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One clear truth in all of this is that you cannot cut your way out. You can make some cuts, trim some services/programs and get even leaner than you were if you had already done that. If you have not been operating lean – meaning effectively using your resources to leverage them to their highest capacity – getting to that point is an essential business step. In that process, identifying your core business and determining your “A” players are absolutely essential for the next step of your consideration.

Ask yourself point blank, “In focusing on my core, am I going to stay the course, or am I going to build?” Staying the course, while a wonderful lifestyle choice for many 24 months ago, is a self-fulfilling prophecy in the circumstances in which we find ourselves operating businesses today. Staying the course will ultimately mean a contraction – no matter how hard you fight to just stay where you were.

Choosing to build requires getting out of the boat – a boat that used to be comfortable and provide security and stability when the seas kicked up a “normal storm.” That boat is rocking pretty hard and leaking now in the storm, and the Dramamine is not going to be enough to keep you from feeling its effects.

Choosing to build is a necessary step and may feel uncomfortable when the crystal ball is pretty foggy. However, with risk assessment and scenario building, you can create multiple options for growth strategies that can be implemented, in parallel or sequentially, to up the chance that one of your calculated strategies will pay off. If you do nothing, the story has been written.

We all know that our salespeople cannot be order takers. We should all know that these positions require our “A” players in all of them. There is no room for mediocre here. What we MUST also do is give them the tools, new and alternative ways to go about building our businesses and future, so that our survival becomes more likely in a world that is going to look, and be, very different.

The longer that we wait to work on creative scenarios, the less likely our options are going to be implemented in a timely fashion. Leadership requires a lot of characteristics such as discipline, vision, enthusiasm, focus and organizational ability. NOW, it requires us to step out of the boat and take some big risks and seek some new opportunities.

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Cynthia Mills, CAE, CMC
Publisher
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Christopher J. Luley and A. D. Ali

It is clear as documented by a number of studies (Figure 1) that what clients primarily want from their tree and landscape service providers is an assessment of the health and pest issues of their trees and landscape plants. Provision of services that maintain health and vigor is an obvious extension of this desire. Providing post mortems because the initial symptoms of a key pest were overlooked is not a good way to support customer satisfaction (Photo 1). This article focuses on helping employees and companies meet client expectations in the landscape.

Pest diagnostics and management is often one of the core service competencies that even experienced arborists struggle with because of its technical nature. What is more challenging is to train employees to have sufficient diagnostic skills so they can identify pest issues in the landscape and answer client inquiries.

Often, employees delivering landscape services are the primary person clients have contact with and to whom they direct questions to about their plants. Despite its importance to clients, training employees so they can approach diagnostics confidently usually takes a back seat to other pressing training issues.

To make this task even more challenging, most green industry professionals have little, if any, formal training in pest management. And even if they did have training, it was likely in the form of one or two insect or disease courses blurred in with their formative college years. Typically, most obtain their pest management information through updates presented at meetings or in-house training sessions, university extension information sources, trade magazines or outside reading. Given this, what can we expect employees to know as essential information to satisfy client expectations, and how can they obtain this information?

What to expect

Plant identification comes before anything else, pest management or otherwise. The first essential step in diagnostics beyond plant identification is knowing normal growth patterns and rates, and how these change over the season. Most pests

Photo 1. Bleeding canker is a fatal disease of European beech unless symptoms are detected early and the disease treated appropriately. Clients should expect that arborists on the property should be aware of the disease and be able to identify its symptoms.

Figure 1. Results of a 2002 survey by the International Society of Arboriculture that identifies the importance to clients of knowing pests and plant health in the landscape. Source: International Society of Arboriculture.
Despite its importance to clients, training employees so they can approach diagnostics confidently usually takes a back seat to other pressing training issues.

first appear as subtle changes in normal growth or appearance. Being aware that these changes may represent the start of a more serious infestation is a very important job responsibility of any employee. A simple example is presented in Photo 2, where a subtle change in the color of the foliage on white pine has been induced by eriophyid mites.

Capturing a deviation from normal is not necessarily easy for someone who is just learning or expanding their knowledge of plants in the landscape. The basic concept of symptoms – or what one sees as a change from the normal health or condition of plants – and signs is useful. Signs are evidence of the causal agent, such as cast skins (from molting), or excuvae of insects, or conks of wood decay fungi on trunks of trees. A 10X power hand lens should be in the pocket of anyone serious about making observations about pests in the landscape. Being able to recognize signs of specific pests offers a significant improvement in the reliability of diagnostics in the field because the actual causal agent is now being identified (Photo 3).

