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n late January, President Obama ordered a review of government regulations that could hamper job creation and “make our economy less competitive.” He emphasized that regulators should be flexible when it comes to rules that would affect small businesses. In a *Wall Street Journal* article, the president called for “the right balance” between free markets and public safeguards against health hazards.

At the same time, OSHA announced it had temporarily withdrawn its proposal to require employers to start tracking work-related musculoskeletal disorders on employer injury and illness logs. The agency took this action to seek greater input from small businesses on the impact of the proposal.

Any quality tree care company that follows all of the various OSHA, EPA and DOT regulations knows that regulatory compliance can be expensive and time-consuming. And every quality company also knows that some companies cannot be trusted to self-regulate entirely, as the number of small outfits that ignore the rules and put employees in harm’s way seems to grow annually.

TCIA is constantly searching for a middle ground somewhere between supporting costly and burdensome regulations that improve professionalism or safety and an unregulated free-for-all where low-priced companies break the law and ignore all rules. After the “shellacking” suffered at the polls in November, we hope the Obama administration is also headed back toward a middle ground.

The true test will come this summer, when the EPA releases its new guidance for pesticide label language meant to reduce spray drift. Under current law, when commercial arborists or line-clearance companies spay to control insects, inassets or other unwanted vegetation, they must satisfy the Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act’s (FIFRA) standard of “no unreasonable adverse effect” to people or non-target vegetation. The EPA has proposed changing that reasonable definition to a much more restrictive one. New label language would limit drift that “could cause an adverse effect” to people or the environment. The difference between an actual adverse effect and a possible adverse effect is the source of considerable anxiety.

The proposed regulations weren’t written with arboriculture or landscaping in mind. Rather, the true target is drift from agriculture operations. The green industry, a tiny user compared to agriculture, is getting swept up in the regulatory battle nonetheless. Farmers have interpreted the proposed language as requiring an unachievable and unenforceable zero-drift standard that could lead to excessive litigation against farmers. If their interpretation is correct, imagine what will happen with the neighbors of your customers. It’s one thing to cause harm to a neighboring property. The results of that action are clear and should be avoided. But can all drift be avoided that “could cause an adverse effect” to people of the environment? Define “could.” In whose opinion – the attorneys hired by the neighbors?

Farmers are concerned that a zero drift policy sets an unachievable standard. They are also worried that lawsuits alleging potential harm would explode, even in the absence of any real adverse effects. We will find out this summer whether the EPA will listen to these concerns, and what that might mean for arboriculture. That’s when we will know if the words coming from the White House are reflected in the actions of the regulatory agencies.

Mark Garvin
Publisher

TCI’s mission is to engage and enlighten readers with the latest industry news and information on regulations, standards, practices, safety, innovations, products and equipment. We strive to serve as the definitive resource for commercial, residential, municipal and utility arborists, as well as for others involved in the care and maintenance of trees. The official publication of the non-profit Tree Care Industry Association, we vow to sustain the same uncompromising standards of excellence as our members in the field, who adhere to the highest professional practices worldwide.
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Circle 9 on RS Card or visit www.tcia.org
By Michael J. Raupp and Chris Sargent

Some time in the latter half of the 1990s, homeowners near Allentown, Pennsylvania, began to notice a new insect around their homes. This invader was a stink bug similar to familiar brown and green stink bugs in appearance, but these newcomers were found on plants and entering homes in droves. Soon thereafter, Richard Hoebeke, an entomologist at Cornell University, confirmed the new alien as an exotic invasive from Asia called the brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB), Halyomorpha halys.

BMSB is native to China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. Exactly how it arrived in the U.S. is unknown, but speculation has it that it came the way of Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) and emerald ash borer (EAB), as a stowaway in a container from the Far East. During the early 2000s, BMSB spread from Pennsylvania to the neighboring states of New Jersey, West Virginia, Delaware and Maryland. A second wave of colonists was discovered in Oregon and California.

Due to its penchant to hide in sheltered locations to pass the winter, it often invades recreational vehicles and campers. One traveler reported driving hundreds of miles away from a home in Pennsylvania and opening the camper only to find stink bugs ready to disembark in a new state. BMSB is also a strong flyer. No doubt, this will enhance the spread of this cagey hitchhiker.

BMSB has now been reported in more than 20 eastern and southern states ranging from Maine to Mississippi, and as far west as California and Oregon. Most believe that the distribution of BMSB is much wider than currently documented and that detections will increase with greater public awareness of this pest.

Bug biology and feeding

BMSB belongs to the clan of insects known as the Hemiptera: Heteroptera, also known as true bugs. The moniker stink bug arises from the ability of the bug to expel a memorable odor when harassed by a predator or foolish human. In the northern part of its native range in Asia, it has only one generation each year, but in southern China, up to six generations a year have been reported. Studies in New Jersey indicated only one generation per year due to the limited number of degree days available for the bug to reach sexual maturity (Neilsen and Hamilton, 2009). However, research conducted in 2010 at the USDA ARS Appalachian Fruit Research Station, in

Brown marmorated stink bugs. Photo by Gary Bernon, USDA APHIS, Bugwood.org
West Virginia, found that two generations occurred. The number of generations BMSB can produce annually is temperature dependent, so as the pest moves south, more generations per year are expected.

BMSB overwinter as adults in protected locations such as natural rocky outcroppings and in structures such as houses and other buildings. Adults emerge in the spring over an extended period of time, usually from late March through June depending on location; however, BMSB sheltering in homes may become active on warm days throughout winter. Even today, as this story unfolds on a chilly day in early February, a BMSB wanders about my desk, looking for a byline, no doubt. After emerging from overwintering sites, adults begin to feed and are very active, dropping off plants or flying away if disturbed.

BMSB become sexually mature after several weeks of feeding. Egg laying begins shortly thereafter, and egg masses are laid at approximately one week intervals from June to September. Egg masses are deposited on the underside of host plant leaves in clusters containing 20-30 pale green or white spherical-shaped eggs. These round eggs are unlike the typical barrel-shaped eggs other stink bugs lay. Each female can lay about 250 eggs in her lifetime.

First instar nymphs emerge four to five days after the eggs are laid and remain clustered around the egg mass for several days, or even until they molt to the second instar. Nymphs complete five instars with each stage lasting about one week, depending upon temperature. Nymphs tend to be solitary feeders, but often congregate on leaves, bark or fruit. Different nymphal instars are often observed on the same host plant throughout the season. New adults begin to appear in mid to late summer.

Adults and all stages of nymphs feed on various plant parts, such as leaves, stems and fruit. In many cases, direct damage to plant tissue has been observed, in others no obvious damage has been noted. BMSB adults and nymphs have piercing-sucking mouthparts that they use to puncture fruit, bark or leaf surfaces. They inject digestive enzymes, which liquefy the plant tissues, and suck out the nutrients. This feeding behavior is the primary cause of scarred fruit and damaged leaves, and the resulting injury could make plants more susceptible to secondary infections.

One disturbing development observed in 2010 was the ability of BMSB to feed through the bark of several species of trees. In late summer and autumn, BMSB accumulated on the trunks of trees in landscapes and nurseries at densities exceeding 30 per square meter of trunk. They fed through the bark on tissue beneath. The extent of this feeding damage is unknown at this time, but it is unlikely that hordes of stink bugs feeding through the bark serve as a good omen.

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Threats to agriculture

BMSB is polyphagous, feeding on many different species of fruit trees, ornamental plants, vegetables and legumes. Bernon (2004) found BMSB on over 60 host plants. In Asia, BMSB is considered a major agricultural pest of a variety of fruit trees, particularly citrus, and of legumes, especially soybeans. In the Mid-Atlantic States, BMSB emerged as a serious pest of corn, soybeans and vegetables especially tomatoes and peppers in home gardens as well as commercial farms. Growers are still in the process of determining the extent of crop loss, but all agree it is not trivial.
The real casualties in this year’s stink bug wars were fruit growers. In Asia, BMSB is reported to damage *Diospyros* spp. (persimmon), *Ficus* spp. (fig), *Malus* spp. (apple), *Morus* spp. (mulberry), *Prunus* spp. (cherry, peach and apricot), and *Pyrus* spp. (pear). The expanding U.S. host list includes *Prunus persica* (peach), *Malus* spp. (apple), *Pyrus serotina* (Asian pear), *Rubus* spp. (raspberry), and *Vitis* spp. (grape).

Many growers in the generally infested region reported record crop loss despite attempts to control the pest with a variety of measures. In some orchards, 30 years of progress toward integrated pest management (IPM) were reversed in a single season as growers were forced to apply insecticides, in some cases more than 20 times, without satisfactory results.

In the U.S., BMSB has been found feeding on a wide array of forest and ornamental trees and herbaceous plants, and vegetable, field and fruit crops. The list of hosts that BMSB feeds on continues to grow.

**Threats to arboriculture**

Early concerns regarding BMSB in the U.S. centered on its status as a nuisance pest when it invaded homes and businesses. However, some of the first reports of plant damage came from Pennsylvania where BMSB appeared on ornamental plants and shade trees in suburban areas and urban landscapes. Butterfly bush and princess tree were heavily damaged by both adults and nymphs. Urban peach and pear trees also sustained heavy damage.

The list of reported woody hosts in the U.S. has grown and now includes *Abelia* spp., *Acer* spp. (maple), *Buddleia* spp. (butterfly bush), *Catalpa speciosa* (catalpa), *Cercis canadensis* (Eastern redbud), *Cladrastis kentukea* (yellow wood), *Gleditsia triacanthos* (honeylocust), *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* L. (hibiscus), *Liriodendron tulipifera* (tulip tree), *Lonicera* spp. (honeysuckle), *Malus* spp. (apple and crab apples), *Paulownia tomentosa* (princess tree), *Platanus* spp. (sycamore), *Prunus serotina* (black cherry), *Prunus x yedoensis* (Yoshino cherry), *Quercus* spp. (oak), *Rosa rugosa*, *Syringa* spp. (lilac), *Ulmus* spp. (elm), and *Zelkova serrata* (zelkova). Herbaceous plant hosts include: *Cleome* spp. (spider flower), *Dahlia* spp., *Helianthus annuus* (sunflower), and *Zinnia* spp. Homeowners with these favored host plants in their landscapes may be the first to notice BMSB as it spreads to new areas.

**Options for management**

**Mechanical and physical control**

BMSB do not harm people, pets or building materials, but they are decidedly unwelcome house guests. The best method to prevent BMSB from entering homes and buildings is simple exclusion: caulk or seal gaps around windows, doors, utility pipes and other openings; replace or repair damaged screens; screen openings to the outside such as attic and wall vents; and remove or seal window air conditioners in fall to prevent entry by BMSB.

If BMSB enter the home, they can be carefully removed by hand or with a vacuum. When disturbed, BMSB are likely to release an odor, but the odor dissipates.
Armillaria Root Disease
From: Steve Williams Landscape, Berkley, CA
To: Keith Giertych [kgiertych@growthproducts.com]
Subject: Re: Great Improvement on Japanese Maples

We treated six 30-50 year old Japanese maples that had construction damage and were suffering from Armillaria root disease. The fungus was under the bark, the bark was peeling off, and gooeys resins & exudates were seeping out from the trunk – both clear signs of extreme stress. Water movement up and down the tree was completely impaired. The tops of the trees defoliated, causing more stress and making the remaining leaves turn red prematurely.

Starting in 2009, we began treating the trees with Companion Biofungicide and Essential Plus, a bio-stimulant. We lost one tree – the one that had been most badly damaged – but the other five trees experienced a remarkable turn-around. By Spring 2010 all five remaining Japanese maples leafed out nicely, returned to more normal coloring, and looked much stronger than before. Thanks for your help with this project!

Another photo of stressed foliage prior to treatment.

Color has returned to normal and clients are pleased.

In Spring 2009, top of tree is thin and defoliated by leaf loss.

By spring 2010, leaves have filled in nicely.

Armillaria fungus lives under bark.

Tree oozes sap, indicating extreme stress.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Growth Products Disease Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>PRODUCT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essential Plus 1-0-1</td>
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<td>Companion Biological Fungicide</td>
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<td>“TKO” Phosphite 0-29-26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hydro-Max - An All Natural Wetting Agent</td>
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<td>14-7-14 All Purpose Fertilizer</td>
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“TKO” Phosphite 0-29-26
A liquid phosphorus and potassium solution, TKO is rapidly absorbed by leaves and roots to correct nutritional deficiencies and to enhance plant vigor.

Essential Plus 1-0-1
A 100% organic soil amendment and root stimulator with humic acid and 21 L-amino acids, Essential Plus rejuvenates soil and boosts plant growth.

Companion Biological Fungicide
Companion prevents a wide range of foliar and root diseases. Available in liquid and granular formulations. Also rebuilds the soil with beneficial bacteria.
After vacuuming up the bugs, the pests can be eliminated by disposing of the bag or drowning the bugs in soapy water if bagless vacuums are used.

Another option to eliminate BMSB from the home is to take advantage of their natural dropping behavior when disturbed. Cut the top off of a ½ to 1 gallon sized, straight-sided plastic container. Place your hand, a piece of cardboard or a whisk broom above the stink bugs, then sweep them down into the container. They’ll cooperate by dropping down as you disturb them. You can also slide the container up a wall, window or drapes to make the bugs drop into the container. Attach the container to a pole or broom handle to reach high locations.

**Biological control**

BMSB poses a significant risk to agriculture. Consequently, the USDA Agricultural Research Service and other scientists at land grant universities are studying biological control as an option for BMSB. A native parasitic wasp, *Telenomus podisi* (*Hymenoptera: Scelionidae*), has been reported to attack this new host as have several resident predators including praying mantids, spiders, assassin bugs and robber flies. Natural enemies of BMSB from its native range in Asia are also under evaluation to determine if any are suitable candidates for importation and release in this country.

**Insecticidal control**

Because of its broad host range, high mobility, and extended period of seasonal activity, effective and durable insecticidal control of BMSB indoors or outside is questionable.

Indoors: There are no pesticides specifically labeled for use against BMSB at this time for applications made indoors. Homeowners are strongly encouraged to weigh the benefits of chemical use against a nuisance pest versus the risks to human health.

Outside buildings: There are some synthetic pyrethroid insecticides available to commercial pesticide applicators such as deltamethrin, cyfluthrin, lambda-cyhalothrin, cypermethrin, sumithrin, and tralomethrin that may be applied to building exteriors where BMSB congregate. Several products are also available to homeowners that are labeled for application to the exterior of structures. Choose insecticides that are labeled for application around window sills and door thresholds, which are points of entry for this pest. Be certain that stink bugs are listed on the pesticide label before making an application to structures.

