don’t agree with it,” place just an acknowledgement statement in front of the signature line. For
example, “This is to acknowledge that a discussion has taken place on the above date. My signature does not necessarily mean that I agree with the nature of the discussion, but it does indicate that a discussion has taken place.” And, if the employee still refuses to sign, write on the form, “Employee refuses to sign,” the date, and the signature of your witness who was present during the discussion.

If the employee has gone through the entire disciplinary process (or commits an infraction that justifies immediate termination such as theft), termination is, of course, the final action. Provide the employee with a dismissal letter that indicates the last day of employment and benefits he or she is entitled to receive. Place a copy of that letter in the employee’s file.

**Final advice**

Obviously, there is no way to iterate every single human resources item that should be present in your commercial tree care firm. However, the above is a perfect place to start. The best advice for other areas, such as compensation, is to ensure that people are paid for the job they do and there is a clear interest in providing equal pay for equal work.

In addition, Figure 5 lists key Web sites you’ll find helpful for general HR questions. Again, you should conduct a thorough HR audit once each quarter. If you’re in doubt about something, by all means seek counsel from an employment law specialist, or hire an HR consultant to conduct an annual audit of your business. However, if you follow the advice presented here, you’ll find yourself better prepared to handle any EEOC investigation.

Steven Austin Stovall is a professor of management at Wilmington College in Ohio. He is also a consultant and trainer specializing in management, entrepreneurship, and marketing.

Helpful HR related websites

- [www.hr-guide.com](http://www.hr-guide.com) (provides general information on Human Resource Management topics)
- [www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org) (Society for Human Resource Management home page)
- [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov) (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission)
- [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov) (Department of Labor)
- [www.hr-info.com](http://www.hr-info.com) (provides general information on Human Resource Management topics)
- [www.humanresources.about.com](http://www.humanresources.about.com) (provides general information on Human Resource Management topics)
- [http://directory.google.com/Top/Business/Human_Resources/](http://directory.google.com/Top/Business/Human_Resources/) (provides hundreds of links to a wide variety of Human Resource Management topics)
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With the Freeman Parr award, we honor the memory of a man and the company he helped found, Parr & Hanson in Hicksville, N.Y. Back in the ’50s and ’60s, in the heyday of the “tree skinner” and in the boom created by Dutch Elm Disease, Freeman Parr helped usher in a new era. The “profession,” if you cared to call it that, was pretty rough around the edges and not exactly what you would call customer-friendly. Mr. Parr, by contrast, made his sales calls in a lettered sedan, wearing a suit and signature bow tie. The firm is long gone, purchased by the Davey Company more than 30 years ago. Freeman Parr is deceased. Yet the legacy is one we still honor.

The Freeman Parr program entries epitomize marketing and communication excellence for this industry. More than 20 years old, the program is open to active member companies of the Tree Care Industry Association.

Winners were selected in four categories: Brochure, Newsletter, Company Web Site and Special Entry. All entries were evaluated on their overall appearance, content quality, and their respective success in achieving the company’s marketing and communications goals.
**Newsletter**

In the newsletter category, among numerous great entries we selected The Care of Trees and their publication, “Arbor Topics.” Its distinctive size and pleasing layout and graphics caught our eye - that and the photo of brewing compost tea on page two!

**Special Entry**

In the special entry category, we recognize Arborwell for a unique integrated marketing strategy that sends beautiful, 5-inch by 7-inch greeting cards with personalized messages to all its customers via an internet marketing portal. Through efforts such as this, the company manages to touch each of its customers every three weeks with professional, personalized marketing. Picture cards (above right) the front and (below) the inside of one thank you card and (at left) the cover of another of Arborwell’s cards.

Dear Sohn,

I wanted to personally thank you for filling out and returning our Bravo Card. It means so much to hear a customer cares about our service enough to respond. Our employees appreciate it as well. Each of the employees on the job will receive a $10.00 tip from me, thanks to your compliments.

Please feel free to contact me at 1800-699-9575 or sohn@arborwell.com if I can be of further assistance.

![Signature Image]

I appreciate your support and response to the Bravo Card!
Promoting safety in the field is one of TCIA’s core values, because after all, safety is fundamental to success in this industry. The TCIA Safety Committee developed the TCIA Safety Award program. It recognizes two broad areas of outstanding contribution by recognizing companies as well as crews or individuals who have accomplished something positive and noteworthy.

This year, we are gratified to be able to present five well deserved awards, four in the category of “contribution” and one recognizing the efforts of an individual crew. Notably, four of the five companies are repeat winners from last year.

The winners in alphabetical order are:

- The F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company, for its ongoing efforts to improve the industry’s knowledge of hazard tree risk assessment. We’ll start this story in 2002 when Joe Bones and Dr. Tom Smiley presented a seminar on tree risk assessment at EXPO to a capacity audience. They married their visual presentation to their audio transcript to create a highly effective PowerPoint, then donated that intellectual property to TCIA. This formed the basis for our newly released DVD on hazard trees. Since then, Bartlett has conducted numerous seminars and workshops on the subject for the National Arbor Day Foundation, at various locales around the country, and even by invitation in Singapore.

- Carolina Tree Care for exemplary actions it has taken to instill a culture of safety among its employees. They have demonstrated their commitment by hiring a full-time safety director. Not rare, in and of itself, but this person is also qualified and empowered to provide individual as well as family counseling, addressing the root cause of many unsafe workplace behaviors. Carolina Tree also uses an aggressive, responsive corporate policy manual and custom-tailored audio and video safety training.

- SavATree is recognized for their innovative approach to dealing with safety issues in a rapidly expanding organization. Over the past two years, they centralized all their safety training materials on their intranet site, allowing all employees instant access and enhanced, self-directed participation. Changes in the program can now be instantly communicated throughout a growing number of offices and employees. SavATree enjoys injury statistics well below the TCIA-reported average for companies its size.

- Finally in the WebSite category, there was one winner chosen from among some excellent entries. The winner was Winkler’s Tree Service in La Grange Park, Illinois. The site features excellent conceptual design and lots of content, something that is somewhat rare for an arborist firm’s site. It also stands out with an animation feature on its home page.

Peter Anduzzi of the F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company accepted his company’s TCIA Safety Award.
Vine & Branch Inc of Carmel Indiana is recognized for its Hazard Tree Recognition and Visual Tree Assessment program. First, the company took the time to fully educate its entire staff so they could better educate clients. President Jud Scott authored a nine-part series of articles, first published in the Indiana and Michigan Builders Journal. It has since been picked up by Indiana Parks and Recreation magazine, and excerpted in various newsletters for local building associations as well as arborist groups. The company also engaged in an extensive letter-writing campaign as part of its overall PR efforts.

Exceptional crews can make the exceptionally hazardous job look routine. This Safety Award recognizes the crane removal crew at Winkler’s Tree Service in La Grange Park, Ill., consisting of Jose Moreno, Humberto Fernandez, Manuel Rosillo, Jose DeLopez and Parnell Barner. They represent more than 60 years combined experience. Together for three years, they have removed 90,000 diameter-inches of the most hazardous and difficult trees with zero accidents. They attribute their success to constant awareness and exceptional communication.

Thanks to all who submitted entries this year.

Peter Gerstenberger is Senior Advisor for Safety, Compliance & Standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.
Shared Pockets Often Equals Tax Trouble

By Mark E. Battersby

Incorporated, but closely-held tree care businesses and their owners/shareholders routinely – and legally – advance money to each other. This often takes the form of paying each other’s debts or obligations. In fact, in many businesses, both advances and repayments often occur at the same time, at least for tax purposes.

All-too-often, the business, the shareholder and their tax advisors ignore not only same-time transactions or cross-loans but also ignore the more routine shuffling of cash between a tree care business and its shareholder/owner. Unfortunately, the ever-vigilant Internal Revenue Service rarely does ignores transfers between the pockets of a tree care business’s owner and the business.

Before the new lower – and temporary – tax rates for dividends were enacted, the IRS often targeted incorporated businesses, demanding a portion of the operation’s profits be distributed as dividends rather than as compensation. Excessive compensation, in the IRS’s eyes at least, indicated that the owner/shareholder was attempting to avoid the double-tax due on dividend income – once at the corporate level and taxed again as the personal income of the recipient.

Today, however, the IRS appears to be focusing its attention on the tax consequences of those so-called “related-party” transactions, especially “cross-loans” and other “below-market” loans between a corporation and its shareholders.

My pocket, the business pocket – Not the same

Generally, when a shareholder advances money to the incorporated tree care business he or she controls, it is considered to be a contribution to capital with no tax consequences. Many of these transfers, as well as loans between a shareholder and his or her incorporated tree care business should, however, call for interest payments. Interest payments that are deductible by the borrower and must be reported as income by the lender. A low or non-existent rate of interest on the transaction means, of course, that one party has a smaller tax bill.

Since a tree care business troubled enough to require an infusion of cash from its shareholders is unlikely to need another tax deduction, the payment of interest is often ignored or stated at a very low rate. Many transactions between family members, a partner and his or her partnership and an arborist, tree care professional or landscaper and his or her incorporated business, will be labeled by the ever-vigilant IRS as a ‘related-party’ transaction. Unless that transaction qualifies as “arm’s length,” the IRS has the power to recharacterize it. That means interest income, at a rate that the IRS deems fair, paid retroactively to the lender and credited to the borrower. These retroactive hits on the lender can result in a substantial tax bill.

What tangled webs ...

All so-called “below-market” loans between a corporation and any of its shareholders – even in those situations where both advances and repayments occur at the same time – have tax consequences. Consider a situation revealed in a recent, non-binding decision by the U.S. Tax Court involving the cross-loans between ATV, an incorporated business in another field with substantial gross sales and its owner/shareholder.

During 1997, ATV and Paul Revere, the founder and 45 percent owner, had open account indebtedness running back and forth between them. At all times during 1997, Revere’s debt to ATV exceeded its debt to him but none called for interest payments.

“Advances” to Revere were to cover personal items he purchased with his corporate credit card and child support payments made on his behalf by the corporation. Revere owned the ATV headquarters building and the main “advance” from him to the corporation consisted of the monthly rent on that space, net of mortgage payments made by ATV on his behalf.

In their efforts to eliminate the tax-avoidance problems related to “below-market” interest situations, Congress created some rather esoteric concepts. One 1984 law change was the addition of Section 7872 to the tax law to deal with gift loans, demand loans and other below-market loans. Section 7872, “Below Market Rate Loans,” did more than merely impute interest – it also provided a framework for doing something else with the foregone interest in corporate loans to shareholders.