**Initial diagnostic steps**

How can employees with little experience with diagnostics be expected to know all the symptoms and signs of pest problems? Obviously they cannot, but they can be knowledgeable in the diagnostic process. They should be able to identify what is not normal and approach pest problem identification in a somewhat systematic manner. That, coupled with basic information on pests and their development in landscapes, is a reasonable starting point for most people.

To determine what is normal for any particular plant, the easiest step is to look at a number of the same species in the immediate or general location. This is a simple step that will help determine if similar symptoms are present on other plants of the same species, and the potential extent of the problem. It is also critical to look at different plant species to determine if similar symptoms are present on them as well. In fact, this observational method is where all landscape diagnostics should start, for the experienced and novice alike. The mark of an inexperienced diagnostician is to ignore other plants in the landscape before considering their diagnosis.

Employees should also be capable of collecting the basic information needed to identify pests so a more experienced person can make a reasonable attempt at identification without important gaps in information. Most of the critical information is summarized on diagnostic forms required by university extension labs.

Plant samples, or – even better – digital photographs, are also usually essential to make an initial diagnosis. From a diagnostic standpoint, it is frustrating to obtain a request for a diagnosis when this basic information is lacking. Many people do not want to take the time to work through the diagnostic process to collect this information. However, the process of making these critical observations and collecting essential information is part of the learning process that trains employees on pest identification in the field.
Basic knowledge

There are several basic elements of knowledge that can substantially help employees become better versed in pest management diagnostics. Our contention is that many green industry professionals lack this basic information because broader concepts in pest management are seldom presented in technical identification manuals.

Causes of pest problems

There are three major groups of agents that cause pest problems in landscapes: the biotic or living agents; abiotic or non-living agents; and declines, which are unique to woody plants and are usually caused by combinations of abiotic and biotic agents. Of these, the many pest problems in the landscape are caused directly or indirectly by abiotic agents. These include environmental factors such as soil and site conditions, weather abnormalities and cultural practices (Photo 4).

This single piece of information is helpful in identifying pest problems: one must consider the environment and culture of the plant as a prime suspect and make observations accordingly. This also suggests that knowledge about the site and plant’s adaptability to existing conditions, past maintenance practices and changes that have occurred are needed in determining what is wrong. Obtaining this information implies a certain level of investigation has taken place, to interview the site manager or tree owner about the development of the
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Unfortunately, most problems in the landscape are the result of more complex issues, and insects and diseases are often secondary in nature, meaning that they are attacking the plant because of its weakened condition. It is often easier to blame and treat a secondary pest than to determine the root cause of a plant’s problem and deal with the long-term prognosis and actual cause of the problem.

Most biotic agents are relatively host specific. The majority attack only a specific plant species or closely related plants, with a few exceptions. However, clients often become alarmed that similar symptoms on a range of plants indicates a pest is present that is capable of killing all the plants present. A key point for employees is that biotic agents cause specific symptoms on a host. Similar symptoms on a range of unrelated plants are either due to a series of different biotic agents, or an abiotic problem is present that is non-host specific.

Knowledge of the symptoms caused by different insects and diseases quickly becomes a technical topic with seemingly endless details depending on the host/pest combination. But, a few basic concepts and facts suggest that initial diagnostics are within the reach of most employees.

First, the number of common pests in the landscape is relatively small (Raupp et al 2001). Therefore, one can know the majority of insect pest problems likely to be encountered in the landscape by becoming familiar with these pests.

Second, grouping damage categories and the types of symptoms insects and pathogens cause allows reasonable conclusions to be drawn about their potential cause and importance (Photo 6). For example, stippling is a common symptom of insects and mites with piercing sucking mouthparts. This damage at low or moderate levels is usually not important to plant health unless it is severe or occurs on evergreens. Knowledge of this type of symptom, and its potential causes and consequences, covers a large number of different host-pest combinations.

Biotic agents are the insects, pathogens and animals that damage plants in the landscape. Clients often believe that pest problems are due to an overt attack by an insect or disease, and therefore some pesticide can be used to “treat” the problem.

Photo 5. Many pest problems in the landscape are abiotic in nature, such as this scorch on Norway maple. Because symptoms can result from multiple causes, further investigation into their cause is a task for anyone attempting basic diagnostics.
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photo courtesy of Dan Herms, Ohio State University

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concern and attention, such as wilting or branch dieback.

Third, the vast majority of diseases in the landscape are caused by fungi. Diseases caused by bacteria, nematodes, viruses, phytoplasmas and other pathogens are relatively rare. Therefore, knowing the important fungal disease of common trees in an area is a significant help in narrowing the cause of pathogen-induced problems.