Nurseries and Landscapes: Formulations of pyrethrin are labeled for stink bug control on ornamentals, but they have not been evaluated specifically for BMSB, therefore the level of control for BMSB is not known. According to information contained at the Rutgers University BMSB website, http://njaes.rutgers.edu/stinkbug/control.asp, the following active ingredients are labeled for use against BMSB on ornamental trees and shrubs: acetamiprid, bifenthrin, cyfluthrin, dinotefuran, and a-cyhalothrin.
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Green up! Boost tree vigor.

GREENTREE PRO NUTRIBOOSTERS 0-15-10
One application helps stressed, weak, or yellowing trees regain health and vitality, green up, and leaf out. Get ready for spring now!
BMSB resistant landscapes, a sustainable approach?

Recent research underway in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland clearly demonstrated great variation in patterns of host utilization by BMSB. Some hosts such as serviceberry and other rosaceous species were used by BMSB for feeding and reproduction. These plants supported huge numbers of stink bugs that could later invade homes. Other trees such as oak supported few or no stink bugs and were not used for breeding.

One hope for addressing the looming BMSB menace will be to have growers, designers and urban foresters work together to design landscapes refractory to BMSB. This strategy would reduce the need for insecticidal intervention while minimizing concerns and complaints by homeowners, property managers and the general public currently terrorized by this expanding national threat.

To learn more about BMSB, visit the following websites:
- Rutgers University BMSB website: http://njaes.rutgers.edu/stinkbug/
- University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Exotic Pest Threats website: www.PestThreats.umd.edu/index.cfm

References


Michael J. Raupp is a professor of entomology in the Department of Entomology at the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland. Chris Sargent is a research assistant in the Department of Entomology at U-Maryland, College Park. Michael Raupp presented an “Invasive Insect Species Update” at TCI EXPO 2010 in Pittsburgh in November. He also maintains the website www.bugoftheweek.com.
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With more than 50 years of expertise and countless university and field trials, Mauget chemistry provides results, trusted by tree care experts like you.

Inject the Best.
Lebanon Seaboard acquires division of Plant Health Care

Lebanon Seaboard Corp. in January acquired the U.S. horticultural and turf division of Plant Health Care, Inc.

Established in 1995 in Pittsburgh, Pa., TCIA associate member PHC is a manufacturer of biologically based products for all segments of the green industry. Among other areas, the company is highly respected for its research applied to fertility products incorporating beneficial microbes, mycorrhizal fungi and soil nutrients. In addition to the PHC brands that had been marketed through the company’s horticultural and turf division, several PHC executives and sales personnel will join LebanonTurf, the professional division of Lebanon Seaboard.

The acquisition reinforces LebanonTurf’s commitment to the growing field of biological plant nutrition, according to Katherine Bishop, president and CEO of Lebanon Seaboard.

“PHC products add to our ability to create both environmental and economic benefits for our customers and capitalize on a movement throughout the green industry toward natural systems and biological products that promote plant health,” Bishop said.

PHC complements Lebanon Seaboard’s 2009 acquisition of Novozymes’ turf and landscape business, including the Roots products and technologies; and its 2008 acquisition of the Emerald Isle line of foliar and granular fertilizer products from Milliken Chemical.

“As the scientific community further clarifies and substantiates the importance of microorganisms to the soil ecosystem, biofertility products will continue to grow in importance to turf and landscape managers,” said Dave Heegard, general manager of LebanonTurf.

EDI and Davey enter into a strategic marketing alliance

Environmental Design Inc., a tree relocation company, and TCIA member The Davey Tree Expert Company have entered into an agreement to combine their large-tree transplanting resources and expertise into EDI. The strategic alliance will supplement the marketing of the service nationwide through the Davey network of tree and landscape experts. The combined company will be headquartered in Houston, Texas, in EDI’s existing facilities.

Bandit adds Southeast and Northwest dealers

Bandit Industries, A TCIA associate member, added Florida-based Flagler Construction Equipment as its newest authorized dealer in the Southeast, and PCI Waste & Recycling Equipment of Portland,
Oregon, in the Northwest.

Serving the Florida market since 1987, Flagler will offer Bandit equipment, parts and service through five main branches covering the entire state. Flagler will feature a full line of Bandit equipment for sale through their dealer network, including stump grinders, hand feed chippers, whole tree chippers and Beast recyclers.

Serving the Pacific Northwest, including Washington, Oregon and Idaho, PCI’s full line of industrial refuse and recycling equipment will add Bandit’s full offering of chippers and stump grinders.

FMC Professional Solutions expands field organization

FMC Professional Solutions is expanding and reorganizing its field operations to ensure more market support for the pest control, turf and ornamental industries.

“There are a number of exciting new opportunities at FMC that our existing structure would not support in the long term,” said Amy O’Shea, director of FMC Professional Solutions. “This new organizational structure allows for much more customer focus and better enables us to identify and solve the challenges that our customers face every day.”

One of the new positions is commercial development manager – one for pest and one for turf & ornamental market segments. In addition, FMC created new key accounts manager roles for each market segment. “FMC Professional Solutions is investing in the industries that have been so good to us through the years,” said O’Shea.

Weaver recalls O-rings on Cougar Saddle

Weaver Leather has been notified by U.S. Rigging Supply Co. that any unmarked aluminum O-rings on the Weaver Cougar Saddles manufactured during 2007 and 2008 are not suitable for use, and asks owners to “please remove any unmarked rings from service immediately.”

U.S. Rigging’s review of this potential issue was initiated after Weaver Leather was recently informed of a failure in the field. The reported fracture of an unmarked ring was being used on a Cougar Saddle. This is the first known failure of any aluminum O-ring on the Cougar Saddle. Fortunately there was no injury to the user.

Weaver Leather has performed further tests on marked rings. Testing has confirmed that marked rings meet or exceed the industry standard, as noted in U.S. Riggings recall notice, while unmarked rings may not meet the standards.

This recall appears to be similar to the unmarked Kong ring recall initiated by SherrillTree in 2009. It is important for each user to closely examine both aluminum rings being used on their Cougar Saddle. If either or both of the rings are unmarked, Contact Weaver or U.S. Rigging for instructions. Note that many of the rings’ markings could be worn and barely visible. Please inspect each of them very thoroughly.

If your ring has a “USR” marking or “ISC” marking (International Safety Components rings have been used by Weaver since 2008), these do not need to be replaced and are suitable for continued use.

Weaver Leather will provide a marked “ISC” replacement ring with a strap sewn to it (see below) and instructions for proper replacement. Weaver Leather has created a YouTube video to assist users in removing and replacing these rings, www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOvU7kpeh9w.

If you have any questions regarding whether your rings need to be replaced, please contact Weaver Leather at 1-800-WEAVER-1.
Synergy robotic work zone flaggers

Synergy Technology, LLC’s new Automated Flagger System AF-100 is an alternative to human highway work zones flaggers. The AF-100 is a trailer-mounted signal light with a gate arm that raises and lowers to direct traffic around a single lane work zone. Two radio controlled signal trailers allow crews to provide traffic signals with the highest visibility, and remove crew members from the roadway. The system offers a short payback period with labor reduction savings. The AF-100 has a perfect safety record, and is Federal Highway Administration 2009 MUTCD compliant.

Toro LS-9 Log Splitter

Toro’s new LS-9 log splitter handles logs up to 26-inches long in both vertical and horizontal applications, as well as boasts cycle times as fast as nine seconds and a splitting force of 28 tons. Catch plates and kick-out plates come standard on the LS-9, protecting operators from falling logs and pinch points. Designed for high-output productivity, the unit features a 9-inch solid steel wedge, a 10-gallon hydraulic tank and a Subaru EX27 9-hp engine. For ease of transportation, the LS-9 comes standard with trailer lights, a rubber torsion suspension axle for safe and smooth towing and an adjustable swing-away jack with pneumatic tires for easy maneuvering on turf. Toro is a TCIA associate member.

Insect Shield repellent work apparel

Insect Shield Repellent Apparel and Insect Shield Repellent Gear offer protection against a variety of insects that can spread dangerous diseases such as Lyme disease, Eastern equine encephalitis, West Nile fever and others of concern to tree care and landscape workers. This patent-pending technology incorporates a permethrin, a man-made version of a natural insect repellent found in certain chrysanthemum plants, providing long-lasting, effective, invisible and odorless protection against insects, including ticks, ants, flies, mosquitos, chiggers, and midges (no-see-ums) through 70 launderings. The first ever EPA-registered insect-repellent clothing, according to the company, includes shirts, pants, coveralls, vests, hats, socks, bandanas, hard hat covers and more. Repellency is odorless and invisible, and, unlike traditional insect repellents, the repellency is near your skin, instead of on it.

Powell IVM Platform software

Powel, Inc.’s new Integrated Vegetation Management Platform (IVMP) is a dedicated enterprise software system for planning, prioritizing and documenting mission critical ROW vegetation maintenance. Using Powel’s IVMP software, foresters can plan work on a map, referencing utility assets, aerial photography, Lidar and previous year’s vegetation programs. Powel IVMP streamlines workflow, enhances reliability and enables regulatory compliance, including NERC FAC-003-1 provisions. IVMP lets utilities create year-by-year trimming plans for an entire service territory, allowing for more effective planning and dispatch of cycle work. It creates and stores historical records of all inspections and mitigations performed against a given line section with all associated costs. The package also comes with standard templates for the most common reporting scenarios, including herbicide application, mitigation, ground inspection results and encroachment. Data in IVMP can be collected via fly-over (LIDAR or aerial inspections) and ground inspection (with a IVMP mobile client) or customer calls so that each danger observation is documented, tracked and addressed in a timely manner. Thorough and accurate data collected by the system can significantly reduce outage risks and potential NERC investigations. Documentation can be quickly generated by IVMP to satisfy an investigation should one occur.
Cummins 6.7L Turbo Diesel

Cummins Inc.’s new High Output 6.7L Turbo Diesel for Ram Heavy Duty pickup trucks produces more torque where customers need it most. With a peak of up to 800 lb-ft of torque at 1600 rpm, power is increased across a wide speed range of 1200-2700 rpm. This delivers up to 46 additional hp at typical highway cruising speeds while maintaining 350 hp at 3000 rpm. Its base engine is the Cummins ISB, which is used in a variety of demanding applications. It will have Cummins best-in-class integrated exhaust brake, with a full 222 braking hp at the wheel for towing heavy loads down the most severe grades. Cummins, a TCIA associate member, will begin producing the engines in April. They will be available in Ram Heavy Duty pickup trucks with the automatic transmission option.

Subaru EX Series engines

Subaru’s EX Series engines are the first to utilize high performance chain-driven overhead cam (OHC) technology in the industrial air-cooled market. Featuring four models with power ranges from 4.5 to 9 horsepower, the EX Series offers more power, easier starting and quieter operation than same-class competitive engines. The EX Series engines are used in a number of stump cutters for the tree care industry, including units from U.S. Praxis/Toro. Chain-driven OHC technology allows the intake and exhaust valves to be positioned for optimum engine performance. This offers lower resistance for the air/fuel mixture flow. Designed with a highly efficient pent-roof-type combustion chamber, the EX engines are able to utilize a high compression ratio, producing higher power and torque while limiting exhaust emissions and fuel consumption. Easier starts are another advantage of the EX engines. An automatic decompression system reduces the required recoil pulling force by 30- to 40-percent when compared with overhead valve engine designs.

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Events & Seminars

March 1-2, 2011
MGIA 24th Annual Trade Show & Convention
Novi, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

March 2, 2011
New Jersey Landscape Trade Show & Conference 2011
Meadowlands Exposition Center, Secaucus, NJ
Contact: (201) 703-3600; www.njlca.org; info@njlca.org

March 3, 2011
The 17th Annual ELA Conference & Eco-Marketplace
MassMutual Center, Springfield, MA
Contact: ela.info@comcast.net.

March 3-4, 2011
Tree Risk Assessment Course & Exam - TRACE Training
Become a Certified Tree Risk Assessor
Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
Contact: (215) 247-5777 x144; www.morrisarboretum.org

March 6, 2011*
Maine Arborist Association Annual Meeting
Portland, ME
Contact: (207) 657-3256; www.mainearborist.org

March 8, 2011
2010 Community Tree Conference, “Tree Workers & Working Safety – A Reality Check”
Stockbridge Hall, UMass Amherst, MA
Contact: www.umassgreeninfo.org; (413) 545-0895

March 10, 2011
ISA Certified Arborist Examinations
San Antonio, TX
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com/certification/tests

March 11, 2011
Diagnosing Tree Disorders with Detective Dendro
Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
Contact: (215) 247-5777 x144; www.morrisarboretum.org

March 14-16, 2011
CARTS: Certified Pesticide Applicator Training & Exam
Belville, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

March 17, 2011
NJArts Garden State Tree Conference
Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: www.NJArboristsISA.com

March 18, 2011
Environmental Trends in Design Tree and Lawn Care
Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
Contact: (215) 247-5777 x144; www.morrisarboretum.org

March 23, 2011 (Raindate March 28)
Pruning shrubs: Broad-Leaved & Needle-Leaved
Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
Contact: (215) 247-5777 x144; www.morrisarboretum.org

April 8, 2011
Mature Tree Care
Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
Contact: (215) 247-5777 x144; www.morrisarboretum.org

April 12, 13, 14, 2011
Wilderness Rescue: Rope Technician Course
Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
Contact: (215) 247-5777 x144; www.morrisarboretum.org

April 13-14, 2011
Trees, People and the Built Environment
Birmingham, England, UK
Contact: www.charteredforesters.org/conference

May 10-13, 2011*
Western Chapter ISA 77th Annual Conference*
La Jolla, CA
Contact: www.wcisa.net

May 13, 2011
Biodiversity and the Influence of Native and Exotic Plants in Landscapes
Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
Contact: (215) 247-5777 x144; www.morrisarboretum.org

May 19-21, 2011
2011 Texas Tree Climbing Championship & Workshop
Trinity Park, Fort Worth, TX
Contact: www.isatexas.com

June 12-14, 2011*
Trees Florida 2011
Wyndham Jacksonville Riverwalk, Jacksonville, FL
Contact: (941) 342-0153; www.treesflorida.com

July 21, 2011
ISA Certified Arborist Examinations
San Antonio, TX
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com/certification/tests

August 25, 2011
ISA Certified Arborist Examinations
Round Rock, TX
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com/certification/tests

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

October 25-26, 2011*
Illinois Arborist Assoc. Annual Conference & Trade Show
Holiday Inn Select, Tinley Park, IL
Contact: www.illinoisarborist.org

November 3-5, 2011*
TCI EXPO 2011
Hartford, CT
Contact: www.tcia.org; 1-800-733-2522

* Indicates that TCIA staff will be in attendance

Upcoming TCIA webinars
Mar. 4 Bob Rouse, & Randy McDonald, Business Bootcamp Series: Business Basics
Mar. 10 Brian Kraff & Griffin Davis, Market Hardware Social Networks & the New Face of Online Marketing

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The Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) program and the Virginia Safety and Health Codes Board have adopted a final regulation for Tree Trimming Operations, referred to as 16 VAC 25-73. The final regulation is expected to be published in the Virginia Register of Regulations on February 14, 2011. Free, downloadable training and information materials will be available on the Department’s website, www.doli.virginia.gov.