As explained by a Tax Court judge in the Revere case, under Section 7872, “the foregone interest on a loan by a corporation to its shareholders is treated as a distribution to the shareholder and generally taxed as a dividend. The foregone interest on a loan...
by a shareholder to a corporation is treated as a capital contribution.” If the imputed interest is ignored then “the adverse current income tax consequences to the shareholder under Section 7872 get maximized.”

**Related, but on different pages**

When different methods of accounting are used by related taxpayers, accrued interest and expenses owed to a related taxpayer may not be deducted until such time as the interest or expense payment is included in the gross income of the cash-basis payee. Thus, an accrual-basis payor is placed on the cash basis for the purpose of deducting business expenses and interest owed to a related cash-basis taxpayer. The deduction is deferred until the cash-basis payee takes the item into income.

The related taxpayers covered by this rule include certain family members, members of a controlled group of corporations, controlling shareholders and controlled corporations as well as owners of pass-through entities such as a partnership and its partners or an S corporation and its shareholders.

A personal services corporation may not deduct payments made to owner-employees before the tax year in which such person must include the payment in his or her gross income. For this purpose, a personal service corporation and any employee-shareholder are considered related.

**Related-party transactions**

Loans between a tree care business and its owner/shareholder that are ignored or that carry little or no interest are generally ‘recharacterized’ as arm’s length transactions by the IRS whenever discovered. That’s right, the IRS has the power to retroactively treat the transaction as an arm’s length transaction in which the lender is treated as having made a loan to the business bearing the stated federal rate of interest.

A related-party transaction is deemed to be a transfer in the form of a gift, dividend, contribution to capital, compensation or other manner of payment (depending upon the nature of the loans) from the lender to the borrower which, in turn, is retransferred by the borrower to the lender to satisfy the accruing interest.

This rule applies to all gift loans; corporation-shareholder loans; compensation loans between an employer and employee or between independent contractors and clients; tax avoidance loans; and any below-market interest loans in which an interest arrangement has a significant effect on either the lender’s or the borrower’s tax liability.

Fortunately, a ‘de minimis’ exception applies to gift loans totaling $10,000 or less.
between individuals, so long as the loan is not directly attributable to the purchase or carrying of income-producing assets. There is also a $10,000 de minimis exception for compensation-related or corporation-shareholder loans that do not have tax avoidance as a principal purpose.

**Less than arm’s length**

Generally, a related-party transaction is considered to be arm’s-length so long as the stated principal amount is less than the amount that must be repaid. The tax rules (Section 483) kick-in only when there is inadequate or “unstated interest.” Under the tax rules, related-party transactions where the amount borrowed is the same as the amount to be repaid, require that unstated interest be determined using an interest rate equal to the applicable federal rate.

The Applicable Federal Rate (AFR) is determined by the IRS using the federal short-term, mid-term and long-term rates for every calendar month based on the average market yields of specified maturities. It is broken down in this manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term of the debt</th>
<th>Applicable Federal Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not over 3 years</td>
<td>Fed. Short-term rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 3 years, no more than 9 years</td>
<td>Fed. Mid-term rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 9 years</td>
<td>Fed. Long-term rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**A loan gone south**

If a tree care professional, arborist or landscape contractor gets stuck after lending money to his or her business, it’s usually treated as a nonbusiness bad debt, deductible against capital gains. Or, up to $3,000 may be deducted against ordinary income in any one year. However, if the loss is a business bad debt, the amount is fully deductible.

The tree care professional may be able to claim a business bad debt if the money was loaned to his or her business in an effort to preserve their employment. That’s right, loans made to maintain employment are made considered to have been made in the course of the trade or business of the employee – even an employee/owner. The deduction is usually taken as a miscellaneous itemized deduction on Schedule A of the lender’s personal tax return subject to the two percent floor of personal itemized deductions.

With the IRS having the legal power to recharacterize related-party transactions whenever warranted, they usually do it on their terms. Obviously, it will pay every tree care business owner to make sure those pocket-to-pocket transactions qualify as arm’s length.
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Moving wood without breaking your back is a job that is becoming increasingly important to arborists. In the past, and to a certain extent even today, arborists sliced a log into many small pieces and lifted them up by hand. With current technology, you can use a crane to lift huge pieces of a tree – or even a whole tree – directly from a takedown to the truck. But for many arborists, getting a log from stump to chipper or truck lies somewhere in between.

Most companies have a lift mounted directly on their truck or use a loader, such as a skid steer or articulating loader, to get the job done. It’s a wonderful feeling as you watch a loader pick up huge chunks of wood and know that you won’t have to do it manually, and that it’s making you money. It was only about a decade ago that many tree companies were still picking up most of their wood by hand.

**Truck-mounted grapples**

“A few years ago the products were too bulky and heavy” for tree companies, says Tom Hirt, marketing manager for Komatsu Forestry in the southern United States. “Then as the weight dropped, a lot of tree service owners started saying, ‘Hey, I can use this.’ The loader manufacturers saw a truck-mounted loader evolving out of this. It would have many advantages, including reduced fuel costs compared to a grapple mounted on a mobile machine.” Also a grapple mounted directly on a truck eliminates the skidding, pivoting motion of the grapple-equipped loader, and hence the damage done by the machine tires, but its reach is obviously limited.

There are three main types of truck-mounted grapples. A standard knuckleboom bends at one spot in the center, and is usually stored over the bed of the truck. A Z-mount knuckleboom folds over itself and allows the grapple to travel attached to the boom with the entire apparatus between the cab and body. A cargo crane folds up in sections, one beside another. It, too, rides between cab and bed, but the grapple cannot remain attached during storage.
Hiab produces an example of a truck-mounted crane. They tend to be slower than loaders, but they are very deliberate in their movements, usually have a greater reach, and cranes generally are built to more rigorous engineering standards than other types of lifts or hoists. A Z-mount weighs between 2,800 and 4,500 pounds and frequently mounts on a truck with a GVW below CDL requirements. The crane or Z-mount loaders have the added convenience that, when you pull into the yard with a full load, you don’t have to get out of the cab and move the loader arm out of the way; you can go right to the dump cycle from the cab. The standard knuckle-boom tends to be less expensive than the other two and, depending on the truck size, can be either below or above CDL. Z-mounts and standard knucklebooms usually have work stations located safely on the truck, while cranes often work by remote control.

“We are very careful not to call our Z-mount knuckleboom a crane,” says Hirt, “because a crane has OSHA standards and other standards in the industry – such as load holding fixtures – that loaders do not have.”

Z-mounts and standard knucklebooms work well in hurricane or other major storm clean-up operations. They allow one rig to pull up and load many trucks. After the debris is hauled off, you can take the grapple off and put on a debris bucket. This attachment is a clamshell bucket designed to clean up rakings or sawdust without digging into a lawn.

One new attachment that seems particularly suited to truck-mounted lifts is the grapple saw. This attachment allows the operator to grab a limb high in the tree, cut the limb with a saw extension, and then lower the limb to the ground.

**Loader-mounted**

Tree services that need to cover long distances between tree and truck commonly use a loader or skid steer with a grapple. They give you the versatility to carry large piles of brush and feed them directly into a chipper, or to carry logs from far distances and load them onto a truck.

“These loaders are so versatile with the quick connect system, and they are extremely labor saving,” says David Glass, vice president of Evans Equipment in Burton, Mich., a retail sales outlet for the SSG Grappler manufactured by Northshore Manufacturing. “The universal attachment system allows an operator to put the same grapple on skid steers, all wheel steer loaders, track loaders or mini-excavators. There are so many attachments for the tree care industry that can be universally fitted,” allowing a tree service to use a variety of ways to lift logs.
Of course, the machine mounted grapple falls into a few categories as well. There is the rake style, which picks up the logs facing across the machine, does not rotate, and often comes without a winch. Their strength is that they can pick up a large pile of brush or several logs at once, they have fewer moving parts or hydraulic hoses to break, and they are sturdy and less expensive. Then there is the scissors style grapple, which many arborists will recognize as the attachment made by ImpleMax of Bozeman, Mont. These grapples are more expensive, but can pick up a log facing across a skid steer or pointing directly in front of it. They can be built with a winch and some manufacturers make them with mechanical rotation, though many do not. Their versatility and ability to allow an operator to mechanically feed a chipper make these grapples popular with many arborists. Then there is the grapple that is a hybrid of both called the compact bypass grapple. It is a clam shell style grapple that comes off a single arm, rotates 360 degrees and, because of its design, does not block the view of the operator while working. They have a nice ease of operation and some are made with a winch.
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Rake-style

The Swinger Division of NMC-Wollard in Eau Claire, Wisconsin manufacturers the LundTech grapple. “It’s a heavy duty attachment that has universal hookups,” says Bruce Steingart, the VP of marketing. “Mr. Lund is an arborist who approached us to manufacture a rake style attachment, because he couldn’t find an attachment that could hold up to the rigors of tree work.” Swinger started making the grapples less than two years ago, and has had strong interest in them for their popular articulating loader.

At Multitek in Prentice, Wis., Howard Heikkinen, the sales manager said much the same thing, “Our LG200 can pick and move multiple logs at once, so they are most suited to land clearing operations or working around a log yard.” The units weigh less than 600 pounds and are commonly mounted on skid steers in the 40-60 hp range. For skid steers with larger hp capacity, Multitek makes a grapple correspondingly larger. Many arborists like these attachments, according to Heikkinen, because they are less expensive, yet versatile and sturdy.

Scissors style

This attachment, made by ImpleMax or Addington Equipment, of Chichester, N.H., helped establish the grapple as a standard in the industry. These attachments allow the machine operator to carry a log across the machine or pointing away from it. This aids in loading logs onto a truck or feeding directly into a chipper. They can come equipped with or without a winch. Adding a winch usually adds between $1,000 and $1,500 to the cost of the grapple. This goes for any grapple whether rake style, truck mounted or scissors style. They typically lift up to 2,000 pounds, and they have saved the backs of thousands of arborists.

A typical scenario for using one of these attachments goes like this: The ground person free-spools out a desired amount of cable to a tree, and then wraps the cable around the butt of the log. The tree is winched over to the truck by the operator. The ground person unhooks the cable and the operator pulls in the remaining wire...
rope. Then either the ground person or the operator flips a switch to operate the grapple. The ground person then saws off the limbs and the logs too big for the chipper. Then he steps back. The operator picks up the large logs and loads them onto a truck or off to the side. He then feeds the brush into the chipper with the grapple.