Since 1993 Virginia has had 59 non-logging, tree-trimming/cutting/felling fatalities, which is seven percent of the recorded total. Forty-seven of those have occurred since 2000, representing nine percent of the total for that time period.

The final regulation is based closely on ANSI Z133.1-2006, Safety Requirements for Arboricultural Operations. The industry (TCIA members and others) first approached VOSH about the possibility of adopting a comprehensive regulation based upon ANSI Z133.1-2000. Discussions with the department resulted in a commitment from the industry to strengthen the ANSI standard. VOSH initiated this rulemaking in 2007 and in 2008 met with a TCIA member delegation to make final revisions to a draft regulation.

TCIA’s delegation was comprised of Sten Cempe, Big “O” Tree & Lawn; Bryan Giere, Northern Virginia Tree Experts; David Marren, Bartlett Tree Experts; Andy Ross, RTEC Treecare; Scott Turner, True Timber Tree Service; and Peter Gerstenberger, TCIA’s senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards.

More recently, TCIA members met on two occasions with representatives of Maryland OSHA for the same purpose. Once again, the ANSI Z133 Standard served as a strong template for the development of a draft tree care regulation that could be implemented as early as this summer. As with Virginia, the rulemaking was initiated because of a high frequency of serious accidents in the industry.

For companies in these states that have been striving to voluntarily comply with Z133, the new laws come with no significant, new regulatory burden. For other companies unfamiliar or non-compliant with Z133, the new laws help TCIA and its members to leverage State’s enforcement personnel in an effort to make the industry safer.

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

Once again, the ANSI Z133 Standard served as a strong template for the development of a draft tree care regulation that could be implemented as early as this summer. As with Virginia, the rulemaking was initiated because of a high frequency of serious accidents in the industry.
In the wake of a recent summit on emerald ash borer management, the newly-formed Coalition for Urban Ash Tree Conservation (CUATC) in January released an EAB Management Statement recommending how to approach EAB management in urban landscapes, including endorsing ash tree conservation as a fundamental management component.

The group is comprised of 20 leading university researchers and extension specialists; tree and land care company representatives; non-governmental organizations; and municipal arborists and foresters. It also includes a representative from Valent Professional Products, which organized the November 2010 summit in Florida.

The CUATC’s “consensus document” aims to help clarify misconceptions about EAB management options and to bring a unified voice to management strategies for dealing this devastating pest, according to a press release from the group. Native to Asia and first discovered in the U.S. in 2002, EAB is an invasive insect pest that has killed tens of millions of ash trees across 15 Midwestern and Eastern states and threatens to kill millions more as it...
We the undersigned strongly endorse ash tree conservation as a fundamental component of integrated programs to manage emerald ash borer (EAB) in residential and municipal landscapes. Cost-effective, environmentally sound EAB treatment protocols are now available that can preserve ash trees through peak EAB outbreaks with healthy canopy intact. Used in association with tree inventories and strategic removal / replacement of unhealthy ash, tree conservation will help retain maximum integrity and value of urban forests. This integrated approach to urban EAB management is supported by university scientists with expertise in EAB management, commercial arborists, municipal foresters, public works officials, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Emerald ash borer has killed millions of ash trees since its discovery in 2002 and the number of dead ash is increasing rapidly. Ash species are abundant in planted and natural areas of urban forests, representing 10-40 percent of the canopy cover in many communities.

Ash trees provide substantial economic and ecosystem benefits to taxpayers, ranging from increased property value, to storm water mitigation, to decreased energy demands (http://www.coloradotrees.org/benefits.htm).

Consequently, widespread ash mortality in urban forests and residential landscapes is having devastating economic and environmental impacts. Indeed, EAB is predicted to cause an unprecedented $10-20 billion in losses to urban forests over the next 10 years. (http://nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/jrnl/2010/nrs_2010_kovacs_001.pdf)

After its initial discovery, regulatory agencies attempted to eradicate EAB through removal and destruction of all ash trees in infested areas. Unfortunately, this proved unsuccessful and was soon abandoned.

Since then, university scientists have developed and refined treatment protocols that can protect healthy ash trees from EAB and help conserve the urban forest.

However, despite availability of cost-effective treatments, many municipalities, property managers, and homeowners continue to rationalize tree removal as the only viable management strategy for EAB. This is based on erroneous beliefs that tree removal slows the spread of EAB, or that treatment is not effective, economical, or environmentally sound. Current science supports conservation via treatment as a sensible and effective tool for managing healthy ash trees in urban settings. In many cases, tree conservation is economically and environmentally superior to tree removal.

Based on research conducted by university scientists, and careful review of the potential impacts on human health and the environment, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has registered three systemic insecticides for control of EAB – dinotefuran is registered for basal trunk bark or soil application, emamectin benzoate for trunk injection only, and imidacloprid for soil application or trunk injection.

When applied using formulations, products, and protocols documented as effective by university research, these treatments can provide environmentally sound control of EAB, sufficient to maintain a functional and aesthetically pleasing ash canopy.

Treatment is most appropriate after EAB infestation has been detected within 15 miles, and is most effective when applied before trees are infested. However, treatment can also save ash trees with a low level of EAB infestation. Spring is the ideal time for treatment, but soil application in fall can be effective in some situations.

Different treatment regimens will be optimal under different situations – no one treatment plan or application method is best under all circumstances.

A program of sustained treatment will continue to spread.

The 20 co-signatories who helped craft the EAB Management Statement said they “strongly endorse ash tree conservation as a fundamental component of integrated programs to manage EAB in residential and municipal landscapes. Cost-effective, environmentally sound EAB treatment protocols are now available that can preserve ash trees through peak EAB outbreaks with healthy canopy intact. Used in association with tree inventories and strategic removal/replacement of unhealthy ash, tree conservation will help maintain maximum integrity and value of urban forests.”

The EAB Management Statement is already being distributed at local levels, with the hope that it will help encourage conservation of urban forests and provide accurate information about currently registered treatment options.

“This document will help increase alignment between different groups – governmental, scientific and the arborists – regarding EAB management,” said Joe Chamberlin, Ph.D., regional field development manager for Valent. “It emphasizes the point that conservation of healthy ash trees is more sensible in many cases, from economic, environmental and public safety perspectives, than tree removal.”

The CUATC statement describes some of the ecosystem benefits provided by ash trees as well as the economic and environmental impacts associated with their removal and loss. It also emphasizes the strong scientific support for an integrated approach to management, discrediting the prevailing belief that tree removal is a valid strategy for slowing the spread of EAB.

They list three chemical options for EAB control that have been registered by the Environmental Protection Agency: dinotefuran, emamectin benzoate and imidacloprid.

“When applied using formulations, products, and protocols documented as effective by university research,” the coalition states, “these treatments can provide environmentally sound control of EAB, sufficient to maintain a functional and aes-
be needed to conserve trees through peak EAB infestation. However, as the local EAB population declines due to death of untreated ash, it is possible that treatment frequency may be reduced. Research on this question and other aspects of EAB management is ongoing, requiring practitioners to stay current.

Up-to-date information about EAB insecticides, application protocols, and effectiveness can be found at: www.emeraldashborer.info/files/multistate_EAB_Insecticide_Fact_Sheet.pdf

In summary, urban ash conservation can be less costly than removal, especially when the significant environmental and economic benefits of established trees are considered (www.treebenefits.com, http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/treecomputer/). Furthermore, ash conservation can circumvent the substantial environmental impacts caused by wholesale deforestation of the urban landscape, as well as the documented public safety risks associated with standing dead ash trees and their removal.

Signed January 6, 2011, by:
Jim Bell, parks superintendent, City of Elgin, IL
Shawn Bernick, director of research*, Rainbow Treecare Scientific Advancements
Joe Boggs, assistant professor, OSU Extension/OSU Dept. of Entomology, The Ohio State University
J. Bradford Bonham, DVM*, municipal consultant (OH)
Joe Chamberlin, Ph.D., development manager, SE, Valant U.S.A. Corporation
Richard S. Cowles, Ph.D., agricultural scientist, The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
Mike Galvin, deputy director**, Casey Trees, Washington, D.C.
Larry Hanks, consulting arborist**~, Pampered Properties, Georgetown, KY
Daniel A. Herms, Ph.D., professor, Dept. of Entomology, The Ohio State University; Wooster, OH
Ray Iacobucci, regional technical manager, TruGreen; Lewis Center, OH
Dana Irwin, senior director - East Svc. Delivery, Scotts LawnService
Deborah G. McCullough, Ph.D., professor, Depts. of Entomology and Forestry, Michigan State University; E. Lansing, MI
Fredric Miller, Ph.D., BCMA, professor, Horticulture, Joliet Junior College; Joliet, IL
Michael J. Raupp, Ph.D., professor & Ext. Specialist, Dept. of Entomology, University of Maryland; College Park, MD
Michael Robinson, VP; Mgr. Midwest Div.*, The F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company
Clifford S. Sadof, Ph.D., professor, Entomology, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
Craig Schaar, forestry inspector*, City of Toledo, OH
David Smitley, Ph.D., professor, Dept. of Entomology, Michigan State University; E. Lansing, MI
Chad Tinkel, manager, Forestry Operations**, City of Ft. Wayne, IN
Chris Williamson, Ph.D., associate professor, Dept. of Entomology, University of Wisconsin; Madison, WI
James Zwack, director, Technical Services, The Davey Tree Expert Company

*ISA-certified arborist
~ASCA Registered Consulting Arborist

Keep Up-to-Date on Invasive Forest Pests With Free Webinars from EAB University!
Emerald Ash Borer University is a free series of informational webinars brought to you by EAB educators from prominent universities in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service.
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Many live webinars are eligible for continuing education credits and all presentations are archived for later viewing.
For more information, including a schedule of upcoming topics and information on how to participate, visit:

www.emeraldashborer.info

The full statement, and more information on the Coalition for Urban Ash Tree Conservation, is available online at www.emeraldashborer.info/files/conserve_ash.pdf.
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Protection from Armored & Soft Scale
Magnolia treated with one application of Transtect (bottom) and untreated control with significant damage from False Oleander Scale (top).

Quick Control of Pests
Transtect applied either as a basal soil application or systemic bark spray moved rapidly into mature bur oaks (avg. DBH of 23 inches) in a trial conducted in Eagan, MN.

Protection from Caterpillars
Honey Locust treated with one application of Lepitect (left) and untreated control with significant damage from Bagworms (right).
I feel as though every time I attend a seminar on pruning or read a pruning article I find some form of drop-crotch or crown-reduction pruning being publicly advised. This concerns me. Although each article or lecture by itself raises no particular red flag, I fear that the cumulative effect might be to encourage overreliance on crown-reduction pruning by newly minted arborists.

Through the nonprofit organization PlantAmnesty, I’ve led an educational drive for the past 24 years to rid Seattle of tree topping, with some good success. From the beginning, I suspected that once topping was ruled out, struggling tree services would turn to selling crown reductions (known back then as drop-crotching), and once that was ruled out, I foresaw a spate of over-thinning. But then I hoped that everything would settle down to the reasonable pruning of trees, with an emphasis on utilizing risk assessments for people with fears about their trees falling over.

To my surprise, the arboricultural literature did a good job of discouraging over-thinning, with many articles categorizing lion’s tailing, over-thinning and crown-raising as beyond acceptable standards. But lately, every so often I read or hear about another crown-reduction program, some of which seem bogus while others seem quite reasonable.

First the Frenchman, Pierre Rambault, (see Ishi, Ford & Kennedy), talked about “reiterations” and how a mature tree could be kept from becoming an over-mature tree with crown-reduction cuts (as if a facelift kept you young). Then came the German, Andreas Detter, with equations and engineering principles to say that a light crown reduction would make trees safer without doing harm. Neville Fay then advocated retrenchment for aging trees, and Ed Gilman shows several instances where crown-reduction cuts (of limbs, not of entire trees) solve safety problems. And now we have an upsurge in subordination pruning.

Unfortunately, what happens in the field can be a perversion of what is advocated in the literature. I recently was called out to see a ghastly over-reduced, big-leaf maple that the arborist had sold as “subordination” pruning to keep the tree safe. ARGHHHH!

All this leads me to wonder if writers
and speakers have an obligation to address what people hear them say, and not just what they actually say. I think they do.

The problem with the crown-reduction cut is that the damage incurred is not apparent. With a topping cut, the first thing people notice is how ugly it is, and then come the watersprouts that are not only ugly but impossible to get rid of. The right-sized crown-reduction cut, on the other hand, keeps the tree looking nice and there is no watersprout regrowth. But damage has been done none-the-less, though not as much damage as with a topping cut. The tree has a much more difficult time compartmentalizing a reduction cut, versus a removal (or thinning) cut. Furthermore, by the time the reduced limb reaches the size of its un-pruned counterpart, it will be less strongly engineered to withstand wind stresses. Instead of a continuous piece of stem, there is a “hinge” point where the stress load transfers to the lateral.

The structural and biological problems with crown-reduction pruning are, in my opinion, not fully addressed in articles and lectures. And they need to be emphasized strongly enough that new arborists don’t hear that crown reduction is a fine way to prune trees. So at every lecture, I would request a longish aside full of the caveats to crown reduction.

For example, I might say to a new tree service that less than 2 percent of cuts and less than 2 percent of the business should be crown reduction. That sounds about right. And that a crown reduction cut greater than 2 inches can lead to substantial damage. And even if the cuts are small, how long is the benefit of such a cut supposed to last? Is this a one-time occurrence to cope with storm damage or will there need to be repeat crown reductions of an entire tree to keep it small and safe for the nervous property owner? And if the latter, what effect will that have? I’ve seen this sort of program on sycamore trees pruned repeatedly, a la Gilman’s book jacket photo. Although it looks, and is, OK when done once, it becomes unsustainable when done repeatedly.

So what did people hear me say that I haven’t actually said in this article? I didn’t say that trees and limbs should never be reduced. I didn’t even say there are no circumstances under which topping is right—and solely a function of its size (as opposed to being a function of soil conditions, roots, tree architecture and the myriad other relevant factors) and that the size of a tree can and should be determined by pruning (with no ill effects). We should be hyper aware that every implication or recommendation that a shorter tree is a safer tree fuels that belief system.

We are barely out of an era where tree topping was the answer to trees that were thought dangerous because of their size. The same amount of time we spend educating new arborists on the latest tree issues and practices should also be spent on educating the public and new arborists that the notion of the “too big tree” is nonsense and not a logical assumption, in most instances. We should continue to beat the drum for risk assessments for people who have safety concerns.

Cass Turnbull is founder of PlantAmnesty, and author of Cass Turnbull’s Guide to Pruning.
I started asking questions in an unlikely place – for a tree hugger. The Negev region lies between the Dead Sea and Gaza, with the Sinai Desert just to the south. The Negev is often called a desert, but Israeli ecologists call this dry and rocky habitat a maquis and liken it to the chaparral of the American southwest.

Although much of the Negev has been deforested, the native flora of this region is dominated by the kinds of small, scruffy plants and squatty oaks one might expect to find in a semi-arid plain.

I was stationed at Tell Halif, and my reason for being there had nothing to do with trees. I was a research assistant on an archaeological project. Nonetheless, trees were the reason we built our camp where we did; our site was in the middle of an afforestation zone that stretched for miles. The view in every direction had great swaths of trees planted 30 years earlier. We found a nearby grove of Aleppo pines (*Pinus halepensis*) to be a lovely oasis. I was grateful for the shade, but there was something very odd about this place. All the trees were the same species, the same size, and were spaced the same distance apart. The Negev forest was not a forest at all – and to this day Israeli foresters are working hard to turn it into one. What was missing? What is the fundamental difference between a tree plantation and a wild forest?

Community, diversity and self-renewal characterize a natural forest. The Negev planted forest consists largely of one tree species of exotic origin. It is true that there are small, scattered local populations of wild Aleppo pines, but the planted pines came from a far away seed source that has proven to be of marginal hardiness. And in addition to being monospecific, the diverse native plant and animal community that sustains wild pines is largely absent to this day. In short, the Negev planted forest lacks sufficient wildness, and is now in decline.

**Wild thing**

Unlike the legions of invading pines, one tree on our site was full of wild integrity. A native fig tree, heavy with...
fruit, grew among short grasses and cacti in an undisturbed corner of the dig. When the figs finally ripened, my friends and I laid in the shade and gorged ourselves. A fresh, ripe fig is a skin bag of sweet milky nectar. In a land that has been said to flow with milk and honey, the sacred fig tree has it all. For the ancient people of this region it symbolized blessing and fertility.

The border between Israel and Egypt opened that year as a result of the Camp David Accords. We were able to drive through Gaza, across a sliver of the Sinai, and finally to the Nile delta and the dunes of the Sahara. I encountered many fig trees along the way, many still heavy with fruit. It came as no surprise to see this tree in ancient tomb paintings and hieroglyphics. In ancient Egyptian sacred art, the fig tree symbolized fertility in this world and the next. The ever-present earth mother goddess was joined by a host of wild flora and fauna, human supplicants, and divine beings. All of these belonged to the created order and were sustained by the waters of the depths that flowed through the tree that culminated in fig nectar, dispensed as the Elixir of Life. And the sacred fig tree was sustained by the community of wild plants and animals and was fertilized by the annual flooding of the Nile, as depicted in many of these tomb images.

Beneath this sacred tree lies a solid botanical truth: fertility requires biodiversity. When diversity is impoverished and natural relationships are few, trees suffer. This was true in ancient Egypt and is true in the modern Middle East and in western Nebraska.

Planting integrity

A 2007 action plan for making the Negev pine plantations more sustainable identifies artificiality and uniformity as complicating factors. As I mentioned above, wild forests are diverse in species and age; they are complex, communal, and self-renewing. Of course, human hands can’t recreate natural forests because nature is too complex. But any strategy to make community trees healthier and planted forests more sustainable needs to include ways to increase biodiversity.

Diversity of species, size, age, and even stages of health and decay contribute to a living web in soil. Every plant takes something from the soil but gives back so much more in return. If we understand that healthy soil is alive and supports a vast and intricate web, and that biodiversity creates and sustains this living web, then our work is not to simply plant more trees but to create connections.

A wild tree connects to the web in soil with the help of fungal partners. Hyphae, the long, thin appendages of soil fungi, infect small root tips and connect the tree to other living plants and decaying matter. Energy, elements and information move through this web, and in some respects the entire tree community acts like a single organism. This external web connects with an internal one, which in turn, connects every living cell belonging to the tree.

The cellular energy and communications network inside a tree is called the symplast.
This internal web is made of thin strands of cytoplasm (cell guts) that transport energy, elements, and information between cells. The internal symplastic web and the external fungal web are integrated in the tips of very fine, soft roots. A mature, wild tree growing in healthy soil has millions of these small root tips, and it is through these tiny tissues that the direct connections between tree cells and hyphae are made. In this way, plants within the community share energy and messages through integrated fungal and symplastic networks.

By adding humates, natural zeolites, a specialty dispersant and an antivolatilization agent, Doggett’s tree fertilizer allows more nutrients to get into the tree system with little or no leaching from the soil. The result is a more highly utilized form of tree fertilizer that promotes good color, vigor and health for your trees, without pushing growth.

In addition to fungal partners, trees depend on countless creatures and relationships from blue jays to microbes, from slime molds to algae. These creatures depend on trees and other plants for energy captured and transformed through photosynthesis, but make photosynthesis possible through complex interactions. Tree communities with little diversity are therefore very fragile. This is true for urban “forests,” desert afforestation zones, suburban yards and botanical gardens. Even those creatures we decide are pests and pathogens often contribute something positive, and their elimination can impoverish tree communities beyond any damage they might potentially inflict.

Urban forestry and landscape design often initiate decline scenarios with the twin demons of artificiality and uniformity. Streets lined with a single exotic tree species growing in small, compacted planters covered with fancy mulch or river rock dominate many North American cities. Artificiality and uniformity are the goal! I often hear the argument that urban soils are no longer native and therefore native trees have no real advantage. But every patch of earth, no matter how poor, can only support trees if it hosts vast numbers of organisms. And the majority of these will always be native.

Soil is only part of the equation. Every tree is part of a living community that extends deep underground and high above the canopy. Important relationships are formed throughout this zone. Humans have influenced every aspect of the world we share with earth’s creatures, but trees that are locally native still have the greatest potential to form these relationships. We can enhance this potential by designing for diversity in soil, mulch, companion plantings, and by writing tree-care plans that rely on biodiversity rather than on chemical controls and fertilizers.

From Tell Halif to Hitchcock County

Hitchcock County in southwest Nebraska is a lot like the Negev. With its short grasses, cacti, scrubby trees and rugged terrain, it could be a film location for a biblical epic. Just north of the Kansas
border in the middle of the open range lays a canyon deeply carved in rock. And it is full of oaks.

My first descent into this unlikely grove took me back 30 years to the artificial oasis of Aleppo pine. The canyon oaks paint a green stripe on dusty hills, but these trees differ dramatically. The bur oaks here are native, ancient, and members of a diverse ecosystem. They are, however, plagued with a similar problem. A majority of the trees are close in age— not because they were planted at the same time like those in the Negev, but because regeneration has been largely lacking.

Overall, the conditions for regeneration are present. On summer hikes raucous birds, brilliant prairie flowers and bumper crops of toads greet us. Dusk bringshoots and howls. And even though the old oaks are quite fertile—producing heavy acorn crops during most years—there are few saplings to succeed their elders. The plentiful acorns provide food for hungry herbivores; unfortunately, oak seedlings feed them as well.

But we have a plan. Expert propagators have been producing saplings from these acorns for planting in the canyon with the protection of steel enclosures. It’s working. A new generation of wild and precocious oaks is connecting with their native companions. And meanwhile, back in the Negev, Israeli foresters are planting lots of local wild and native plants, including oaks. And somewhere deep inside an ancient tomb, the goddess is being served. For there are no sacred trees without photosynthesis and there is no photosynthesis without biodiversity.

Jack Phillips is a registered consulting arborist living in Omaha, Nebraska. He is principal of New Tree School and teaches tree biology and care for Arboriculture Canada Training and Education.
In Las Vegas, especially at casinos and custom homes, palms get special treatment. One of the specialties of First Choice Tree Service, Inc., in Las Vegas, Nevada, is the aesthetic pruning of palms, says owner Tony Valenti. While dead palm fronds in areas such as Southern California fall naturally, in Las Vegas First Choice removes them. This gives the palms their smooth appearance.

“We do quite a bit of it,” says Valenti. “There’s a real art to it.”

Valenti started First Choice Tree Service in 1989. Their clients include municipalities, resorts, hotels, golf courses, gated communities and homeowner associations (HOA’s), in addition to casinos. Approximately 35 to 40 percent of their work is residential.

First Choice also specializes in transplanting, especially palms. People frequently plant them too close to walls, driveways or pools, he says, and the company either replants them on the property or salvages and relocates them. Their state-of-the-art transplant equipment includes a 91-inch spade truck and a water jet. The spade truck is used to extract palms when there’s enough space. When space is limited or if a tree has a low crotch, such as an oak, olive or sumac, they use the water jet to cut the root ball. The high-pressure nozzle shoots water at 5,000 to 7,000 psi and cuts through root balls almost like a laser. At the same time, they vacuum up the water and mud.

“It’s very fast and it cuts the roots clean and sharp,” he says, but it doesn’t cut through water lines or sprinklers. The company recently used the water jet to successfully relocate a 40-year-old olive, plus it’s used for root pruning, root guards and trenching.

Most of the company’s work is pruning for the health of the tree and for safety. Their Plant Health Care division includes customized fertilization programs and long-term maintenance for larger communities and HOA’s. They do large and high-risk removals, with bucket trucks and cranes, or with specialized rigging in small spaces. They also do property clearing, emergency services, cabling, bracing and staking, as well as stump removals and grinding.

First Choice works with both the Nevada Division of Forestry and the Nevada Fire Safety Council on fire fuel reduction, thinning palms that are too close to cabins and removing ones that are too close to the freeways, or dead, diseased or dying. They’re also licensed to do highway waste suppression – pest and weed control – for the Division of Forestry.

They have 55 employees in the winter and can gear up to 70 in the summer, the best time to prune palms. Aside from Tony, there are four other certified arborists on staff: Jaimie McConnell, Sean Knapik, Jay Zambo and John Valenti, Tony’s brother. Three others are currently preparing for their exams.

Many of the company’s employees are very long term. “My first two employees are still with me,” Valenti says. “Usually when you come to First Choice, you stay.”

They do very little advertising. Their reputation attracts 80 percent of their customers, he says. People notice the quality and variety of their work, their concern for safety, and the responsiveness of the staff in handling any problem that arises. Potential clients also notice their equipment. They lease late-model trucks for their sales staff and they have a 56-foot-long flatbed trailer that hauls equipment.

“We’re also playing around with Facebook and twitter,” he says. “It’s almost necessary for any company to do that.”

First Choice supports a variety of community projects by donating company time to prune palms for families in need, as well as local schools and parks. In partnership with the Springs Preserve, they chip close to 75 percent of the city’s Christmas palms, a process that takes approximately two weeks. Many of their salaried employees also volunteer their own time for tree planting in the area.

They also recycle 99 percent of their green waste. They split and sell some for
firewood. They distribute palm chips, which are high in boron and not compatible with the city’s salty soils, to A1 Organics, where they’re made into compost. They send the “clean” chips to horse corrals, fruit orchards, parks and local residents. Additionally, First Choice is embarking on a research and development project with Landfill Alternative in an effort to minimize city green-waste burial at landfills in Southern Nevada.

In 2007, master arborist Dennis Swartzell noticed the company’s professionalism and suggested they look into Accreditation, Valenti says.

“We’ve always had an honest, good approach. The company has always had safety director. Our incidents were next to zero and our complaint level was next to zero. But we strive to improve ourselves every day. When we looked into Accreditation, we thought it would do nothing but better ourselves.”

Safety is the main reason the company became accredited. Anyone in an industry as dangerous as the tree industry should take steps to become accredited, Valenti says. And because safety is such an important element of Accreditation, accredited companies qualify for insurance with ArborMAX, the only insurance company endorsed by TCIA. “We’re happy with them,” Valenti says. “We had a little incident last year and ArborMAX worked very closely with us.”

Accreditation was also a way to differentiate themselves from unlicensed companies in the area. Although he sympathizes with people who are trying to feed their family, he’d like to see more policing of these companies, he says. “It’s a big problem for companies like First Choice.”

They became accredited in June 2009, in just eight months. They handled it as a team, with the operations manager at the time and the new safety director, Jaimie McConnell, who was already a CTSP, helping out.

One of the hardest parts of the Accreditation process was getting all their employees aware of what it meant and on board. Once they saw the improvements, though, they were happy to go along with it. It was also difficult to train each employee, from the groundsman in ANSI standards and OSHA safety, to the office staff in customer relations and even management in how to better control meetings.

“We learned every day,” he says.

Casinos are beginning to want accredited companies working on their properties, Valenti says. For now, though, most of the rewards of being accredited are internal.

“I think it will keep us stabilized in developing the company and keeping up the quality of work we do,” he says. “I recommend it for any company that’s serious about safety and customer service and wants to go to the next level. It’s the best thing we ever did.”
Unlimited Possibilities with Limited Liability Companies

By Mark E. Battersby

There is a relatively new business structure on the block. While the S corporation remains the most-used type of small business entity, the Limited Liability Company, or LLC, is increasingly the entity of choice for both new and existing tree care businesses.

LLCs are popular entities for operating a landscaping or tree care business because, as with any incorporated business, owners have limited liability for the debts and actions of the LLC. Other features of LLCs are more in line with a partnership, providing management flexibility and the benefit of pass-through taxation.

Owners of an LLC are called “members” and since most states do not restrict ownership, members may include individuals, corporations, other LLCs and even foreign entities. There is no maximum number of members and most states also permit “single member” LLCs, those having only one owner. Only a few types of businesses cannot be LLCs, such as banks, insurance companies and nonprofit organizations.

LLC defined

A Limited Liability Company is a business structure that combines the pass-through taxation of a partnership or sole proprietorship with the limited liability of a corporation. As is the case with owners in partnerships or sole proprietorships, LLC “members” report business profits or losses on their personal income tax returns; the LLC itself is not a separate taxable entity.

Like owners of a corporation, however, all LLC owners or members are protected from personal liability for business debts and claims – a feature known as “limited liability.” This means that if the business owes money or faces a lawsuit for some other reason; only the assets of the business itself are at risk. Creditors usually cannot reach the personal assets of the LLC members, such as their house or car.

Unlike S corporations, LLCs have no limit on the number or nationality of members who can own subsidiaries and can have more than one class of interest – a good method of unequally dividing income and losses. A limited liability company – yes, company not “corporation,” is correct – can select varying forms of distribution for profits. Unlike a common partnership where the split is 50-50, LLCs have much more flexibility. LLC profits are taxed only once, at the owners’ tax rate when earned by the entity.