Compact bypass grapple

This type gets its name because two tongs from one direction marry inside the two tongs coming from the other direction, thus bypassing each other. Two arborists working in different parts of the country developed this type of grapple because they were frustrated that they couldn’t find a grapple that met their specifications. They are the Beaver Squeezer Grapple of Comer, Ga., and the Hood Jr. sold by Quality Tree Service in Rhinelander, Wis.

Stan Ogletree at Beaver Squeezer says the driving forces to build the attachment were versatility and affordability. “Everyone’s been real happy with them. You can’t always get a grapple close enough, so if you want to get wood from point A to point B, why not put a grapple on a loader to do it?”

Ogletree saw a need in the market, because he noticed that many of the attachments out there were not versatile enough. He wanted a grapple with improved sightlines, an ability to mechanically rotate 360 degrees, that came with a winch, and that carried the wood on a lower profile that allowed the operator to lift more. In addition, since there are two tongs on each side of the grapple that marry into each other, this grapple can pick up small logs without the spinning-off action common to scissor grapples, and it can pick up boulders.

What Ogletree brings to the plate is that his company manufactures all of his attachments. He builds them sturdy and tries to include features that work for operators. For instance, when logs are lifted by the tongs, whether pointed across the machine or pointed away from it, they are immediately locked into placed by a set of teeth. He will also customize an attachment based on a particular need of a tree service.

Ogletree understands that sometimes a truck-mounted grapple works best, but because of the various situations arborists will find themselves in, he also knew that there would be plenty of uses for his attachments. As with any new piece of equipment, arborists would be well advised to try out these attachments at a dealer, request a video, or see them at a trade show, such as TCI EXPO.

Technology is changing rapidly when it comes to using machines for tree-care, but, surprisingly, the impetus is not coming...
from the tree care industry. As Hirt from Komatsu explains, “Most technology changes come from other businesses, because the tree service industry is a small market.” The place to find the new innovations are at the trade shows. “Guys who don’t go to trade shows are living in the Dark Ages,” says Hirt.

“Tree care is a growing industry, but up till now there have not been a lot of machinery companies to service the tree care industry,” says Hirt. “They just haven’t realized the value of the market. Now you have machinery companies realizing the value of tree businesses and that are making machinery with multiple attachments that allow tree services to work with versatility.”

As time passes, it appears that the commercial tree-care industry can look forward to improved methods to do its work, with machines that are stronger, faster, safer and easier to use.

Michael Roche is a certified arborist and president of Stowe Tree Experts Inc. in Stowe, Vt.
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The article was headlined “OPP REPORT” with the sub heading, “Man dies while falling trees.” It went on to describe how a 43-year-old male had been killed as a result of sustained injuries while felling trees. The Ontario Provincial Police (Canadian counterpart to state police in the U.S.) and the Ministry of Labour (Canadian counterpart to OSHA) were investigating the fatality that occurred in late January of this year and a post mortem was scheduled.

When I read the name, I was jolted, for I had met the victim a decade ago while doing contract work for an area company. I well remember the day this fellow had shown up on the job as an hourly paid worker, employed by the contractor. The work involved felling and cutting to stove lengths numerous trees in a thinning process to allow other smaller trees to reach a fuller spread and height.

I recall, after being introduced to him, inquiring if he had cut trees before. He answered with a quick yes. The individual I was doing the contract work for left his new employee with me, instructing him as to his duties.

I watched him for the first 15 minutes, and it became all too clear to me that his education in the area of tree work had been sadly neglected. The trees being targeted were some large silver maples in a low area that flooded in the spring and remained underwater for much of the year.

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We maintained a clear distance from each other in the interests of routine safety and became engrossed in our work, with the objective to have more than enough wood cut and ready for loading when the first truck came, loaded, left to unload, and returned at 90 minute intervals. It was a routine job, requiring only the skill to aim the target trees into an area outside the established road area for egress.

I had worked a good hour with periodic glances at the new worker who I noticed tackling a very large tree about five foot dbh. I had picked a tree of similar size, cut the directional notch, and then the backcut. This particular tree had grown in a balanced manner, making it easy to fell in any direction with a wedge. I had left a hinge of about 3 inches and noticed no crown sway at all. Shutting the saw off, I was startled by the presence of the new worker to my left, 10 feet out, watching me work. I was displeased, because I did not want or need anyone in the danger area. As I leaned over to pick up the wedge and drive it in to topple the tree, the new worker told me to cut...
through some more. I held my breath, my temper, set the wedge, gave it a few taps, and told him to get out of the area by the back door before I finished the process. Instead, he started telling me again that all I had to do to finish the felling was to cut through the remaining hinge area more.

It was at this point that I ordered him out of the area immediately, an order to which he complied with no further argument. A few swings and the tree tottered, then fell in the targeted area. I started cutting it into stove lengths with never a further thought to the new worker.

Stopping a few minutes later to sharpen my saw, I noticed him approaching again, somewhat pale and with a serious look on his face. He walked quickly up to me and with no hesitation informed me that he had narrowly missed being crushed by the large tree he had been cutting. Without a word I walked over to the area he had been working in, examined the stump and realized immediately what had happened. There had been a notch, but the backcut went right through into the notch and the tree had fallen backwards. I was aghast at this demonstration of ignorance. There could have been a fatality, and I felt shaken by the very thought of the implications of such a tragedy.

When the contractor returned, I impolitely harangued him for not assuring the new worker was knowledgeable about the work and told him what had happened. I also instructed him to tell his new charge to stay far away from me, as I had no time to watch someone while performing my work. His solution was to instruct me to fell all trees and his new worker would then cut the wood into stove lengths. This arrangement lasted two more days when, for whatever reason, the unfortunate fellow was fired. I never saw or heard about him again, until I read the accident notice a decade later.

Details of the fatality indicated the worker had felled a tree into a “hang-up” situation, and while walking under the hanger, the tree had let loose, crushing his mid section. Workers nearby cut the tree and removed it off him, but he was pronounced dead by the responding emergency crew.

It was only a few years ago that another fatality occurred in this area when a worker attempting to fell a tree crushed an observer who never should have been in the work area.

I firmly believe that accidents do not happen, they are caused. In both these cases, common sense safety rules were ignored. I suspect ignorance and disregard of safety and common sense claimed another victim. Yet weekend warriors will continue to take to the woods, with chain saws in hand, and start their process of cutting wood to make a few dollars, supplementing their regular jobs and in the process risking life and limb.

**Weekend warriors**

If I may now digress, I received a call a short while ago to assist one of these weekend warriors who attempted to fell a tree and managed to get his saw jammed when the tree hung up. His wife insisted I go back to the worksite and finish felling the tree, free the saw, and cut the wood in sections. On the appointed day, I drove to the...
residence, picked up the client and followed his directions to an isolated waterfront property. After completing the job, which took us two hours, I asked him about the broken glass on the ground in the area. I noted what appeared to be scrape marks on the lower trunk from a chain or cable, yet wondered who would have been so uninformed as to try to pull a tree over with a remaining wood section of four inches holding the trunk.

Visibly embarrassed, he confessed that he had attached his SUV to the tree with a cable and attempted to pull the tree back to free the saw and drop it safely. He had taken no spare saw, no ax, no wedge, and in the process of ramming and raring he had snapped the cable and the backlash had hit his rear window, shattering it. The cost to replace it was several hundred dollars.

With such scenarios occurring, is it any wonder that there are those of us who demand compulsory certification in the area of our work? This is a profession where injuries/fatalities can and do occur to the experienced and knowledgeable, and are thus more probable to happen to the unskilled.

In this great banana republic to the north of the USA, where we have billions squandered on a useless law that mandates gun registration for law abiding citizens, and ignores the real problem of gun smuggling within organized crime, isn’t it amazing that politicians worry about the rights of people to buy a chain saw, itself a dangerous weapon, to be able to go out and perform an act that has the potential to injure/kill themselves and others?

The time for certification in this profession is long overdue, and the injuries/deaths will continue unabated until that policy is put in place. Incidents such as those mentioned here make this more evident every year.

Edward Kennedy is owner/operator of Meadow Green Tree Experts & Certified Arborists in Harrowsmith, Ontario, Can., and writes about issues affecting the tree care industry.
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By Mark Garvin

When four successive hurricanes hit Florida last fall, line-clearance tree contractors responded to the emergency. In some cases, they headed south into the freshening winds so they could be ready before the storm struck. They battled fatigue, logistical headaches, wildlife and special electrical hazards.

At the forefront was the Asplundh Tree Expert Co., which had almost 7,000 people on the ground during the course of four storms. “We usually have about 1,500 people working in Florida,” says Ryan Swier, field personnel manager with Asplundh. “We brought in about 5,500 outside people from across the United States and Canada.”

Swier is on the company’s storm team, which coordinates the movement of crews from the corporate headquarters storm room in Willow Grove, Pa. Swier is one of six storm coordinators who are led by company vice president Matt Asplundh. When a large storm hits, all assist with logistics.

“There’s no shortage of volunteers for these events because of the overtime potential,” notes Swier. “Usually, we let our employees know they will be gone for an extended period of time, since you never know.”

Last fall, with one hurricane after another, Asplundh had crews that arrived back home and would have to re-supply, turn around, and head back down. Some people were away for 30 days, though most spent less time.

And where do 5,500 people sleep? Hotels, motels, tents – anywhere they can find a bed. “The customers that we work for set up the sleeping arrangements,” explains Swier. “Every sending region fills out a roster, so the utility knows how many people will be arriving.”

Communication was less of a problem than one might imagine. The utilities understand how important instant communication is, so they had radios and phones that worked at the ready. Prior to the hurricanes’ landfall, Asplundh’s local managers actually moved their offices temporarily out of the path of the storm in order to maintain communications.

“The cell towers were down briefly, but we didn’t have too many problems overall.”

The utilities also manage the work assignments. Larger utilities have well developed storm cleanup protocols. They assign zones, while the tree contractors manage the work from a production and safety standpoint. All of the contractors work exclusively for the utility. They may see the need to help private property owners, but their first and only priority is to restore power. Some utilities may tell their customers they will come back out to clean up debris. Some may not. It all depends on the policy of the utility.

“We politely and professionally explain to homeowners that we are contracted to the utility and are unable to do private work,” says Swier.

Stressing safety

Though utility work is inherently hazardous, responding to storm emergencies holds additional hazards. Safety briefings
start in the home office and filter down to daily briefings of the crews.

“We do safety stand-downs before crews even leave for a storm,” notes Swier. “We make sure the trucks are in safe working condition. We talk about safe driving habits and the type of conditions they might be driving into – no power for traffic signals, people running through lights that don’t work. The hazards change as we get closer to the area. On the way down, we talk about safe driving. Once there, we stress that they should treat all downed wires as energized. Crews don’t know if there is backfeed from private generators. We also review ways to deal with tension wood where lines are on trees.”