Sound like a partnership? Well, not quite. LLCs protect all members’ personal assets from debts and lawsuits. Even a limited partnership (LP) has one party who assumes liability, the general partner, and that partner usually must have substantial net worth. Furthermore, limited partners who participate in managing the tree care business risk losing their limited liability.

Viva the differences

Corporations are required to keep formal minutes, have meetings and record resolutions. The LLC business structure requires no corporate minutes or resolutions and is easier to operate. In fact, in some states, LLCs can be created with just one actual person involved.

All business losses, profits and expenses flow through the tree care business to the individual members. You avoid the double taxation of paying corporate tax and individual tax. Generally, this will be a tax advantage, but circumstances can favor a corporate tax structure.

Probably most importantly, owners of an LLC have the liability protection of a corporation. An LLC exists as a separate entity much like a corporation. Members cannot be held personally liable for debts unless they have signed a personal guarantee.

The downside

Admittedly, this limited liability is not foolproof. Both LLC members and corporate shareholders can lose this protection by acting illegally, unethically or irresponsibly. Plus, many courts are increasingly reaching behind the corporate veil into the pockets of members and shareholders who have not kept the business entity fully separate from their personal finances.

Other disadvantages include, but are not limited to:

- **Limited life.** While corporations can live forever, an LLC is dissolved when a member dies or undergoes bankruptcy.
- **Going Public.** Owners of tree care businesses with plans to take their company public, or issuing employee shares in the future, may be best served by choosing a corporate business structure.
- **Raising capital.** It may be more difficult to raise capital for an LLC, as investors may be more comfortable investing funds in the better-understood corporate form with a view toward an eventual IPO.
- **Complexity.** Running a sole proprietorship or partnership usually involves less paperwork and is less complex. Under federal tax laws an LLC may be classified as a sole-proprietorship, partnership or corporation for tax purposes. Classification can be made on the tax return thanks to the so-called “Check-The-Box” question on the tax return. If not selected, a default often applies.
Also on the downside, the laws of various states governing Limited Liability Companies vary — no uniform law prevails, making doing business in more than one state difficult.

Like partnerships, LLCs do not have perpetual life. Some states stipulate that the tree care business must dissolve after 30 or 40 years. Technically, an LLC venture dissolves when a member dies, quits or retires.

Forming the LLC

In most states, an LLC can be formed simply by filing “articles of organization” with the state’s LLC filing office, usually the Secretary of State’s office, and paying a filing fee. Many states, in fact, provide a fill-in-the-blank form that takes only a few minutes to prepare.

The operating agreement, for the most part, contains any procedures and rules that the parties desire and, once put into place, can just sit there, maintenance free. The operating agreement explicitly states the rights and responsibilities of the LLC members. Without a written LLC operating agreement, the LLC laws of your state will govern the inner working of the LLC.

Generally, it is preferable to clarify your business arrangements and decide how your LLC will be run, rather than having the state dictate its terms.

No one needs any more red tape in his or her life. Under the LLC rules in most states, there is no need to keep exhaustive minutes, hold meetings or make resolutions to, in effect, stay legal. This is often a trap for the unwary and is the first place the IRS or an aggressive attorney will attack when attempting to “pierce the corporate veil,” and go after the shareholders personally. If the records are not maintained perfectly the corporate protection may be lost.

Switching

In most situations, a landscaping or tree care business operating as a partnership can quickly and inexpensively convert to an LLC. Partnerships can usually convert without tax consequences, with the new LLC continuing to file a partnership tax return with the IRS. Because of the similarity of the structure, the IRS does not usually look at the conversion as a taxable event.

A corporation can also convert to LLC status although it may not be a wise move for the shareholders of many incorporated businesses. Generally, it is not feasible for an arborist, tree care professional or business operating as a corporation, either a regular or as an S corporation, to convert to LLC status. IRS regulations require that the incorporated business liquidate first, thus creating considerable tax liability.

To convert, a corporation must first be liquidated and pay tax on any gain in its fair market value. Even a corporation with depressed values that converts would have to be prepared to prove its estimate to the IRS. That could mean a costly appraisal.

Taxing questions

As with many good things, there are tax questions surrounding the use of an LLC to operate the tree care business. For starters, there is the Self-Employment Tax Act (SETA). Limited partners and S corporation shareholders generally are not subject to self-employment taxes – a 2.9 percent Medicare levy on all salaries and 12.4 percent FICA (Social Security) tax on income up to $106,800 (for 2009 and 2010) – but are passive LLC members?

The IRS’s position, subject to change, is that LLC members who participate in management are subject to employment taxes. If LLC members are legitimate, passive members, according to the IRS, they should not be subject to those employment taxes.

The LLC is A-OK – sometimes

Limited Liability Companies work for start-ups, for arborists and tree care operations branching out, and in lieu of Limited Partnerships (LPs) for such financial entities as trading pools and hedge funds. Lawyers are increasingly recommending them for estate planning: reorganize assets or the family business as an LLC, and you can gradually give most of the shares to your heirs while retaining management control.

The LLC is rapidly becoming the entity of choice for many owners, shareholders and partners in every realm. The LLC will continue to gain momentum as more and more people learn of its existence. You might be well advised to consider its many benefits – and its possible pitfalls – for your tree care business. Once all of the pros and cons are considered, many owners have discovered the so-called Limited Liability Company is the most profitable operating entity for self-employed arborists, tree care professionals and businesses.

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Mini skid steers, such as this Vermeer S600TX, can save a lot of back breaking labor.

By Rick Howland

You have only to watch TV commercials or run to your local hardware or tool crib to see what’s going on with power tools. What you find happening at the hand tool level is happening as well at the Big Boy equipment level, at least with compact loaders, mini loaders and skid steers.

Just as the power hand tool market touts the ability to attach many different functioning heads, along with increased tool power to attack so many more jobs often in smaller power packages, so, too, do the skidders, mini and compact loaders.

All three are powerful carriers for hydraulic-powered tools, albeit at three levels. The skidders are more powerful than the compact loaders, which in turn out perform the minis. The minis, though, are famous for being able to get a hydraulic powerhouse through the proverbial garden gate and into some very tight areas. The main difference is that you climb into a skid-steer cab, climb on or into a compact loader, and ride on a platform or walk beside or behind the mini.

Still, depending on the manufacturer, there can be some confusion over the different categories, such as what is a compact loader and what is a mini, or between a loader and a skid steer. While they all do similar jobs and sometimes can do the same job, each is designed for a slightly different niche.

“What we have seen in growth of our mini skid steer lines is that a lot of arborists purchase these for backyard work where larger units can’t fit,” says Jon Kuyers, product manager for the utility products group at Vermeer. “Their great advantage is that they get into tight spots, first through the 36-inch standard gate, and can maneuver very well in new home developments with difficult lot lines. It’s the ability for them to grab a large quantity of material quickly, which speeds up production. That reduces manpower needs and the potential for injuries.”

Jon Kuyers

“They truly eliminate a lot of labor from the operation,” Neil Borenstein, senior marketing manager at Toro, says of the Toro Dingo TX family of mini loaders. The TX line is comprised of four walk-behind tracked loaders featuring 25 hp diesel and 27 hp gas engines and narrow-track models that easily access a 36-inch gate, and up to 42 inches in the wide tracked versions.

“They allow you to quickly move material...
in one area to a curbside for pickup or chipping.”

Today’s skidders, compact and mini loaders are far more rugged than their predecessors, from the engines to the undercarriages. This means they are a longer-lasting capital investment. From a business perspective, and we saw this in our recent article on cranes, this results in two things.

To begin with, your equipment lasts longer, so your annualized capital cost can be lower. (Let’s say a $50,000 piece of equipment which used to last 10 years conservatively now lasts 12. If you completely use the equipment up, your annual cost goes from $5,000 to $4,167, or a savings of about 18 percent in capital costs annually.)

Combine that with far greater engine and hydraulic efficiencies and the return on investment might surprise you; you might just find that it PAYS to buy new rather than make do…

Second, durability and longer life means that if you do NOT plan to use up and wear out your loader and plan to trade or sell into the secondary resale market, you’ll get a better return on today’s new skidder or loader because the used-equipment buyer knows the increased value of new technology. Of course, trade-in and resale value depend on hours of use and overall condition.

Next, you will see not only from this article but also from Internet searches and sales presentations that the trend is toward a variety of engine alternatives. The thinking is not only that it’s most efficient to match the tool carrier to the job, but also that increasing the horsepower rating translates to the ability to get more work done in a smaller package. Also, let’s go back to our second point about return on investment at resale or trade-in time. Beefing up the engines and buying an engine slightly larger than you normally might need has the potential to lengthen the life of your tool carrier and cut down on maintenance and repair costs because the operator isn’t pushing the skidder or loader to its maximum over and over.

Fourth, and connected to the horsepower ratings, is the availability of an expanding selection of sizes and capacities of the overall units. That again means there is a unit tailored for your business.

You can find skidders and loaders, for example, with ratings from under 500 pounds to more than 4,000 pounds. (Know and be familiar with the SAE Rated Operating Capacity of the machines you own and/or are investigating for your fleet.)
Just because you purchase an attachment that has a particularly high weight capacity and will fit your skidder or loader does not mean your equipment can safely handle the tool’s load capability.

Regarding the minis, the same thing goes, proportionately speaking. Whereas a skid steer will punch out upwards of 100 hp, you can find minis climbing through 35 hp.

When it comes to efficiency of the minis, it is not necessarily the capacity of the machine that counts as much as it is the ability to deliver material directly to a chipper, according to Kuyers. “We see users limbing a tree, scooping material with a grapple and feeding it into a chipper all in one motion. That’s efficiency,” says Kuyers, “and it takes a lot of risk away from the operator.”

Choosing attachments can range from scoop buckets to winches to stump grinders to mini-dozers. There are scores of attachments in each class of skidder or loader, and the addition of a new attachment may not only increases profitability of existing business, but also creates potential for new types of work and thus new profit centers.

“One of the nice things about these minis is that you can put a grapple on one end and go in with a stump grinder on back. Grab the shavings with a loader attachment, clean up and restore the site quickly to like-new condition,” Kuyers says.

A buyer should be looking at these comfort features as contributing to the bottom line because your crews won’t tire as quickly as they can get more work done faster.

These are not intended to appeal to the operator as much as they are designed to put less wear and tear on him or her, and to make machines easier and safer to use. Think ROI again. A buyer should be looking at these comfort features as contributing to the bottom line because your crews won’t tire as quickly as they can get more work done faster.
that of crews in the vicinity, and it also goes to safety when you can better hear what’s going on about you. Cabs are easier to get in and out of, and with more space in the cab and better ergonomic seating and controls, the operator is more comfortable and not distracted from his or her duties and will not fatigue as quickly. A tired operator can slow down progress and also create the risk of dangerous situations.

One can argue all day long about the new diesel fuels and government engine regulations, but a couple of things have happened in spite of all that. The new engines are more efficient, burn greener and both the engines and the overall machines are far simpler to maintain. And, as we’ve heard before, simpler maintenance means it will get done more often.

Regarding preference of gasoline versus diesel engines, Kuyers says “What we see is that contractors used to run what they like. If they run diesel in their chippers, they run diesel minis.”

Vermeer recently came out with its S800TX mini skid steer, touting a greater operating capacity and more powerful hydraulics with an efficient dual-flow hydraulic circuit. All Vermeer minis are on tracks, though there is a rubber option to deliver low ground pressure in sensitive turf areas.

In addition to the smaller mini loaders mentioned earlier, Toro’s Dingo TX family also offers two-wheeled units with ride-on platforms for improved visibility. These are 40.5 inches wide, provide two speeds with four-wheel drive all the time. While compact loaders, at up to $20,000, can cost close to the price of a lower-end compact loader or skidder, the minis have additional advantages, says Borenstein. “The compacts are unlike a skid steer, which typically requires a second worker,” Borenstein says. “And they don’t damage turf as much when they are turning.”

Mike Fitzgerald, loader product specialist for Bobcat, says there are a number of changes in Bobcat’s new M-Series of compact track loaders. The new design provides more power and increases the durability to keep the loader working longer. It also increases operator comfort through improved visibility and a more spacious and comfortable cab, he says.

“For example, Bobcat has increased the performance of the hydraulics on M-Series loaders, engineering them for higher standard flow and pressure that give attachments more power to work more quickly,” says Fitzgerald. “Furthermore, a new, removable hydraulic hose guide makes changing attachments easier and correctly routes the hoses, preventing wear.”

“Other performance enhancements include an increase of the tractive effort of...
M-Series loaders by 15 to 20 percent to provide greater pushing and digging power; holes for frame-mounted counterweights that increase lifting performance with certain attachments; and a larger fuel capacity that allows the loader working longer between fueling,” Fitzgerald says.

“Because comfortable operators are more productive, and to create a better working environment, Bobcat increased the size of the cab by 10 percent, redesigned the interior to allow operators to adjust the environment to their individual preference and improved cab pressurization,” he added. “Noise is another factor affecting operator comfort, and Bobcat has reduced the sound level of M-Series loaders by more than 60 percent. New engine mounts improve isolation to decrease vibration and reduce sound levels.”

Bobcat also offers a mini track loader, the MT55. According to Fitzgerald, “At 41.5 inches wide, less the bucket, its wide tracks lower the machine’s ground pressure to 4.1 psi and a turf-friendly lug track distributes the operating weight ... of the loader over a larger area, reducing ground pressure and minimizing damage to landscapes, paving stones and other established surfaces.” The rubber-track undercarriage also provides improved traction and better floatation, even in soft, wet or muddy conditions with minimal ground disturbance, he adds.

And then there are “tractors.”

While the Fecon name may be synonymous with skid steers to some, they do not make mini loaders and refer to their FTX line as “track carriers” or “tractors” rather than skid steers or loaders. There are a few reasons for that.

“We don’t call them loaders because our primary design and focus has been mulching and land clearing business, not a converted loader,” says Tom Hover, product manager at Fecon Inc. Fecon’s machines are designed as brush cutter or mulching head units, with much higher horsepower and hydraulic pressure and flow for those purposes, explains Hover. Also, due to the nature of that work, the closed cab is an integral part of their units.

“We don’t call them loaders because our primary design and focus has been mulching and land clearing business, not a converted loader,” says Tom Hover, product manager at Fecon Inc. Fecon’s machines are designed as brush cutter or mulching head units, with much higher horsepower and hydraulic pressure and flow for those purposes, explains Hover. Also, due to the nature of that work, the closed cab is an integral part of their units.

.“A skid steer/loader is primarily designed to do a multitude of tasks... The skid steer is designed to be a loader first,” says Hover. “The skid steer business over the years has

While primarily purpose-built for mulching or land clearing, Fecon’s FTX148 track carrier, with 142 hp, has a universal quick attach blade or coupler to attach other tools, such as tree shears or stump cutters, and can easily handle those applications.
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evolved so that skid steers are looked at as a power unit that is capable of a lot of different tasks through the multiple attachments. Skid Steers are truly work horses on most jobs and applications, but the size of the tool is determined by the size and scope of the work; this is where Fecon’s larger purpose built machines are ideal.”

That said, while Fecon’s FTX100 is a purpose-built mulching tractor, says Hover, it can do other things. “We do have a quick attach coupler so that it can handle standard skid steer attachments… but it has larger pumps and higher pressures to run the mulching head in a more powerful way than a skid steer traditionally runs it.”

“We design and build Fecon mulching heads for skid steers, and that’s a big part of our business, and we have a lot of respect for the skid steer market and our friends who are building machines; that is why we don’t build machines in that category,” Hover explains.

Fecon’s FTX100 or FTX148 units, with 100 hp and 142 hp respectively, do have the universal quick attach blade or coupler to attach other tools, such as tree shears or stump cutters, and are the perfect tool for some applications with those tools, says Hover. The FTX 100 is designed to be tough enough for forestry, land-clearing, and right-of-way work yet light enough afoot for light commercial, residential and urban improvement projects.

The FTX100 and FTX148 both have tier 3 engines and advanced electronics. The FTX148 also has Fecon’s Power Management System, which, along with the tier 3 engine and improved electronics, provides greater fuel efficiency and lower costs of operation, the company says. Both units have had refinements made to their cooling systems, improved air flow through the engine compartment, improved hydraulics, electronics and brush and limb guards as well as numerous cab improvements. All Fecon cabs have a minimum of 1/2-inch thick Lexan windows for improved operator sight and safety. (Most skid steer manufacturers now offer a forestry package that includes similar protections, says Hover.) While these two models might arguably be compared with skid steers in terms of form, others in the FTX line are far larger and more powerful units.

Fecon’s newest and largest machine, the FTX600, will debut March 22-26 at CONEXPO in Las Vegas. Surpassing the FTX440 with a 600 hp Cummins QSX15 engine, the FTX600 delivers 210 gallons of hydraulic flow to the variable speed mulching head and solid power to the hydrostatic all steel oscillating undercarriage. The FTX600 is designed for pipeline and power line right-of-way clearing, large scale vegetation management and site preparation.

“It’s built for large scale productivity in land clearing,” says Hover.

OK, we won’t quiz you on the different categories – mini or compact loader, skid steer or tractor, but if you are in the market for one of these units, it seems clear that, with their varied capabilities, you need to consider carefully how you intend to use it before breaking out your checkbook.
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Taken from published reports.

Ground worker injured in struck-by
A 19-year-old ground worker was struck in the face by a two-foot-long piece of wood about a foot-and-a-half in diameter in Mill Valley, California, January 3, 2011. The wood, estimated at about 50 pounds, had been sawed off from a tree by a co-worker. It was probably a glancing blow, according to one of those on the scene.

The worker, an employee of a Pacifica tree service company, was conscious when emergency crews arrived and was taken to the hospital with injuries that included possible facial lacerations, according to the Mill Valley Patch.

Climber falls to death when harness malfunctions
A Hansville, Washington, man died January 5, 2011, when his safety harness apparently malfunctioned, causing him to fall some 70 to 100 feet onto a concrete walkway. Aaron B. Waag, 28, had been hoisted up by a boom crane and was trying to reach the limb of a large fir tree when he fell. Waag was wearing a safety harness, but the harness somehow detached from the boom crane hook, causing him to fall, according to a KOMO Channel 4 news report. Waag worked for a family owned and operated tree trimming and removal company based in Poulsbo, Washington.

The Kitsap Sun reported that Waag fell “at least 50 feet,” and that he was trimming limbs and preparing the trees for felling when the harness became detached from the crane, adding that witnesses and medics tried CPR, but he was pronounced dead on arrival at Harrison Medical Center. Submitted by Doug Cleland, Cleland’s Tree Removal, Port Orchard, Washington.

Tree trimmer injured in fall
A tree trimmer was injured January 8, 2010, in Clackamas, Oregon, after falling about 50 feet to the ground. The man, described in a report as being in his mid 20s, was free climbing up to a place in the tree where he would have tied-off when he fell. He suffered injuries to his back and legs, but is expected to make a full recovery, according to www.kptv.com.

Homeowner injured cutting down tree
A man suffered a serious injury when a tree fell on him January 10, 2011, in Ryland Heights, Kentucky. Gola “Kenny” Johnson, 53, was cutting down a tree on his property when the tree fell. Johnson suffered a serious head injury and was transported by helicopter to University Hospital. His condition was not immediately released, according to WLWT New 5.

Man trapped after tree pins arm
A Maryland man was recovering after being trapped under a fallen tree for between two and three hours on January 14, 2011. The man was flown to the hospital after his wife found him trapped under the tree. The Washington County man was apparently cutting down trees when one fell on him. The tree, which was 3 feet in diameter, pinned the man’s arm to the ground, according to The Baltimore Sun.

Man found dead likely crushed by tree
A Franklin County, Indiana, man found dead Tuesday, January 18, 2011, was likely crushed by a tree while cutting wood over the weekend.

Police were asked to check on Peter A. Sturm, 46, a school bus driver, after he didn’t show up for work Monday or Tuesday. When police couldn’t find Sturm in his home, a neighbor suggested he might have been cutting wood on his property. Sturm’s body was found Tuesday morning.

He was apparently cutting a tree sometime over the weekend when it fell on him, causing massive head trauma and internal injuries. He was pronounced dead at the scene, according to TheIndyChannel.com.

Man hanging in tree rescued
A man became stuck up a tree, and rescuers found him hanging 30 feet in the air, upside down in Haverhill, Massachusets, January 19, 2011. The victim was one of three men apparently cutting a tall storm-damaged tree behind a triple-decker home. Somehow the man found himself upside down, hanging by a leg wedged in the tree. His other leg was an artificial one. The good leg was the one stuck in the tree, according to a witness quoted in the WHDH Channel 7 News report.

Firefighters used ladders, ropes and a harness to secure the dangling man before
they could cut away branches and bring him down safely. No update was given on the man’s condition.

Man killed in fall from tree
A 46-year-old man fell to his death while working on a tree in Nuuanu, near Honolulu, Hawaii, January 22, 2011. Victorio T. Ulep of Honolulu was trimming trees when his harness or his climbing line broke and he fell about 50 feet. He was taken to the Queen’s Medical Center, where he died later that day, according to The Honolulu Star-Advertiser.

Submitted by Carol L. Kwan, a consulting arborist in Mililani, Hawaii, and secretary of the Aloha Arborist Association.

Man falls, dies while trimming a tree
A man died January 24, 2011, when he fell from a tree he was trimming in Northwest Jacksonville, Florida. The man was not identified, but was described as being in his 50s and working independently. There were no witnesses and the occupant of the house was not home. It was not clear how high the man was when he fell. A ladder rested crookedly against the tree he had been working on with a chain saw, according to the Florida Times-Union report.

Limbs removed to free injured man
A Muskogee, Oklahoma, man was injured January 24, 2011, when a tree he was cutting for firewood fell on him. Keith Horsley and another man were trying to get rid of a dead, fire-damaged tree at the home of the second man’s mother. The men apparently used two wedges on the tree to keep it from falling in the wrong direction. They were using a chain saw to cut the tree.

When the tree began to fall, Horsley ran in the same direction. A large limb hit him on the left side of his head and his shoulder. When firefighters arrived, the tree limbs were on top of Horsley, and firefighters had to use chain saws to remove them. A downed power line from the house was under the limbs, which also slowed their efforts, according to The Muskogee Phoenix report. Horsley was in good condition at a local hospital after the incident.

Man injured when tree falls on him
Thomas James Daley, 22, the son of Michigan state Rep. Kevin Daley, died January 30, 2011, while cutting a tree for firewood at his home in Arcadia Township, Mich. Daley was with other people at his home when a tree he was cutting took an unexpected fall and struck him. He was taken by emergency personnel to two different hospitals before succumbing that night, according to a WNEM TV5 report.

Send your local accident reports to editor@tcia.org.
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Building A Safety Culture: From Beginning to Never End

By Mike Schronk, CTSP

C

hanging how an organization views safety requires energy and passion for people. Carolina Tree Care is proud of the achievements made in the area of safety over the past decade and wanted to share our experiences during the process. The building blocks of our safety culture are: Accountability, Risk Reduction, Employee Involvement, Leadership, Training and Education, Partnering Safety and Production, Mentor Relationships, and Overcoming Adversity.

Our president, Jack Guffey, was the first to recognize the need to begin developing a safety program through a relationship with a safety consultant. The task of making sure “paper work” was in order to avoid heavy OSHA and DOT fines was the first attempt at our safety program. A lot of energy went into our driver files as well as making sure all the vehicles had the required documentation for inspectors. The company’s first safety director spent most of his time getting signatures for driver files and showing defensive driving videos. The safety director was also an area manager, so most of the safety related issues were put on the back burner.

Guffey recognized the need to have a full-time person dedicated to safety. He decided to hire a person that was new to the industry. When I say new, I mean never held a gas-powered chain saw. That person was me.

Guffey challenged me to “change the culture” of this company. I had no idea of the challenges that would lie ahead to make that change – ignorance is bliss! I knew guys were getting hurt, so that was where I focused my attention. I called the Tree Care Industry Association and spoke to Peter Gerstenberger, a well respected safety leader in our industry. Gerstenberger spent several hours on the phone with me explaining how to develop a safety culture and what steps I should take to accomplish this task. We began with the Model Company Safety Program and weekly tailgate safety sessions. That is where our journey began.

Accountability/10 Laws

Gerstenberger provided our company with statistical data that showed the areas in which our industry struggles. It was then that Cal Sparks, a safety and loss prevention consultant with our insurance carrier, suggested that I come up with 10 laws that would address the major risk areas in our company. The “Carolina Tree Care 10 LAWS” cover most of the incidents we have as a company and an industry. The idea was to have everybody memorize them so we could hold employees accountable. All too often a worker would say, “Oh, I didn’t know that,” and they would be off the hook. The 10 Laws leave no excuse for not following safety best practices.

The 10 Laws at Carolina Tree Care are:

1. Safety starts with me. Job briefing and proper work zone set up (including 10 cones)
2. Two hands on the saw (kickback occurs on the top tip of the bar)
3. Three points of contact (when getting in and out of vehicles and while climbing)
4. Do not violate Minimum Approach Distance (MAD)
5. Say “Stand Clear” and wait for the “All Clear” response before making a cut
6. Do not speed (drive safety)
7. Wear your seatbelt (all occupants)
8. Use a spotter
9. Wear your personal protective equipment (PPE)
10. Be your brother’s keeper (look out for each other)

A new employee is read the 10 Laws the first day on the job, and is expected to have them memorized within one month. Everyone is accountable and at least most people remember the 10th law the first time they hear it: “Be your brother’s keeper.”

Risk reduction/Employee involvement/Leadership

One of the core values of our safety culture is for each employee to be responsible for his personal safety and the safety of others. Every safety initiative, training session and committee has that core value. We look at what motivates bad behaviors and look to change that motivation through new procedures. We reward good behavior and discipline poor behavior. We focus on the capability and attitude of the individual doing the task and their willingness to follow through with best practices.

A major component in developing our
Our safety culture is built on personal responsibility. Safety starts with the individual. We focus on educating our employees to recognize hazards and eliminate them through safety sub-committees. Every viable idea generated by the committees is presented to the leadership of the company and followed through with an action plan as needed. The sub-committees help build the safety structure of our organization. In addition, if we have an OSHA recordable or serious unplanned event, the area manager and safety director must give an account of the incident in person to the president and vice president and develop an action plan to prevent it from happening again.

Area managers are the catalysts of our safety culture and without them it will not work, period. They are the coaches, parents, teachers and principals of the safety culture. They are the safety champions to employees in the field. The area managers are the most crucial aspect of the safety culture in terms of reaction and execution.

The leadership of Jack Guffey and Gordon Spaugh, vice president, is without question the nucleus of our safety culture. They are fully committed to the point that Guffey has volunteered his time by becoming a member of the TCIA Board of Directors. They refuse to withhold any funding or moral support for the betterment of their employees. Spaugh has a hands-on approach to safety and involves himself in the actual work activities of the field employees and encourages me to do the same. Through working in the field, I have developed a respect for the jobs being performed and a better understanding of the work process. Guffey’s and Spaugh’s full support of a successful safety and training program have been unwavering from the beginning.

Training & education

If knowledge is power, then learning is the generator. Learning is never in short supply. Therefore, it is easily attained. If you want to learn, simply ask anyone and you will get an answer. It is important to learn from a trusted source. The energy from that source will determine how bright the light bulb illuminates. We identified several trusted sources and have used them as the building blocks in our organization’s safety culture. Those building blocks include educational resources from industry associations, train-the-trainer resources, involvement in the American National Standards Institute committee, and building relationships with other safety professionals in our industry.

Our training currently consists of three levels: new hires, certified tree workers, and certified line clearance arborists. We also conduct a one day emergency response training that includes courses in electrical hazard awareness, CPR, first aid, aerial rescue, defensive driving, and work zone safety. The classes are high energy and have high participation.

Our instructors were trained by North American Training Solutions. During a two day intensive training, our instructors learned key techniques to apply when teaching our classes. They have also...
Certified Treecare Safety Professionals1 can earn one (1.0) “professional development” CEU toward their recertification by taking this short comprehension quiz that is tied to this month’s safety article in this issue of TCI Magazine. The CTSP CEU Quiz is a bimonthly feature in TCI. This quiz is based upon information in the article “Building a Safety Culture” (page 52).

CTSP CEU Quiz #2011-2: March, 2011

1. Which is not one of the 10 Laws of Carolina Tree Care?
   a. two hands on the saw
   b. safety starts from the top
   c. three points of contact
   d. wear your seat belt

2. Rewarding good behavior and disciplining poor behavior:
   a. starts with yourself
   b. is part of the loss-control program

3. Training and education should be:
   a. learned from a trusted source
   b. provided at a discount
   c. attained from anyone
   d. part of building relationships

4. Coaching the employee to recognize hazards and eliminate them:
   a. is the responsibility of the safety consultant
   b. should be performed once a month
   c. is an optional component of the training program
   d. is a major component in developing the safety culture

5. What does the Certified Treecare Safety Professional credential not focus on?
   a. safety
   b. training
   c. coaching
   d. production

Your Full Name: ____________________________________________ CTSP#: ____________________

To obtain CEU credit, you may either copy this page, answer the questions and fax the answer sheet to TCIA at (603) 314-5386, mail to TCIA - CTSP, 136 Harvey Road - Ste 101, Londonderry, NH 03053, or you may go to www.tcia.org, click on the Safety tab, and click on the CTSP page to complete the answer sheet online.