Asplundh doesn’t just send bucket operators and groundperson down to restore power. Corporate safety supervisors are on site, too, to make sure that everyone comes home.

“We send corporate safety people down to large storm operations to make sure that stand-downs are done and to emphasize safety communication each day. If we have any specific issues, we communicate those each day. Safety is always at the forefront of the company’s operations, and particular hazards relating to storm cleanup are stressed,” says Swier.

“Each night our regional managers and corporate safety department have conference calls on things that might have occurred during the day. We want to communicate whatever we have learned to all the crews by the next morning,” stresses Swier. “It’s a constant reminder to focus on safety. It was a coordinated effort between the people in the field, management, our corporate staff, and the safety department. The crews worked long hours over several weeks. We made sure people were getting proper rest and that we communicated the conditions on the ground to crews daily.”

Wolf Tree in Knoxville, Tenn., headed down to help out non-client utilities. Wolf sent about 200 people altogether to deal with storm work. “We had one contract with Clay Electric,” reports Louis Geasland, safety director with Wolf. “We brought people in from six states to work with a number of different utilities – Tampa Electric, SECO, Kissimmee Utility, Gulf Power and others.”

“People finished work, came home, went back, finished, went home, came back. It was one right after another. I spent more than a month there myself,” he says.

“After Ivan hit, we had crews working just north of Pensacola,” reports Geasland. “There is nothing there. They built a tent city – one for sleeping, one for feeding. They brought in tractor-trailers with showers and rest rooms. They had all the comforts of home, but they were sleeping in a huge tent behind the power company. In a disaster situation, you take what you can get.”

“We were out there just a few hours after the hurricanes passed through. We started at the substations and fanned out,” recalls Geasland. “As time went on and they developed real-time knowledge of where power was down, they knew where to send us each day.”

For the better part of seven weeks, the Storm Center in Willow Grove was a hub of communication as storm coordinator Matt Asplundh (head of table) and alternates Ryan Swier (standing, from left), Jim Orr, Pete Fengler and Scott Lambrecht lined up resources, dispatched them and constantly updated the managers and customers involved. Executive Assistant Cheryl Ridolfo (standing center) and alternate Jim Hines also supported the effort.

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The hardest thing to come by?

“Sleep,” notes Geasland. “We worked 16 hours a day, seven days a week. We took extra care to keep our fingers on the pulse of the crews. We monitored their temperament, making sure there wasn’t any infighting. We negotiated off days, but for the most part the guys hung in there. We stressed pre-job planning, communicating hazards, working with the power company. We worked the entire time with no lost time accidents. Our guys responded incredibly. We had safety meetings every morning. We emphasized saw chaps, especially, since the guys were doing a lot of cutting on the ground. We stressed electric hazard issues, because of generators. We had people from the power company with us at all times to make sure the lines weren’t energized.”

Wolf crews weren’t expected to clear debris or help out on private property. “We didn’t do anything with the debris,” says Geasland, “we created it. The debris cleanup was taken care of by other contractors. There was one elderly lady who needed some help. I had one of my climbers – on his lunch hour – go into her yard and remove a limb that was hanging over her house. I got clearance from the utility. It only took 15 minutes, but it really helped her out. Most of the time, we had to refuse requests.”

Wright Tree Service in Des Moines, Iowa, sent 150 people from Florida and Alabama for storm work, reports Scott Packard, company president. “We ran a constant stream of people back and forth,” he says. “We missed Charley, the first one, but we sent people for Frances, Jeanne and Ivan.”

Wright didn’t have existing contracts in the region. Instead, they were called in by Lewis Tree Service to help out on the lines they maintained for Glades Electric and Progress Energy. Lewis needed a large number of crews, more than either company could provide. Initially, Wright sent down 80 people from the Midwest, who worked through Lewis as a subcontractor for the first hurricane. “The utility coordinated where we worked and where we stayed,” says Packard. “They set up staging areas that we deployed from. Crews stayed everywhere, including at Disney World.”

The crews are hand-picked volunteers explains Packard. Wright’s policy is to contact existing customers and get permission to release a certain number of crews. They also choose the managers who will go. “The guys just love storm work,” he says. “For one thing, it’s a great opportunity for them to make pretty good wages. Most had never been through a hurricane, so this was a different experience for them.”

Wright’s crews were on site and waiting before the hurricane made landfall. The utility wanted everyone in the encampment two days before the storm hit. Since hurricanes are more predictable than tornadoes, crews can be ready to go as soon as the storm passes.

“We try to bring everything with us,” says Jerry Black, central division manager for Wright, who was on the ground in Florida. “We bring extra chain, extra everything. We had a few trucks break down, and we needed mobile services, but we were pretty fortunate down there. We carry a lot of spares, and the utilities are very helpful. They often have on-staff mechanics.

“We would meet at the staging area, which was a mobile RV information center, with caterers, tents, water and everything we needed,” relates Black. “They would tell us where we were headed for the day.”

At the end of the day, Wright trucks returned to the staging area. The utility refueled the trucks overnight and bussed the crews to the motels. While the utility took care of fuel, routing, communications and sleeping arrangements, tree companies were free to concentrate on getting the work done efficiently and safely. “Safety is our No. 1 concern,” stresses Black. “Because of the special hazards involved in storm work, we take extra time for safety meetings. The utilities always have an ori-
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entation and safety meeting too. We came back with no lost time accidents."

While the vegetation was different in Florida from what Midwest crews were used to, they adapted easily. Before they left, the utility briefed them on the heat, the need for sunscreen and other work conditions they weren’t accustomed to.

“The guys were more worried about poisonous plants, snakes and alligators,” says Black. “At night, the lights would shine on the eyeballs of alligators in the ditches, so they would stay alert. And some of the motels weren’t the nicest. At one, there were geckos and tree frogs in the rooms. One of our guys woke up with a tree frog stuck to his forehead. He jumped up screaming and dancing around.”

Despite the long hours and sometimes uncomfortable conditions, Wright employees had a sense of pride and accomplishment in getting the power back on. “We had whole neighborhoods coming out and clapping for the guys,” remembers Black. “Homeowners were bringing out food and drinks. It made all of the long hours worthwhile.”

For Packard, the highest hurdle in successful storm work isn’t lodging, safety or re-supply but selective enforcement by state transportation departments. “We had a 13-page letter from Jeb Bush declaring a state of emergency. Still, the inspectors at the weigh station said, ‘You ain’t in Florida boy. You are in Missouri’.”

“We can have all of the proper paperwork, but if the guy at the weigh station wants to be a jerk, it doesn’t matter. We had everything we needed legally. They still wanted to inspect the trucks, examine log books, etc. There’s nothing you can do. Some states are worse than others.”

While state officials outside the areas hit hardest by hurricanes might not have understood the urgency, the people living in Florida certainly did. Arriving crews were welcomed as heroes in most neighborhoods. “Getting thank-you letters after the storm from classrooms of kids was very rewarding,” Swier says. “Some of these people lost almost everything they had and yet they were so hospitable. They were cooking meals and thanking crews day in and day out.”

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Full-Day Electrical Hazards Awareness Workshops to Benefit U.S. Arborists.

Interested parties may register online at http://www.treecareindustry.org/EHAP.

These FREE EHAP workshops are made possible by a federal grant from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and many local host partners across the US.

The grant was awarded through the Susan Harwood Training Grant Program, which provides funding for nonprofit organizations to conduct training and education programs for employers and workers on the recognition, avoidance, and prevention of safety and health hazards in their workplaces.

TCIA’s Electrical Hazards Awareness Program (EHAP), introduced in 1975, has trained thousands of arborists involved in line clearance and those working on residential properties near energized lines. It is widely recognized as the training standard for complying with OSHA 29 CFR 1910.269 regulations.

The FREE workshops will provide participants with most of the formal requirements of an Electrical Hazard Awareness Training Program (EHAP). Topics will focus on training requirements that serve as a prerequisite for working within 10 feet of an electrical conductor. Participants will learn about identifying electrical system components, the presence and nature of electrical hazards, protective measures available, and common unsafe acts to avoid. Workshops will be offered in English and Spanish, with accompanying TCIA EHAP materials (a retail value of $135) provided at no charge in either language.

Approximately 34% of tree care worker fatalities are related to electrical hazards. These workshops will help reduce the number of fatalities and injuries.

TCIA (formerly the NAA) is an international trade association that develops safety, education and management programs and standards of tree care practices. TCIA is the only accrediting body of tree care firms in the United States.

To register for an EHAP workshop, please visit: http://www.treecareindustry.org/EHAP or call 1-800-733-2622.

Seminars will be located in most major metropolitan regions.

*Workshops are free. A fee for food & beverage service may be charged.

This is NOT a complete certification program. Passing chapter exams from the manual provided and completing approved CPR and first-aid courses are also course completion requirements which may be used by employers to support designation of qualified line clearance trimmer status. For more information about TCIA EHAP certifications, call 1-800-733-2622 or visit us online at www.tcia.org.

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Please circle 73 on Reader Service Card
By Nikki Nichols

When the average person looks at a tree knocked over in a storm, the general thought is that the tree is destined for the trash heap. Sam Sherrill sees the same tree with a different pair of eyes. Sherrill, who has a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Cincinnati, has spent the last several years trying to convince as many people as possible to refrain from burning and burying trees.

“My belief is nothing green gets wasted,” Sherrill asserts.

And for the last several years, Sherrill has been working hard to spread the word. Sherrill published a book last year, *Harvesting Urban Timber*, about using green resources in the most efficient ways possible. In the book, a small, portable sawmill is used as an example to show the value of urban timber and its various potential uses.

“The green waste that comes out of urban areas can be diverted into mulch, lumber and to co-generation fuel for coal-fired electric plants,” Sherrill says. Green waste can be used as biomass and can be fed to plants instead of just coal.”

Portable wood mills come in various sizes. This one was being used by Last Chance Logs-to-Lumber at the TCIA’s Day of Service in Detroit last October. In one day they produced about 4,000 board feet of ash lumber with an average value of $6.65 per board foot.

There are several co-generation plants in Michigan and Minnesota, proving this concept can work. Market Street Energy Company and Tri-Gen-Cinergy can produce up to 25 megawatts of electricity in burners fired with wood residuals.

In two years of researching and writing, Sherrill found that “trees depend less on what they are than where they grow. A cherry tree in rural Pennsylvania is likely to become nice furniture; in a city, mulch.”

According to a 1994 USDA Forest Service study, between 3 and 4 billion board feet of lumber is wasted each year. In the U.S. alone, we consume 14 billion board feet of hardwood lumber each year. Sherrill says we could make some serious headway in preserving national forests by eliminating the waste.
“If we used all this wood, we would not have to take anything from the nation’s forests,” Sherrill says.

Sherrill fears that, since the most recent data was collected in 1994, the waste may be far worse than projected. The study did not include data on wood fiber converted into mulch, firewood, or wood that was buried with no record. Sherrill’s book outlines various ways to maximize green resources through community grassroots efforts. His own efforts began somewhat by accident.

Sherrill is a professor of design, architecture, art and planning at his alma mater, the University of Cincinnati. He is also a lifelong amateur woodworker. In 1994, a friend who owns a cabinetmaking business walked Sherrill through the process of lumber manufacturing.

“Not long after that, somebody asked me if a downed tree would be useful,” Sherrill recalls. “As an economist, I couldn’t bear seeing things go to waste. The first thing I thought was ‘How do I cut this thing up?’”

Sherrill investigated, and found out about Wood-Mizer, an Indianapolis-based manufacturer of portable and industrial band sawmills. Thin-kerf, narrow-band sawmills from Wood-Mizer and a number of other companies are known for maximizing lumber recovery by upwards of 50 percent from what a circular saw can produce.

Wood-Mizer loaned Sherrill an LT15 sawmill so he could use it to demonstrate how easy it was to convert once-ignored trees into valuable lumber.

“Wood-Mizer has been supporting me for at least eight years. They gave me some money once to go to a presentation, and...
loaned me a mill so I could learn what it could do. They also always had someone available to do demonstrations for me."

Safety is one of the prominent themes in Sherrill's book. One of his main points is that amateurs should not fell urban trees, a point on which professional arborists agree.

Sherrill spends a great deal of time, all volunteer, explaining and selling this concept to people on the phone and via e-mail. In fact, he spends about 12 hours a week just talking about harvesting urban timber, and how it can benefit communities and the environment. Sherrill says the USDA Forest Service has been a big help with technical information and book editing. His wife, Pat, however, has served as the biggest inspiration.

Sherrill hopes that the information he provides in this book will spur people to take action. He has already seen some promising results. "The interest is rising at a steady but vigorous pace. People recognize intuitively that when a tree comes down, it's probably going to be thrown away, and they recognize that that's a waste, and they want to do something about it."

Contact Linden Publishing for details on purchasing the book at (559) 233-6633 or www.lindenpub.com. Nikki Nichols is a freelance writer living in Indianapolis, Ind.
What You Need to Know About Health Savings Accounts

By William J. Lynott

A new way to lower your healthcare costs

If you’re like most tree care professionals, you’re probably fighting what sometimes looks like a losing battle against the onrushing tide of rising healthcare costs.

While this problem isn’t likely to disappear entirely, the Health Savings Account (HSA) legislation signed into law by President Bush a little over a year ago offers you the possibility of making a dramatic reduction in your costs for staying healthy.

In their first year on the market, HSAs attracted thousands of individuals and business owners eager to escape the runaway costs of health insurance. Now, about 1.5 million people are enrolled in HSAs. William Boyles, publisher of an industry newsletter, predicts that 20 million people will be enrolled within five years.

The new law makes Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) permanent and available to everyone – individuals, business owners, and employees. And don’t confuse HSAs with their predecessor, the Flexible Savings Account. HSAs are the next generation of tax-favored medical insurance.

Here’s how they work: HSAs come in two parts. First you must purchase a low-cost, high-deductible health insurance policy available through a growing number of providers, including such giants as Aetna, UnitedHealth Group, Blue Cross, and Golden Rule Insurance.

In conjunction with the insurance policy, you open a dedicated savings account in which you make tax-deductible deposits to pay for your medical care. Each year, you may deposit up to the amount of the deductible on your insurance policy. You then use the money in the account to pay for your medical care. Once your expense reaches the amount of your deductible, if it does, the insurance policy kicks in.

Consider this example: Arborist Mark enrolls himself and his family in a plan with a $5,250 deductible policy. He then deposits 400 tax-deductible dollars per month in his HSA savings account. That year, his family’s out of pocket medical expense, paid from funds in his HSA account, comes to $3,200. Since his total deposits for the year were $4,800, the balance of $1,600 rolls over in the account. It compounds tax-free (as long as it is used to pay for qualified medical expenses).

As the money in the account grows, it becomes a resource available to cover the cost of routine or future medical care. This is an important feature that makes HSAs far more attractive than their predecessors.

In another example, arborist Tom enrolls in a similar plan with the same deductible. He also deposits $400 per month in his tax-favored HSA account. However, one of Tom’s children had expensive surgery raising the family’s total medical expense for the year to $15,500. Once Tom’s out-of-pocket reached the family deductible of $5,250, the insurance paid the balance of $10,250. In this case, the HSA protected the family against a catastrophic medical expense.

In addition to the tax incentives, HSAs offer control over choice of doctors and eliminate the often annoying referral requirements of some health plans.

Current law requires a health insurance policy, with a deductible of at least $1,000 for individuals and $2,000 for families, to open a HSA. The law also limits the maximum out-of-pocket expenses to $5,100 for an individual and $10,200 for a family. Therefore, if there is a health insurance plan with no co-insurance, the deductible can be as much as $5,100 or $10,200 for individuals and families respectively.

Golden Rule Insurance Co. was one of the first providers of HSAs. Today, one out

Frequently Asked Questions About Health Savings Accounts

Who is eligible to open an HSA?
Anyone may apply for an HSA and its companion high-deductible health insurance policy, though individuals with serious pre-existing medical conditions may find it difficult to find a provider willing to accept them.

Where can I open an account?
There are now scores of insurance companies and brokerage firms offering HSA coverage including such major providers as Aetna, UnitedHealth Group, Blue Cross, and Golden Rule Insurance Co. In addition, HSAs can be obtained through thousands of independent health insurance brokers.

Does an HSA pay for the same things that regular insurance pays for?
HSA funds can be used to pay for any qualified medical expense, even if they are not covered by your health insurance. For example, most health insurance does not cover the cost of over-the-counter medicines, but HSAs can. If the money from the HSA is used for qualified medical expenses, the money spent is tax-free.

Do unused funds in a Health Savings Account roll over year after year? Yes, the unused balance in a Health Savings Account automatically rolls over year after year. You won’t lose your money if you don’t spend it within the year.

Where can I get more detailed information about HSAs?
Web Sites:
www.hsainsider.com
www.ustreas.gov/offices/public-affairs/hsa/
www.ehealthlink.com/HSA.asp
http://sbinformation.about.com/od/insurance/a/uchS
A.htm
www.goldenrule.com or 1-800-974-4472
of every three plans purchased from Golden Rule is a Health Savings Account. “Our customers have accumulated more than $116 million in their tax-advantaged savings accounts,” says Golden Rule spokesperson Ellen Laden.

“As to who’s buying, self-employed men and women, families with children and early retirees are leading the way,” says Laden. “We feel the reasons why are clear: premiums typically 45 percent to 55 percent lower than traditional plans, discounted healthcare costs through preferred networks, one annual deductible per family and the 4 percent annual interest that Golden Rule pays on health savings.”

Golden Rule’s current deductibles for HSA policies are $1,000, $1,750 and $2,650 for singles, and $2,000, $3,550 and $5,250 for families. “Our Golden Rule HSA 100 pays 100 percent of covered medical expenses once the deductible is met and there is no co-insurance,” says Laden. The policies of other providers offer similar, but not necessarily the same, provisions.

The tax advantages of Health Savings Accounts along with control over choice of doctors makes them appealing to small business owners and the self-employed as well as the uninsured.

“Nearly all of the policies I sell now are HSAs,” says Tom Rogala of Custom Benefit Solutions in Northville, Mich. “All of my plans provide 100 percent coverage after the deductible. I can’t imagine why any business owner or individual would want to go any other route.”

Rogala, an independent health insurance broker, says that many of his clients are small business owners who need coverage for themselves and would like to make coverage available to their employees at little or no cost to themselves. HSAs make that possible. “A business owner can sign up for an HSA for himself and make them available to any employee on a voluntary basis,” says Rogala. “That way, the employee deals directly with the provider. The employer is not involved and makes no contribution.

The employer can also sign up for a group plan in which the company pays a portion of the cost for each covered employee.” The required employer contribution for group plans varies by state. In Michigan, employers are required to contribute a minimum of 25 percent of the cost of the high deductible insurance policy. “That’s still a lot less than it would cost the employer for any other type of plan,” says Rogala.

Rogala tells of one of his clients, a small business owner who was paying $900 per month for coverage for himself and his family. “With his HSA, his cost is $250 per
Steve Sclater, owner of Nature’s Garden Center in Saline, Mich., has recently signed up for an HSA for himself and three employees. “I’ve been paying about $2,600 a month for health coverage for the four families,” he says. “My new HSA will save me at least 25 percent and we’ll have better coverage than we have now.” Sclater bought his policy from Golden Rule. “I researched it on the Internet and found that they have a better rating than my present company. Also, I’ll now be able to offer the insurance to other employees who may not have been eligible under my old plan.”

As might be expected, not everyone is enthusiastic about Health Savings Accounts. Skeptics argue that the high deductible policies will deter some from buying an HSA plan and that others will be reluctant to dip into their HSA savings to pay for medical care with what amounts to their own money. At a congressional hearing in the spring of 2004, Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA) said that he believed that high deductible plans are not consumer driven. “They simply shift costs to so-called consumers who pay more out of pocket.”

“That’s ludicrous,” says Tom Rogala. “My files are full of examples of individuals who are thrilled with the savings and the service they’re getting through their HSAs. Knowing what I know after 15 years in this business, I just can’t imagine that there is a better deal available to consumers today.”

One disadvantage for some prospective enrollees is the reluctance or refusal of some insurance providers to issue policies to people with serious pre-existing medical conditions.

Still, despite the reluctance of some to jump on the HSA bandwagon, there is no denying the rapidly growing popularity of this new approach to healthcare insurance. Employees like the way HSAs give them more choices and more control over their health care. Small business owners say they like HSAs because they help to control spiraling healthcare costs, putting more money on their bottom lines.

As a business owner, you may well benefit from a comparison between an HSA and your present health insurance for you and/or your employees.