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

learned proper aerial rescue techniques, chain saw handling, precision tree felling, rigging, electrical hazard awareness, and storm responder training. North American also helped develop our training program for new hires, tree workers and line clearance arborists. We developed a verification process for each employee to demonstrate he or she has the skills needed to do the job. That guidance made our training program what is today.

In addition to having qualified instructors, we actively promote all managers to achieve the Certified Treecare Safety Professional credential. The CTSP validates our management’s ability to build a solid safety culture within our company. The Tree Care Industry Association has developed the CTSP, which focuses on coaching and how to relate safety topics in a way that people will change their belief system about safety.

Partnering safety and production

Crews are motivated every day to be productive. We coach our employees that production cannot stand alone and must be balanced with safety. Carolina Tree Care rewards those who make conscience decisions to be safe. If we cannot do it safely we cannot produce our product. That product is to provide quality, cost efficient tree trimming services to the utility industry while operating in a safe and effective manner. Our employees know that at Carolina Tree Care safety is the most important aspect of every job. We communicate the most important function of the day – safety: partnering safety and production.

Before we start talking about footage, ticket work, mechanical issues, crew maneuvering, supplies, customers, weather, sports or politics, we talk about safety. We discuss any unplanned events from the day before and how we can improve or correct any deficiencies. As a company, we hold fast to the safety standards set by our industry and strive to achieve those standards in the midst of a production driven environment.

Mentor relationships

As I said earlier, I had no experience in the industry before joining Carolina Tree Care. I also had no experience building a safety culture. I was hired as a safety director/chaplain. I knew I needed to develop lasting relationships with others who could help me grow as an arborist and help our safety culture grow. Cal Sparks gave me eyes to see and the tools to build a world class safety culture. His experience, patience and mentoring helped us achieve more and strive for the highest standards regarding safety. He told me that all you need is a passion for people and the willingness to do the right thing.

Another change to our culture was, again, attributable to a consultant, Scott Prophett of North American Training. On the surface, Scott is a trainer, instructor and teacher, but underneath he is a dreamer. He inspires others to do well and to carry the burden of bringing about change in the industry. He has many followers who share his convictions and passion. I am one of those followers and dream with him of better days to come. He has shown me and many others how to be an excellent arborist and instructor and what it means to be dedicated to a cause.

I have such respect and admiration for Prophett and Sparks and their ability to mentor others. We see the importance of mentors and the positive affects they can have on an individual. Therefore, we assign all new hires a mentor on their crew from the day they begin work.

Overcoming adversity

The hardest obstacle is dealing with the

(Continued on page 65)
You work hard. Your insurance should work hard for you.

ArborMAX supports the tree care industry through competitive pricing and by contributing to industry safety and loss control programs.

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Trees have a tough time in the urban environment, but city planners know the value that trees bring to urban communities. Millions of trees are planted each year in cities throughout the world, raising the question: who will care for these new trees, maintain their health and ensure public safety and reliable electricity? The TREE Fund is making an effort to answer this question.

For the past two years in New York City, the TREE (Tree Research and Education Endowment) Fund has been helping to connect young adults in search of a career path with the growing need for skilled tree care workers, through the MillionTreesNYC Training Program (MTTP).

This public/private “green collar jobs” program is part of New York City’s plan to plant and care for 1 million trees by 2017. The MTTP is managed by the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation and the New York Restoration Project. It provides seven months of paid on-the-job training in arboriculture, ecological restoration and landscape design and gardening for up to 33 unemployed young adults. Along the way, the trainees learn life skills that will give them a foot up in the job market.

Connecting resources to MTTP

In 2009, the TREE Fund began a collaboration with four industry leading companies to provide MTTP trainees with two weeks of professional chain saw and climbing instruction to supplement their on-the-job training with NYC Parks & Rec. The companies – Asplundh Tree Expert Co., Bartlett Tree Experts, The Davey Tree Expert Company and Stihl Inc. – agreed to provide this annual supplementary training, plus various PPE, tools and study materials, for five years.

“It’s this kind of generosity that demonstrates the level of professionalism and leadership these companies possess,” says Janet Bornancin, TREE Fund executive director. “I’m proud of these partners and I know their contribution is making a difference in the lives of the trainees as well as the future of tree care.”

Having just completed the second year of its five-year commitment in early December 2010, the overall consensus of the partnering companies’ 15 instructors was very positive. Instructors involved for the past two years noted that the quality of the trainees was even better this year than last year – and the group last year was very impressive!

“No matter what we were doing, you could tell they were really listening because their questions were all really good,” commented Pat Flynn from Bartlett.

Andrew Krenz, of Northeast Stihl and who was primarily involved in the chain saw training, said, “Maybe they were more mature this year, but I felt that they were overall more confident and not as afraid to operate the saws as last year.”

“I saw really great interaction between the trainees and trainers over both weeks. I also think the trainees really supported each other, and it was great working together with other companies on a positive project,” said Asplundh’s Tim Walsh.

Steve Nagy of Davey commented that, “the MillionTrees Training Program is a great example of how professionals from the industry can come together and share their expertise with a young group of people who are interested in the green industry.”

The energy and determination of MTTP trainees attests to the selection process conducted by the NYC Parks & Rec, which includes a written application, references, personal interviews and a field interview. For the 2010-2011 class, there were 373 applicants and only 33 were selected.

Kate Kinsey, a project manager for MTTP, said she has been impressed every day by this year’s group of trainees. A month after the supplemental training was over she said, “They loved the training and...
the trainers. In fact, they miss it now and want to have a refresher every month!”

**MTTP is hands-on training**

The MTTP provides the participants with intensive training in three fields: arboriculture, ecological restoration and landscape design and gardening. After six weeks in the program, the trainees are able to select a track on which to focus. The TREE Fund and its partnering companies get involved soon after that choice is made. This year, during the first week of the two-week supplemental training, the whole group of men and women received training that covered subjects such as chain saw safety and maintenance, tree felling procedures, tree identification, biology and inspection, plant health care and information on careers in arboriculture. Some of the training sessions took place indoors, but the majority of it was hands-on, in the field during the icy, wet, blustery days of November and December! Close supervision and an emphasis on safety were extremely important to the success of the program.

When asked to evaluate the chain saw training, Jordan Aponte, a member of the ecological restoration crew, commented, “They let you try to do your own thing with the chain saw, but they were still watching. It felt safe.” He also said the training was interesting because the instructors shared a lot of personal experiences.

The second week focused on climbing instruction and was strictly for the 10 trainees who had chosen the arboriculture track. The climbing sessions covered knot tying, job site evaluation and set-up, electrical hazards (courtesy of local electric utility ConEd), basic climbing and rigging techniques and aerial rescue. To start off the week, Mark Chisholm, world champion climber and working arborist with Aspen Tree Expert Co. in New Jersey, was sent by Stihl Inc. to provide an educational climbing demonstration that amazed and inspired the MTTP trainees.

Nick Miazio, a member of the arboriculture crew, commented, “The caliber and passion of the guest trainers and speakers were very motivating and energizing.”

**A positive transition**

The participating companies have been invited to a job fair scheduled for April 7. The goal is to connect all the MTTP trainees to jobs with local or national companies, as well as public agencies. This year there will be more emphasis on maintaining a connection between MTTP program managers, the graduate and his/her employer to assure a positive transition to the work force.

“The MillionTreesNYC Training Program cultivates a new generation of green collar workers who will be the future stewards of New York City’s greenspace,” said Adrian Benepe, NYC Parks Commissioner. “With intensive training in tree care, ecological restoration, and landscape design and gardening, graduates of this program will help green communities throughout the five boroughs to establish a more sustainable city. We are grateful to our public-private partnership with the TREE Fund, which supports the MillionTreesNYC Training Program.”

The TREE Fund and its partnering companies are proud to be playing a part in advancing green careers for urban youth. To learn more about the TREE Fund education programs and the MillionTreesNYC Training Program, visit www.treefund.org/ed_grants.htm.

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Some MTTP trainees and trainers did push-ups to help them warm up in the icy weather.
Tony Gragnano is a firm believer in the saying, “Necessity is the mother of invention.” After two years of discomfort in the tree care industry with his original pair of climbers, he began to think of alternative designs. Since then, he has invented Squirrelmax Climbers, with a patented Swivel Mounted Embracing Rigid Cup (SMERC) attached to the shank to provide added comfort and mobility when ascending a tree or pole.

“It’s like the top half of standard climbers has been missing since their invention in 1846,” he says with disbelief. “It was only partially invented.”

Gragnano thinks this modification completes the climbers. Pads on standard climbers try to force the leg into a straight position but oftentimes the leg still hits the shank. Though there have been many improvements to the pads, the climber’s leg has never been able to move freely. Gragnano took a different approach when designing the Squirrelmax. Acting as a joint, the SMERC makes the climber move like the leg. This improvement does not limit the user’s mobility or create discomfort.

“Maybe others are stoic, but I’m not,” says Gragnano about the standard climbers he used from 1985-1987. “They were very uncomfortable. If a person is unhappy with their climbers as well.

Gragnano easily remembers the first day he used his new adaptable prototype. “It was September 11, 2001. I was climbing a tree during the attack on the World Trade Center,” recalls Gragnano.

In 2005, the design for the SMERC was patented. Originally, Gragnano tried to sell the design to leading manufacturers. With no luck, he sought out a consultant and pursued other manufacturers. Finally, he decided it would be best to manufacture the Squirrelmax (which he will market as SQUIRREL-MAX) under his own company, Gray Squirrel Manufacturing, LLC.

Manufacturing began in December 2010 and the product will arrive on the market this spring. Though it took a long time, Gragnano feels that his climber will be successful in the tree care community.

“It’s interesting how I got started in tree care. I was never happy with my previous jobs. I used to have these vague feelings of hanging from ropes and swinging. I saw a chipper and thought it was awesome.”

Gragnano looked up tree care companies in the phone book and began working in tree care in 1985. When he started in the business, he was one of the youngest climbers on the job. Now, many of those in the industry who know him refer to him as the “Gray Squirrel,” which in turn led to the name for his climbers.

“The funny thing is that once I started in the tree business, I never had those vague feelings again,” laughs Gragnano.

With more than 20 years in the tree care industry under his belt, Gragnano has the experience to offer advice on what does and does not work. As proof, Squirrelmax is designed for climbers, by a climber.

Squirrelmax Climbers will be available through American Arborist, the first dealer to sign on to sell them, and other tree care supply outlets. For more information, contact BGO Consulting and Development, LLC at (610) 241-7469.
In support of Canola oil

Thanks to Mark Przekurat for “You want fries with that?” (TCI, February 2011). I have been using vegetable oil as a bar lubricant for about five years. At the start, I spoke with a tech at Husqvarna U.S. who informed me that straight vegetable oil would definitely increase bar and chain wear. He did not inform me that canola oil was better. I went ahead anyway, using waste oil from restaurant fryers.

My experience, which is not scientific research (no measurements or control), has been a significant but tolerable increase in wear. But I was not selecting for canola, and used oil may contain damaging impurities. I’m grateful to Mark for his research, disclaimers notwithstanding.

On the topic of pollution, aquatic and terrestrial environments differ greatly in their ability to handle organic material of any kind, including petroleum derivatives. Even vegetable oil can pollute a stream or a lake. But in healthy soil, a host of microorganisms uses all complex carbon compounds as food, primarily fungi. Eventually even complex compounds such as lignin and organophosphates will be consumed. Of course this is limited by the volume of the compound and the health of the soil.

Switching to vegetable oil lubricants will reduce our carbon footprint, and this oil may be easier for microbes to digest. But we are not “polluting 50 million gallons of fresh water” with our choice of lubricants.

For more information about fungi, please refer to Paul Stamets, Mycelium Running, and his other works.

T. Gray Shaw
Certified Arborist
Redway and Berkeley, California

Doesn’t like colored mulch

I am sorry to see in your excellent magazine that you are taking advertising for companies that promote garish-colored decorative mulch. Organic mulch is designed to be natural looking and unobtrusive, to protect the soil until plants spread to cover it. It simultaneously improves the soil, which nourishes the trees, while offering some protection from man-made weapons of mass destruction: string trimmers and mowers.

Organic mulch is a means to an end, not an end in itself as a decorative feature in a landscape. Ugly terra cotta, red and black mulch is an intrusive, tacky, artificial feature which demeans the lovely plants that are forced to tolerate it.

Today’s standards are out of kilter, we are spending more for decorative iron grates to place around the base of trees than what we are spending on the tree and it’s installation.

Serious horticulturists, gardeners, arborists and landscape architects know better and are appalled at these practices.

Rick Ray, professor of ornamental horticulture, retired
Marple Tree Commission, chairman
Springfield, Pennsylvania

Kent Rotert, director of marketing and sales for Colorbiotics, Inc., which had a press release on its colored mulch product

(Continued on page 64)
Scott Jamieson takes reins of TCIA Board

Scott A. Jamieson, vice president for Bartlett Tree Experts, was installed Chair of the TCIA Board of Directors during Winter Management Conference 2011 in Grand Cayman.

Jamieson was first selected for the Board in February 2002; he served for two years before he had to step down due to circumstances outside of his control. Two years ago, while serving as president & CEO of The Care of Trees in Wheeling, Ill., he returned to the Board. When The Care of Trees merged with Davey later that year, Jamieson moved to his current position at Bartlett.

"To me, service on this board has always been about giving back to the industry, so being unable to complete my service was unfortunate. I am thrilled at the opportunity to come back on the board," he said when first rejoining the Board in 2008.

When Jamieson first joined the Board eight years ago, the Association looked very different. One of the first assignments the Board faced was to devise a strategic plan to lead the association into the new century. The outcome of that early work was TCIA’s decade-long journey that would become its Transformation of the Industry.

"I was lucky enough to be in on the first stages of the strategic plan that set in motion the transformation," he recalled. Two years ago he said it was exciting to see what came from that strategic planning meeting and how the Association and industry had grown, and that he was pleasantly surprised at how fast things have moved and how fast programs such as Accreditation and CTSP had taken off.

"I am still impressed by our pace, but we have slowed these last few years due to the tough economy. We made it through these tough times in great financial position – and now it is time to get moving again."

For the Transformation of the Industry and 10-year strategic plan, five outcomes were identified to map the journey. With that plan winding down, what is the emphasis for Jamieson as Chair?