By William J. Lynott is a syndicated columnist.
Red oak and raccoons are both indigenous to NY

I am a Landscape Architect in Lake County, Indiana, and I read an article in your January 2005 magazine (TCI) titled “Preserving What’s Down Below.” I am curious why the article lumps Quercus rubra with other species I would say are invasive out east and here the midwest. I agree with the article that Robinia pseudoacacia, Acer platanoides, and Ailanthus altissima would be invasive and exotic in New York, but not red oak. In fact, the article shows a large red oak that a raccoon was living in, and it was being taken down.

Here in Lake County we plant a lot of red oak, and one of the benefits might be that someday, when its older and maybe hollow, it will provide a lot of habitat for birds and animals that need this tree to survive. Maybe now the raccoon that was displaced can move into some homeowner’s attic or barn, and then be shot, poisoned or relocated. This seems silly since it was using a tree in a park where it should have had some sort of protection.

Sorry, if I have read into this wrong, but please let me know the reasoning behind this so I can tell my fellow co-workers.

Craig Zandstra
Lake County Parks, Lake County, Ind.

Letters

As you point out, the article states, or at least infers, that Quercus rubra is NOT an indigenous species, and that is incorrect. Red oak is indigenous to climax upland hardwood forests throughout much of the U.S. temperate zone forest. I checked the source document for the article and it says that the trees removed from this site were MOSTLY non-indigenous. Knowing the company that submitted this project, I don’t believe they meant to infer that red oak was an invasive species on this site.

The stated reason that the raccoon-inhabited red oak was removed was because it was “highly hazardous and diseased.” The tree couldn’t be allowed to remain because it would present too serious a hazard to visitors. Therefore, the raccoon was going to be displaced no matter what, but the crew’s actions kept it from being killed or harmed.

It seems our article didn’t provide quite enough information for discerning readers such as you. We apologize, and thank you for your concern about the accuracy of the information we publish.

Excellence in Arboriculture - Recognition for your great work

Companies large and small can enter the best examples of their work to be judged by an industry-leading panel of experts. The Excellence in Arboriculture program is a time-honored, peer-review process to recognize and promote the best tree care projects in the industry. The entry requirements are simple and flexible and there are many categories in which work will be judged. If you think you can’t compete with larger firms for Excellence Awards, think again! Most past recipients are mid- and small-sized firms.

Entries are not judged against all other entries, but against standards of quality tree care. Expert judges determine whether or not the entry meets the criteria established for recognition, not whether it is the best in its category.

So think of that one project you are particularly proud of and invest the small amount of time to enter. The rewards are well worth it.

Excellence Award recipients are presented with a handsome plaque and benefit from exposure in Tree Care Industry magazine and on the TCIA Web site. Good luck!

Download entry forms at www.treecareindustry.org/content/yourassn/excellence.htm, or call TCIA at (603) 314-5380.
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Please circle 78 on Reader Service Card
SHA’s Hearing Conservation Standard has been in existence for 20 years, yet few employers are aware of all its requirements. Arborists use some equipment capable of producing enough noise to permanently damage their hearing, so it makes sense for the employer to be aware of its responsibilities under this regulation.

When employees are subjected to sound exceeding those listed in the accompanying table, and assuming no feasible controls can be used to reduce the noise exposure, the Hearing Conservation Standard is triggered. Personal protective equipment must be provided and used to attenuate (reduce) noise exposure to within the levels of the table.

The Standard triggers at even lower noise level – 85 dBA – when an employee has already experienced a “standard threshold shift,” or STS. A standard threshold shift is defined as a change in hearing threshold relative to the baseline audiogram of an average of 10 dB or more at 2,000 Hz, 3,000 Hz and 4,000 Hz in either ear.

By the way, there is no exception for employees who have diminished capacity to hear or for employees who have been diagnosed as deaf. Also, the noise standard gives the maximum time within a workday an employee may be exposed to each sound level and combination of sound levels, regardless of the length of the workday. Thus the permissible exposure limit for noise for an extended work day is the same as the limit for an eight-hour work day.

The employer has to administer a continuing, effective hearing conservation program. Let’s assume that the employer already provides employees with adequate hearing protection, only the first of several compliance steps. Full compliance entails:

- Offering the employee free baseline audiometric testing – within 6 months of the employee’s first exposure to harmful noise levels.
- Offering free annual audiometric testing – to determine if there has been any hearing loss.
- Training in the harmful effects of noise; and the proper fitting, use and care of PPE.

How does an employer determine if its employees are exposed to harmful noise levels in the first place? That can only be accomplished through field measurements of noise levels. It is not necessary for every employer to measure workplace noise, and TCIA is aware of only a few tree care companies that have been party to noise measurements on their crews. Seemingly, the Standard presents the employer with a Catch-22 with the following requirement: “Noise monitoring or measuring must be conducted only when exposures are at or above 85 dB.”

One might suspect that noise exposures in the workplace may be at a harmful level when employees complain about the loudness of noise; there are indications that employees are losing their hearing, or noisy conditions make normal conversation difficult. One should also consider any information available regarding noise emitted from specific machines.

With the end game being prevention of hearing loss, employers can protect workers and demonstrate their intent to comply by offering free baseline and annual audiometric testing, by providing the PPE and the training, and by absolutely requiring the hearing protection be used in work situations deemed “noisy.”

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.
**Do-it-Yourself:**
**Customizing Your Chipper**

By Jim Dregalla

When I took a welding course at the Ohio State Agricultural Technical Institute, I had no idea it would become such an important skill. Although metal fabrication has been more of a hobby compared to my career in the tree care industry, it sure has come in handy for repairs and add-ons.

When I purchased my second chipper in 1995, a Wood/Chuck W/C 17, I had a good idea of what I needed in a chipper. Some options I asked for were: heavy duty fenders, feed wheel lift cylinder (great for crushing brush and opening for large logs), folding tailgate for infeed chute (great for storing tarps and small dolly), grating between frame gaps to stand on when changing knives, extra tool box on fender and curb-side feed.

Additions I added were: a cone holder mounted on the fender, a vise on top of the extra tool box (I store lowering lines in the box and the vise is at a good height for sharpening saws); and, a box on the side of the infeed chute to hold a flag stand with the flags (very convenient on a busy street). Next I made a pad with caster wheels for the jack stand. It’s not mounted to the jack stand, in case I don’t want to use it on an incline, but it’s great for moving the machine around in my barn and also for that little adjustment when connecting to the chip truck (I carry a small piece of plywood when on gravel).

Additions added included a cone holder mounted on the fender.

I had to make a new feed wheel clean-out door when the factory hinge broke. I made the new door sturdier, with one long pin for closure. Two small items are a grab handle on the discharge chute to move it, and a wire harness holder mounted on the tongue.

My light hook-up is round, so a piece of pipe mounted upright keeps it off the ground and from being stepped on.

The last thing I added was a centrifugal air cleaner. I’ve noticed the engine’s paper element stay’s cleaner.

At present, some chipper manufacturers may include some of these items, or you can request them. For me, the time and money spent on the extras or customizing had made my work day easier and safer.

Jim Dregalla is owner of Oakwood Landscaping, which has been operating in the Cleveland, Ohio, area since 1986, and a TCIA member since 1992.
Help Wanted

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The new online member store may be accessed via the Web at www.tcia.org/store, or by clicking on the “TCIA Store” menu on the TCIA home page. Members will be prompted for their user ID and password. Member prices are calculated and savings are posted for every item.

“Products can be added to the online store much faster than to our printed catalog,” says Lee Gilman, TCIA products and services developer. “Check the online store for the most up-to-date product and service offerings.”

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n 2003, TCIA established five benchmarks to allow our industry to take its rightful place as a respected service business within our communities. Among them is “partnering with government so that they regularly seek our advice and counsel as THE source of industry standards and as a partner in crafting appropriate legislation and regulations for our industry.”

Through our outreach efforts and the Voice for Trees political action committee, we are communicating the concerns of our industry directly to legislators and regulators. We are building relationships before we have a legislative crisis. Last year, we pushed for passage of several bills of interest to our industry. For his support of all of these initiatives, TCIA recently honored Congressman Jeb Bradley, who represents the first district of New Hampshire, has been a strong supporter of small business issues in general, as well as tree care industry concerns specifically.

In 2004, he was cosponsor of the Small Business Health Fairness Act, legislation allowing association health plans. He also:

- Worked for Hours of Service exemptions for emergency tree care operations;
- Supported the Save Our Summer Act to provide relief on H-2B visa limits; and
- Authored a strong letter of support in favor of TCIA’s successful Susan Harwood grant application for electrical hazards training workshops.

### Preparing for and surviving an OSHA inspection

Are you ready should an OSHA inspector arrive at your door? Is your paperwork in order? Do you know what citations are most common in the tree care industry and what regulations apply to your operations?

If your answer to all of the questions above is “YES,” then you won’t need this month’s free member giveaway, entitled “Surviving an OSHA Inspection.”

Everyone else should keep this valuable booklet handy. Study its advice. Make a checklist of the top 10 areas for citations and make sure your operations comply.

TCIA’s Model Company Safety and Accreditation programs help companies stay on the right side of OSHA compliance. For more information on these programs, an electronic version of this guide, or for immediate assistance with an OSHA inspection TCIA members can call 1-800-733-2622.
TCIA’s First Legislative Conference

Join us in Washington, July 18-20

With a new Congress and a second term for the Bush administration about to begin, TCIA’s first-ever Legislative Conference is shaping up as one of the most important events of the year for the tree care industry.

Organized by the American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) and held in conjunction with the Horticulture Research Institute (HRI) and the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), which is the new name for the organization that combined the Professional Lawn Care Association (PLCAA) and the American Landscape Contractors Association (ALCA), this joint conference will be the green industry’s first coordinated legislative day.

Join us for unique educational sessions focusing on the most compelling employment, compliance and legislative issues facing your workplace. Whether you are interested in hearing an overview of how legal decisions affect you, learning more about compliance issues, or getting an update of what is on the legislative agenda for Congress, this conference is vitally important to your business.

The conference occurs at a time when you can make your voice heard by meeting with your member of Congress – whether your congressional representatives are returning or newly elected. Take advantage of this rare opportunity to visit the congressional office of your senators and/or representatives.

Not only can you make a difference. You can also attend important workshops focused on important legislative issues, network with industry colleagues, and enjoy exciting social events.

Full registration information will be available in April, but attendance at this conference is limited, and we expect both registrations and hotel rooms to sell out. The conference will begin with a welcome luncheon and briefing Monday, July 18, and will end with a Closing Reception on Wednesday evening, July 20.

To make your room reservations, contact The Washington Court Hotel, (202) 628-2100.

U.S. workplace becoming safer

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor recently reported that non-fatal workplace injuries and illnesses in private industry declined in 2003, both in terms of the case rate – the number of injuries/illnesses per 100 full-time workers – as well as the total number of injury and illness cases reported.

The report shows that there were three hundred thousand fewer injuries and illnesses. That represents a 7.1 percent actual decrease in cases as well as 0.7 percent lower employment.

“The news behind the news is that this Administration has formed more health and safety partnerships with organized labor and employer groups than any of its predecessors, and has set new records for achieving compliance through workplace inspections,” said U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao. “These positive results show that our dual commitment to compliance assistance and enforcement is working.”

According to BLS, the illness/injury case rate fell from 5.3 in 2002 to 5.0 in 2003. The size of the labor force in those two years was 88.6 million and 88 million workers, respectively.
First free EHAP workshop held in Michigan

Grant-funded program aimed at reducing electrical accidents

More than one-third of the OSHA-reported treeworker fatalities in the U.S. are caused by contact with electrical conductors, and the actual number of electricity-related deaths may be much higher. Prevention of these on-the-job accidents is the goal of a series of free workshops offered by the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) in metropolitan areas around the country. The Electrical Hazards Awareness Program (EHAP) workshops are being funded by a federal grant awarded to TCIA through the Susan Harwood Training Grant Program.

The first workshop, conducted in Farmington Hills, Mich., on Jan. 5, was hosted by the Michigan Green Industry Association. Instructor David Boone guided 89 participants from the surrounding area through a fast-paced agenda that covered the nature of electrical hazards, protective practices, how to avoid becoming a victim during a rescue, and the unsafe acts to avoid. Boone is the Midwest safety and training coordinator for Bartlett Tree Experts, Inc.

“Nobody was bored, I can tell you that,” said Karla Trosen, director of member services for the Michigan Green Industry Association. “The speaker really moved through the material, and the participants asked tons of questions. I think many companies will want to send workers every year, so we hope these workshops continue,” she added.

Kevin Schilbe, owner of Schilbe Tree Care in Dearborn, Mich., attended the training along with four of his workers. “The session went extremely well,” he said. “You can check excellent right down the line.”

“We are always looking for ways to upgrade training for our workers,” said Chris Smith, owner of Smith Tree and Landscape Service, Inc. in Lansing, Mich. “It’s not just that we need to satisfy legal training requirements. We want to make sure that our workers are as safe as possible and fully qualified to work around power lines.” Smith sent six of his workers and supervisors to the training session. “For the seasoned workers, it was a good review, but even more valuable for the younger workers who may feel that they’re immortal. It’s important to alert them to the hazards of this industry.”

Jeff Dawson, one of Smith’s field supervisors and a 30-year veteran, said the opening video caught everyone’s attention. The video showed an electrified house gutter system sparking. “Crews need to understand these hazards, and how to work safely within 10 feet of conductors so they don’t become victims.”

Dawson said he respected the instructor’s willingness to admit past mistakes. “Sometimes you think, how can a tree worker be so stupid, but it happens,” he said. “Education increases awareness and brings it back to our attention. When we saw the reduced cost of this training, it made it an attractive program for us. The decision to participate was really a no-brainer.”

If you are interested in registering for an EHAP workshop in your area, please call 1-800-733-2622.
Choose the leaders of your association

Dear Fellow TCIA Members,

I’m sure you have heard volunteer service will return more to you than you can possibly give during your term of office. I have been fortunate to serve TCIA’s membership for the last three years, and I can confirm that this is the case as a Board member for the tree care industry.

I have been honored to serve during one of the most exciting times during our profession’s history as TCIA has pledged to Transform the Industry. From launching our Accreditation program to becoming more effective representing our businesses in Washington to working to lower the accident and fatality rate with OSHA, we have only just begun developing a very different future for our industry.

In the coming year, I am responsible with the Nominations Committee for helping to identify key leaders who will continue to contribute to these efforts over the next three years.

Enclosed you will find a listing of the qualifications we are seeking for Board members. I promise you that, should you decide it is time to serve your industry, you will be engaged, challenged, and will bring many contributions back to your own business from the experiences you will gain. TCIA’s Board is not a management board. It concentrates on strategy and policy-setting. We provide oversight and advice to a team that is working with us to craft and implement a reality for our industry that will result in a whole new day of professionalism, credibility and visibility.

If you would like to serve with us from 2006-2009 as a TCIA Board member, please fill out the enclosed “Candidate for TCIA Board of Directors Nominator Form” and return it to TCIA by April 1, 2005.

I know there are some terrific leaders in our industry out there, and we need your commitment to serve. I have just recently committed to another three years with TCIA, and it is important to me that we assemble the most talented team possible during these critical years for our industry.

Please consider serving.

Scott Jamieson
2005-06 TCIA Senior Director
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TREE CARE INDUSTRY – MARCH 2005
Chain Saw Artists

Want Your Scrap Wood

By Wendy Komanchek

We figured there are probably 2,000 to 2,500 chain saw carvers worldwide,” states Liz Boni, whose husband, daughter and brother-in-law are chain saw carvers. The Bonis host the ChainSaw Carvers Rendezvous every February in Ridgway, Pa. The Rendezvous brings chain saw artists from around the world to design various types of carvings to sell. All proceeds are donated to Make-a-Wish Foundation.

Two carve or not to carve

“I was bored one day, and decided to make a chair,” says Magnus Sandblom of Half Moon Bay, Calif. “Well, I did. And, the first person that came in after the chair was done wanted to buy it. I got $5 for it. And, I made one more. But, I upped the price to $10. That one sold quick. After making about 10 chairs, I thought I’d try something new. I tried with a bear, and looking back at the first bear I made, I’ve really made some progress. I think I made over 1,000 bears. I sell about 100 to 150 bears in a year. These are small sitting bears that can be planted with flowers or other decorations,” says Sandblom.

Sandblom’s story is typical of another carver from Pennsylvania. H. Dean Fox of Narvon, Pa., got into the tree carving business “by accident.”

“I started out painting. Then, about 15-16 years ago, my wife bought me a chain saw,” says Fox. “I took it out and in a pine, I carved a cherub that was 5 feet long with wings. My first pieces were pretty ugly. I carve human figures, a lot of angels, Indians, a mermaid … I try to get better. I look at Gettysburg statues, go to the museum to get ideas, such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Rodin Museum” (Rodin sculpted statues, the most famous of which was “The Thinker.”)

Both men attribute the United ChainSaw Carvers Guild (UCCG) as the place to gain support and education in the art of chain saw carving. Boni states that UCCG is strictly a national group. There aren’t any local or state chapters in the United States.

Sandblom and Fox use similar tools to create their carvings. “I use a chain saw, angle grinder, bevel, die-grinder – it’s primarily chain saws, grinders, drills and lots of sandpaper,” says Fox. “When I do a stump job, I take seven saws with me – a 24-inch bar to a 14-inch bar. I do all the maintenance on my tools.

“I always start with a chain saw and from there, a smaller chain saw. Then I use...
Magnus Sandblom, who carved this eagle, always starts with one chain saw, goes to a smaller chain saw, then a 4-inch grinder with heavy grid paper.

Learning the art of chain saw carving

“There is an art movement going on around the world, and it’s chain saw art,” says Liz Boni. “These artists are dedicated to this new art form. They travel extensively to share and see others performing with a chain saw.”

Sandblom and Fox are self-taught carvers. “I’m a self-learner,” says Sandblom. “I guess everybody can learn. But, you have to have the feel and the vision of the piece already done and be able to see what you carve – like Michelangelo – only ‘take away what doesn’t belong’ to the final product. Sometimes, it’s hard; but it’s the only way to be able to be creative – to be able to see what is not there until it’s done.”

Fox concurs, adding that creativity comes as the sculpture takes shape. “I’m getting better as an artist. I’m self-taught. I learned a lot from trial and error,” he says.

Who are the carvers’ wood suppliers?

There are many places where carvers obtain their wood: From residents whose trees need to be taken down; sawmills; and tree care companies. Fox used to get his wood from a local sawmill before it closed down. Now, he gets materials from friends who work for tree care companies. Many times, Fox and a tree care company will trade services.

Sandblom gets a lot of his wood from the tree care business. “I never pay for wood. It’s being delivered to my business; I take redwood and oak for free. The pine and eucalyptus, I charge a dump fee, which is less than what a landfill would charge. I have a firewood lot retail business along a highway that has good visibility. And, my main business is selling firewood.”

Fox gets his wood from residents who need to have a tree removed due to disease or tree death. Discussing what type of carvings will be made from the remaining wood can be an emotional time for he and the family that owns the tree, Fox says.

“Take a beautiful piece of cedar. (Instead of throwing it in a landfill), it’s better to use as a carving. It is more lasting. And, it creates memories for families. I have themes thrown at me during the carvings. A lot of them (the carvings) are for memorials. It’s gut-wrenching dealing with death and memorials.”

“All stumps rot from ground up. But with pine, cedar, oak – instead of cutting up the stump, make a carving out of it,” says Fox. “The most long-lasting and my favorite kind of tree is cedar. But, sugar maple, red oak and Norway maple are long-lasting, too.”

Fox advises that a carving should be inside a person’s home or business to prevent rotting.

Marketing for business

It seems that carvers work in conjunction with each other instead of battling for the spotlight in this growing market. And, because this is a visual business, carvers’ calling cards are their work on many people’s front yards and on fireplace mantels in homes and businesses. For example, Fox carved replicas of General Sutter for General Sutter’s Restaurant and Inn in Lititz, Pa. His two carvings of General Sutter face Route 501 and Main Street in Lititz. These “calling cards” provide continual exposure to the main throughways in this northern Lancaster County town that attracts tourists and locals daily.
Other than his carvings, Fox’s business grows from word of mouth and traditional business cards. He works with 75 percent residential customers and 25 percent commercial customers. Fox works both inside and outside his customer’s home or business.

“I always seem to have work. It’s year-round. I work out of a 10-by-16 shed in the backyard. If it gets really bad (the weather), I drag things through the kitchen to the basement. Someday, I’ll have a decent shop. Right now, money goes into overhead,” says Fox.

Sandblom markets his business with the high visibility of his firewood business as well as through his Web site, www.firewoodfarms.com, and through business cards. Sandblom, like Fox, gets business via word of mouth. Sandblom says, “I do a lot of custom orders. After 15 years doing carvings, everybody knows me in the Bay area, from San Francisco to San Jose to Sacramento.”