"We need to update the plan, as times have changed and our successful "weathering of the storm" is over. It is time to engage our members at a higher level and attract more members to the Association. When we crafted the strategic plan 8 years ago we did not seek to increase membership. I think that was a mistake. I have a hard time seeing how we can transform the industry when we aren’t expanding our membership."

Two years ago, Jamieson said he felt another transformation was underway, that the next generation was coming; people were riding a new wave of sophistication. But how would the Board and the Association project this higher professionalism to the consumer? How would he draw in the unprofessional ones?

"The economy slowed all of this, but we need to get going again and find ways to attract those companies that can benefit from our mission of advancing tree care businesses. Our membership numbers have been flat and that is not good for the health of the Association, nor is it a particularly good indicator for our industry."

Has jamieson found anything surprising or unexpected about the association during his most recent time on the Board?

"We have had many changes and I was surprised how well we collectively worked through the issues of the economy, our CEO leaving and our search for a new leader for TCIA. We had some seasoned Board professionals who were the right leaders at the right time. I look at the Board we have now and..."

Revised A300 Part 2: Soil Management release

The A300 committee has recently revised the ANSI A300 – (Part 2) Soil Management (Fertilization) standard. This recently completed standard is a major revision from the 2004 version. The standard addresses fertilization practices and applications.

A new section, “Soil management a. soil modification,” includes:

- Evaluating site soil condition practices
- Managing soil organic matter content practices
- Incorporation of soil amendments
- Compaction – prevention and mitigation practices
- Mechanical soil loosening
- Surface application of organic mulch
- New content to the “Soil management b. fertilization section,” includes:
  - Soil reaction (pH) adjustment
  - A new section, “Soil management c. drainage,” includes:
    - Mitigation of impenetrable layers
    - Mitigation/adjustment of surface drainage
    - Mitigation/adjustment of subsurface drainage
- TCIA members can receive a free copy of this standard using an order form included in the March Reporter or by calling 1-800-733-2622. Additional copies of this and other standards may be ordered for the special member price of $15, plus shipping and handling. This offer expires May 15.
- Non-members may order standards by calling 1-800-733-2622 or visiting www.tcia.org.
- For more information on A300 standards, visit www.tcia.org/standards/a300.htm.
Jamieson says his years and experience with the Board, having to come off it and come back on, have enabled him to see many changes, yet he sees “consistency in our mission.” And he has specific priorities:

- Increase our membership in the right way.
- Engage members more proactively to get them involved in the Association.
- Set our next path with a strategic planning process later this year.

Jamieson attended Purdue University where he graduated in 1984 with a degree in urban forestry. After graduation, he attended Michigan State University where he earned a master’s degree in urban forestry in 1985. He completed his education with an MBA from DePaul University in 1994.

In the green industry, he started with ChemLawn during summers while still in school. He later became sales manager of their company’s Mokena, Ill., office. Though he was moving up through the ranks in lawn care, he wanted to return to the tree care side of the green industry. He took a job as an arborist in 1989 for Hendricksen, The Care of Trees, and continued his business ascent. He quickly became a crew leader, and then moved on to sales in the Chicago area. He was promoted to district manager in 1991, regional vice president in 1994, and chief operating officer in 1995. In 1998, The Care of Trees named him president. In 2003, he became the president and CEO. In the 10 years as president, The Care of Trees more than doubled its revenue, topping $50 million. The company grew to 23 offices and about 500 employees, primarily on the East Coast, Upper Midwest and in the Bay Area of California. He moved to Bartlett in 2008, where he has focused his energies on national recruiting and building corporate partnerships.

Jamieson was named to the National Safety Council’s board of directors in October 2007. “I finished my three-year term in 2010. Serving on the NSC board helped transform my perspective on safety. They are so singularly focused on keeping people safe. I worked alongside executives who had companies doing very dangerous work but had figured out how to keep their people safe. It was an inspiring group of people who really care about saving lives.”

He serves on the board of the Alliance for Community Trees, the board of Openlands, one of the oldest most respected conservation groups in Chicago, and is a certified Enneagram teacher and serves on their national board.

Current ANSI A300 standards for tree care

TCIA is the secretariat for the ANSI A300 tree care management standards, which are divided into the following parts based on tree care practices:

- ANSI A300 (Part 1) - 2008 Pruning
- ANSI A300 (Part 2) - 2011 Soil Management (Fertilization)
- ANSI A300 (Part 3) - 2006 Supplemental Support Systems (includes Cabling, Bracing, Guying and Propping)
- ANSI A300 (Part 4) - 2008 Lightning Protection Systems
- ANSI A300 (Part 5) - 2005 Management of Trees and Shrubs During Site Planning, Site Development, and Construction
- ANSI A300 (Part 6) - 2005 Transplanting (includes Planting)
- ANSI A300 (Part 7) - 2006 Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM)

See the A300 website for more info: www.tcia.org/standards/a300.htm.
TCIA launches CTSP Facebook Group

TCIA has launched a new service to help our members excel in the industry: TCIA’s CTSP Facebook Group. This Group, open to all TCIA CTSPs and enrolled CTSP candidates, allows participation in communal activities such as safety discussions, document-sharing, group chat and e-mail lists.

“Since introducing this group, there has been a ton of activity!” says Tchukki Andersen, TCIA’s staff arborist, CTSP candidate and FB Group enthusiast. “It’s been a great way to connect with the CTSP community and share ideas, questions and anything else we can think of.”

To join, or if you have any questions about TCIA’s CTSP Facebook Group, please contact Amy Tetreault, TCIA’s marketing & PR coordinator, at (603) 314-5380 or tetreault@tcia.org.

For more about the CTSP program, please contact Peter Gerstenberger at peter@tcia.org or (603) 314-5380.

Robert Felix Memorial Scholarship applications due May 1; Wright applications due June 15

Students interested in applying for a Robert Felix Memorial Scholarship must complete their application and submit reference letters by May 1.

Established by TCIA (formerly the National Arborist Association), the scholarships are funded by investment earnings from the endowment of the Robert Felix Memorial Fund. The annual scholarship program provides up to four scholarships of $3,000 each for college students studying arboriculture, urban forestry or a related field with the intention of entering the profession of arboriculture.

John Wright Memorial Scholarship
A $2,000 John Wright Memorial Scholarship is available for high school seniors and returning college students interested in a career in arboriculture. Established in 2008 by Wright Tree Service, the intent of this award is to enable undergraduate-level students to attend college without accumulating burdensome debt. Deadline for applications is June 15.

Apply online for either scholarship at www.treefund.org/scholarships.htm.

The Tree Research and Education Endowment (TREE) Fund provides research grants, scholarships and educational programs to advance knowledge in the field of arboriculture and urban forestry.

For more information, visit www.treefund.org.
Don’t kid yourself, you work with trees because you love them.

Remember what it was like to see the world from the top of your favorite tree? You grew up in a simpler time, without all of today’s complications. The passion you developed in your youth for trees hasn’t faded and, in fact, has made your company what it is today. But running a business in this complex world has its fair share of challenges. Let TCIA be your partner and help develop your business to meet today’s standards. We’ve been instrumental in supporting the ever-changing landscape of tree care for over 70 years – from the days of simplicity to 2011.

Your TCIA membership gives you:

- Increased profits with marketing programs and resources
- Unlimited access to OSHA and regulatory advisors who can help you navigate the rules
- Assistance with business practices that will distinguish your company from the competition
- Training programs to improve worker safety and increase profits

Plus you get: discounts, giveaways, members-only publications and access to TCIA’s online member resources right away!

For a limited time only we are offering new members 50% off of our first-year dues.*

Circle 38 on RS Card or visit www.tcia.org

* New membership rate of $150 is available to first-time, new members only. Please respond by March 15, 2011 or call Brenda or David for details.
Grammy Awards opt for cork over other wine stoppers

In keeping with its commitment to improving its sustainability initiatives, the Grammy awards organizers in February served only wine sealed with natural cork at two of its events. Wines sealed with cork were served at the MusiCares Person of the Year fundraiser honoring Barbra Streisand and at the official Grammy Celebration February 13. The stoppers were to be recycled by ReCork, a cork recycling organization, and SOLE, a company that manufactures shoes and sandals from recycled cork.

Natural cork is one of the world’s most sustainable products, according to ReCork by Amorim and its “100% Cork” campaign to educate consumers about the benefits of choosing cork stoppers. The campaign is funded by the Portuguese Cork Association and the Cork Quality Council.

Biodegradable and recyclable, cork’s use provides an economic incentive to preserve vast cork oak forests in the Mediterranean Basin that trap greenhouse gases, prevent desertification and provide habitat for hundreds of plant and animal species. There is no shortage of cork, and cork oaks are not cut down to make cork. A portion of their bark is removed every nine years during a 250-year lifespan, according to ReCork.

Letters & E-mails

(Continued from page 59)

featured in “Cutting Edge Products,” TCI, February 2011, responds:

Having been involved in the science, research, development – and, yes, sales and marketing – of colorants used for a variety of applications, my motivation in writing this is not to change a reader’s opinion, but rather to provide another perspective in support of colored mulch and its growing rate of popularity.

The safety of colorants used to produce colored mulch is well documented. Scores of laboratory tests, conducted by independent interests including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, university science and related horticulture labs and leading colorant manufacturers, all prove that colorants are safe for people, animals and the environment. Test results place mulch colorants in the lowest and safest level of toxicity, Category IV, the same assigned the sugar we put in our coffee – although I don’t mean to suggest people should actually consume colorant.

Colorants have been used safely for decades; most notably (ironically) in food products. People associate certain colors with certain flavors, and the color of food can influence the perceived flavor of nearly any food product. For this reason, food processors add dyes to food products for much the same reason mulch processors color mulch – simply for effect and enhanced presentation.

Most consumers are aware that food with bright or unnatural colors likely contains coloring; however, few realize many “natural” foods such as oranges and salmon are also sometimes dyed to mask natural variations in color. While some may prefer (certainly within their subjective opinions and preference as consumers) to remain with “natural” mulch, the growth of colored mulch offerings is proof that more and more landscapers, homeowners and commercial developers have a personal preference for a splash of color.

Those who have adopted and favor color-enhanced mulch – that which others may view as a tacky, intrusive and demeaning landscaping ploy – have done so with sound rationale, as colored mulch also has several benefits over its so-called natural counterpart.

As individuals, we are all entitled to our personal preferences. And while it is certainly not my intent to change an opinion held by a TCI reader, I felt it important to communicate the facts regarding the safety and popularity of colored mulch – a fact I can personally document by the dramatic growth in colorant sales experienced by our company over the past several years.

Tweets

January 24, 2011

@VoiceOfTreeCare thanks for the link to sign up for your free mag, just signed up.

WVU Forestry

February 9, 2011

Great article from TCI on sustainable urban forests...

http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/0d6762e6/page=26

Nelson Tree Service, nelsontreecare

Send letters and e-mails to editor@tcia.org.
Safety Culture

(Continued from page 54)

personal injuries suffered by those whom you love. Their lives are forever changed and our lives change with them. You cannot lead from the rear, and Prophet once said to me, “If not you, then who?” “You can’t quit.” He taught me the value of overcoming adversity through his agony of living out the tragedies of friends lost or seriously injured in this industry and his desire to overcome those tragedies by making the industry safer for generations to come.

Conclusion

Changing how an organization views safety requires energy and passion for people. Our culture is built on Accountability, Risk Reduction, Employee Involvement, Leadership, Training and Education, Partnering Safety and Production, Mentor Relationships, and the ability to Overcome and not quit. These are the tools you need to build a world class safety program. I’m reminded of the speech John F. Kennedy made on September 12, 1962, when facing a task that seemed impossible at the time. He said, “We choose to go to the moon, not because it is easy but because it is hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one that we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win.”

The task of building a complete safety culture may sound impossible, much like going to the moon sounded in 1962. The difference may be that most people in 1962 believed that, yes, it could be done. Everyone involved intended to win and everything they did was for that purpose. There was no evidence that the task could be accomplished. The scientist did not have to prove they could do it before the project began. The leader spoke the vision and everyone involved tried their best to accomplish the task with no end in sight from beginning to never end.

Mike Schronk, CTSP, safety director for Carolina Tree Care, Inc. in Concord, North Carolina.
By Kevin Oldland

It was early summer a few years ago when I was working for a local tree service company in Erie, Pennsylvania. I had only been climbing trees full time for a year or so, but had three or four years’ experience as a ground man for another company running ropes and learning as much as I could from experienced climbers. One day my boss told my co-worker and I that we were taking down a large, 70-foot soft maple in the backyard of a house in the city.

When we got there, the homeowner told us that they didn’t care about the grass or if there were big divots in the yard, as they would be doing a lot of landscaping later on that year. I was relieved to hear that because roping down such a big tree would have taken days with just me and one other person. But, since we were surrounded by houses and sheds, we still needed to take our time and be cautious or we’d have some serious property damage.

I started with the obvious lower branches and worked my way up and around the outside limbs. The tree was about three-quarters of the way down, with only the base and some of the major wood left. I started spiking up the last outside lead using just my lanyard for support, as I already cut out the top and any other limbs I might have been able to use to tie-in to with a climbing line. By now I was on a roll and confident in my ability to drop this 500-or-so-pound log out of the tree without a problem, or so I thought.

Since the lead I was about to take was shooting out at about a 45 degree angle, I didn’t want to put a notch in it because some of the brushless limbs I had put notches in ended up planting themselves in the ground. My ground man was having a hell of a time pulling them out and gave me a look like, “the next time that happens you’re coming down here and getting them out yourself.” In an effort to try and keep him happy I decided to snap cut the log out of the tree and maybe it would lay parallel to the ground.

Since the rest of the big leads responded well to snap cuts I didn’t think this would be any different. I made a generous under cut, stopped and checked to see if it was straight, then preceded with the top cut. Almost as soon as I started cutting I felt the lead start to split down the middle.

Now keep in mind that all I have to support myself is a steel-cable reinforced lanyard that’s wrapped around this lead just below my undercut. (NO SECOND POINT OF TIE-IN!!!) As the lead started splitting I remembered thinking how bad of an idea this was. That thought was quickly replaced by terror as I was sucked into the limb with such force that my breath was literally squeezed out of me. My buddy on the ground saw the whole thing but was helpless.

There was nothing he could do. I tried to take a shallow breath but was unable to. I could feel my face start to go numb and the once bright sky was turning black. I honestly thought that was it when, suddenly, I felt the wood snap, releasing me from this death grip.

Blood and oxygen flooded back to my head as I took the deepest breath I’ve ever taken. Finally I looked over at my ground man and said, “That was *#!-ing close!”

I’ll never forget that day and how close I came to being a statistic. In retrospect, when I was cutting down that tree, I should have left something else to tie into. It WON’T HAPPEN AGAIN!

Kevin Oldland operates Oldland Tree Service in Erie, Pennsylvania.

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