Words of wisdom for tree care industry

Both men agree that selling or bartering with a chain saw artist is a better option for getting rid of trees than depositing them in a landfill. “They (tree care companies) have their job to do, and to keep their job as safe as possible. If they have a piece (of wood) that can be used to make something besides filling up landfills, give it to a carver,” pleads Sandblom.

Fox concurs by saying, “Don’t burn red cedar! There are areas that are developing that won’t rot. Don’t fill up the landfills. Plank it out or give it to a chain saw artist. It’s so valuable.”

Sandblom and Fox don’t know each other – they live on opposite ends of the United States. However, their love for making art out of trees make them allies in the chain saw carvers’ art movement. They’re also passionate about rescuing valuable wood from landfills and giving it to carvers, providing tree care companies another option for disposing of wood.

For more information on chain saw carving, visit www.uccg.org or www.chainsawrendezvous.org.

Wendy Komanceh is a freelance writer in Ephrata, Pa.

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A Masterful Event In Augusta, Georgia

By Henry Frischknecht

Once every year in Augusta, Georgia, there is an event that brings the best in their field together for competition. This is not the one where tickets are scalped to watch guys in polyester slacks bash little white balls with sticks and chase them all over some of the finest turf this side of the big pond. This event is the CSRA (Central Savannah River Area) Tree, Ornamental and Turf Seminar and Climbing Competition that has been held annually for the last six years. This event showcases the best in their field who come to instruct the masses on everything from tree physiology to irrigation and turf diseases to tree climbing. Of course, some of the latest tree and turf care equipment is on display by biggest and most respected manufacturers in the industry.

The main draw for the event has been the attendance of Mark Chisholm, the two-time ISA world champion tree climber. Rather than him competing with the locals, he is there to oversee a climbing competition, training with those who are interested in knowing what it is like to attend a competitive event. He is joined by other competitive trained arborists as well as approved event judges to give the feel of a real competition. Chisholm makes the annual trek from his frigid northeast to partake in an event held here in the comparatively balmy southeast.

“This is great weather,” Chisholm says on a sunny 40-degree day in the trees. “I could play golf in this weather.” He makes reference to the Augusta National, which is only open for play from October to May each year.

Chisholm helps to oversee all events that would be held at a competitive climbing event. These are the: Throw Line, Secured Foot Lock, Belayed Speed Climb, Aerial Rescue and Work Climb. All are set up by him and, in accordance with any competi-
tive event, there is an equipment inspection prior to anyone setting a boot on bark. All required safety gear is mandatory, as you would expect. And after all have had a chance to perform in each event, the top three are selected to a climb-off to decide each year’s master climber for the event.

One would be surprised by who they might see in the events. This year they ranged from the slightly overweight guy who is more accustomed to using the aerial lift to a guy who owns a local ice cream shop that took up tree climbing recreationally in the last three years to maintain his health as he neared retirement. Both were respectful participants in the competition and were cheered on by the gallery.

While all this is going on outside, the speaker selection ranges from professors of prestigious universities to researchers from the corporate world to nationally respected nurserymen who bring the latest plant information from the travels to all over the world. This last year saw William Chaney of Purdue University discuss tree growth
regulators; Kim Coder of the University of Georgia discuss the interrelationship of trees and turf; Ted Stephens from Nurseries Carolina present his plant finding trip to Japan. In a previous year the latest in plant introductions from Argentina were presented by Bob McCartney of Woodlanders.

These highly respected presenters and the world champion climbers are two reasons to visit Augusta in the cool season — if you’re not one for following one of those little white balls around a golf course.

Henry Frischknecht is owner of Empire Tree & Turf in Augusta, Ga.
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To learn more, call TCIA today at 1-800-733-2622 or visit www.tcia.org.
Bartlett Tree Experts helps wow Annapolis homeowner on TLC’s “While You Were Out”

The task at hand was to surprise one lucky Annapolis, MD homeowner with a new backyard treehouse and the hit TLC television series, “While You Were Out” was about to make it happen. But to take this plan from design to reality, they needed to call in the experts – Bartlett Tree Experts that is.

With certified arborists based locally in their Annapolis office, Bartlett Tree Experts has extensive knowledge of the Chesapeake Bay area plant life. Backed by this expertise, Bartlett was ready to help make a backyard tree fit for a truly amazing treehouse.

“At Bartlett, safety is of the utmost importance and the ‘While You Were Out’ team felt the same way about this project,” said Paul Foster, Local Manager and Bartlett Arborist Representative. “By completing a thorough evaluation of the tree and consulting with designers and architects, we were able to help ‘While You Were Out’ build a treehouse that is structurally sound and fun. The homeowners are very pleased with the results and are already enjoying the new addition to their yard!”

Under Paul’s supervision, climbers from Bartlett also provided basic pruning services for the tree. Paul, a member and former president of the Maryland Arborist Association, has been helping Maryland residents care for their trees and shrubs for over 30 years. His appearance on the show was January 15. Keep an eye out for repeats.

Vine & Branch project receives Building With Trees program honorable mention

The National Arbor Day Foundation has awarded the Langston Development Company of Carmel Indiana with an Honorable Mention in their Building With Trees award program. Langston received this award for their work on the Brookside project in Westfield Indiana. For this project, Langston worked in conjunction with registered Consulting Arborist Judson R Scott of Vine & Branch Inc., a TCA member company.

Scott is one of two Registered Consulting Arborists in the State of Indiana. He is the owner of Vine & Branch, Inc, a tree and landscape company. As a registered Consulting Arborist he advises attorneys, developers, architects, engineers, insurance companies, and homeowners concerning their trees and landscapes.

The Building With Trees program is designed to recognize and award builders and developers who protect trees during building and land development. Winners are reviewed and chosen by developers and urban foresters from across the country. There are three sections of judges: Planning and Design, Tree Protection during Construction, and Maintenance/Long-term Care of Trees.
Is he safe under this tree?

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Project Learning Tree educator honored for achievement

Esther Cowles, New Hampshire’s Project Learning Tree executive director, was recognized recently with New Hampshire’s Outstanding Non-formal Environmental Educator of 2004 Award for her commitment to education excellence. Congressman Jeb Bradley, R-NH, bestowed the award on Cowles before a crowd of more than 700 leaders of the state’s education community. Among other achievements, Cowles was recognized for having introduced advanced summer institutes to enhance teacher understanding in ecological principles, and initiating hands-on workshops to help teachers extend their classrooms into open spaces around their schools.

Cowles said the award signifies the value of N.H. PLT’s innovative practices to the field of environmental education in the state and beyond. Teachers and administrators know that PLT makes a difference in what their students know about our forests and other natural resources. Project Learning Tree (www.plt.org) is the environmental education program of the American Forest Foundation and its partners.

Winter moth hits the East

Winter moth (Operophthera brumata) is a new pest to Eastern states and was a nuisance during the winter mating season. Growers should be aware that emerging larvae in spring will be a serious threat to oaks, maples, basswood, ash, crabapples, apple, blueberry and some spruce varieties, said Robert Childs, Univ. of Mass. entomologist. Older larvae feed in expanding leaf clusters and are capable of defoliating trees, he said. Larvae are pale-green caterpillars with white longitudinal stripes running down each side. They feed until mid-June before they migrate to the soil for pupation, he said. Bacillus thuringiensis will control younger larvae, he said. Spinosad (Conserve) is also a good control product.

Officials expand N.J. longhorn beetle quarantine

USDA announced it’s enlarging its Asian longhorn beetle quarantine in Rahway, N.J., after an infested maple was found just along an existing quarantine border, said John Dodd, USDA public affairs specialist. On the bright side, no Asian longhorn beetles have been found in the Jersey City, N.J., area since 2002 and no ALB have been found in the Chicago area since 2003. The Chicago infestation was first discovered in 1998. (301) 734-5175.

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The 300-year-old Ponderosa pines that gave Colorado’s Tall Timber Resort its name have always been part of the scenery. But starting this spring they will become the centerpieces of an eco-tourism thrill ride.

The new attraction is Soaring Tree Top Adventures, an arboreal excursion course that takes visitors on a high-flying ride through 180 acres of alpine forest. Adventurous guests soar above the forest floor, tethered to overhead cables 30 to 40 feet off the ground. The course winds between towering ponderosa pines, over shimmering aspen groves, across the roaring Animas River, and along one of the most spectacular canyons in Southwest Colorado’s San Juan Mountains. It’s an exhilarating way to experience the wilderness without even leaving footprints behind.

Most attractions that introduce visitors into areas of natural beauty are compromises between the needs of commerce and the concerns of environmentalists. Soaring Tree Top Adventures sought out an expert on ponderosa pines, arborist David B. Temple, president of Animas Valley Arborist Inc. and a longtime TCIA member, and met or exceeded every recommendation he provided to guarantee the health of the forest.

Patented “tree hugging” collars, each consisting of a ring of individual wood blocks linked by steel cables, support the welded, stainless-steel platforms. Foam rubber cushions insulate each wood block from the tree trunk. Not one nail, bolt or cable penetrates the bark. At the base of each tree, thick layers of pine needles have been arranged to mitigate the impact of foot traffic on the ponderosas’ shallow root system. As Temple says of his favorite conifers, “These old girls won’t even know you’re here.” Temple’s research provides the basis for the pre-tour orientation, which will give visitors a deeper appreciation for the increasingly rare forests they are about to enter.

Guests take to the trees in equipment provided by Petzl. Each guest wears a full-body harness with redundant safety lines and connectors. A Petzl Trac pulley linked to the harness snaps to the overhead cable. Guests step off the platform and let the slight downward angle of each cable whisk them from tree to tree. “It’s the next best thing to flying,” according to private pilot Jim Stevens of Overland Park, Kan.

There are no roads to Soaring Tree Top Adventures (www.soaringtreetopadventures.com). The experience begins in Durango, Colo., aboard an antique train of the historic Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. Originally built to transport silver ore from the mining town of Silverton, the railroad takes passengers through the rugged Animas River canyon, along sheer granite cliffs, high into the San Juan Mountains. The train delivers guests to the Tall Timber Resort, where their soaring adventure begins.

The railroad itself raises one mystery. Timber was a valuable commodity a century ago, when the train supplied miners in Silverton. The towering ponderosas would have been a tempting natural resource. “It’s very rare for trees of this size to have survived loggers, especially this close to a rail line that could easily transport raw lumber,” Temple explains. “Somebody must have protected these trees.”

So as guests soar through these majestic sentinels, they might speculate about some far-sighted frontiersman who recognized their value to future generations. Whoever this hero was, he can rest assured these trees are still in good hands, and likely to be enjoyed for generations to come.

Lance Thompson is a freelance writer living in Sun Valley, Calif.
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