**Declines and the long-term**

Trees and shrubs are long-lived in the landscape. This single fact greatly influences the development of pest problems and diagnosis of their cause. Most tree and shrub problems have multiple causes as part of their genesis, even though the immediate symptoms may be attributed to a single cause or agent (Photo 7). Declines are diseases that have multiple biotic and abiotic causes that together result in the deterioration in plant health. Typically, one of these biotic or abiotic agents alone cannot cause the observed decline in health.

It is not unusual for urban and landscape trees to have decline types of symptoms that are due to combinations and sequences of agents unique to that plant. It is only with careful forensics that the actual contributing factors can be pieced together, at least partially. Knowledge that decline-type problems are common on mature trees in urban areas is useful. It suggests that simple explanations or cause/effect relationships should usually be avoided, at least initially. It also suggests that employees need to understand that diagnostics are developed by considering multiple causes and events that can only be deciphered by careful observation along with consideration of the history of the tree. The presence of any particular pest on a tree does not necessarily implicate it as the cause of a problem.

**Plant health care**

The real essence of plant health care is that virtually any management done in the landscape is part of pest and health management. Many common management practices, when performed poorly, are at the root of a significant number of tree and shrub health problems. Deep planting, over-mulching, poor pruning cuts and poor plant selection top the list. Many of these issues can be found in every landscape. The health and pest problems that develop from these poor cultural practices can be misidentified as pest problems. However, the real treatment is good employee training so that quality management practices are delivered in the landscape.

Plant health care also includes an employee base that is able to recognize that changes in health are a good reason to look closer. Providing them with the basic knowledge so they can approach diagnostics in a confident manner and make basic observations to start the diagnostic process seems like a reasonable goal. After all, it is these on-site employees who our clients often look to for the answer to a simple question, such as, “How is my tree doing.”

Christopher Luley, Ph.D., is a pathologist for Urban Forestry LLC. A. D. Ali, Ph.D., is a technical advisor in the Davey Institute of Davey Tree Expert Company. Together they co-authored a newly released book, “Pest Management in the Landscape: An Introduction,” on which this article is based, available at www.tcia.org.
Washington in Review

By Peter Gerstenberger

With the change to a Democratic Administration, the conventional wisdom is that with the Occupational Safety & Health Administration, the pendulum will swing in the direction of increased workers rights and protections; or in other words, more rules and more enforcement.

If the past is any predictor of the future, there were times when Senator Obama was openly critical of OSHA’s alleged lack of effectiveness.

Change is often guided by leadership. On December 19, Obama appointed Hilda Solis, a State Representative from California’s 32nd congressional district, as his choice for U.S. Secretary of Labor. It was the last cabinet position to be filled. The selection earned praise from the AFL-CIO and other labor organizations just as it brought dismay from business and anti-union groups.

Solis’s confirmation hearings were held January 9, 2009, before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. While HELP Committee chair Ted Kennedy repeatedly praised her, the confirmation process was not entirely smooth sailing for Solis. Finally on February 24, Solis was confirmed by the Senate by a vote of 80-17. She resigned from the House and was sworn into her new position that evening.

While it may be too early to predict where she takes DOL and OSHA, in her first major speech as secretary, Solis vowed to bring about more aggressive enforcement of workplace protection laws. She was quoted in that speech as saying, “You can rest assured that there is a new sheriff in town.”

In his first few days after taking office, President Obama announced a slight delay – a moratorium really – before he would allow OSHA or any other federal regulatory entity to consider or to issue new regulations.

The administration is following a tradition started by Ronald Reagan in 1981. It ordered all work halted on federal regulations left unfinished by the Bush White House until they could be reviewed by Obama’s team.

The White House will perform a legal and policy review of each pending regulation. Proposed rules in the OSHA pipeline include: exposure to crystalline silica, exposure to beryllium, a review of the methylene chloride standard, review of the bloodborne pathogens standard, proposed confined spaces in construction standard, revision of the electrical power transmission and distribution standard (1910.269), proposed revision of the cranes and derricks standard for construction and, a proposed arborist standard.

Despite this moratorium, it took less than 24 hours for Obama’s OSHA to move forward on two proposed regulations. OSHA has issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on occupational exposure to diacetyl and food flavorings containing the substance, the alleged culprit in the so-called “popcorn lung” disease. The proposal seeks public comments on issues including methods to evaluate and monitor exposure, controls, employee training, and medical monitoring.

The agency has also issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to establish revised procedures for fit testing respiratory protection face masks. The proposed revisions would allow certain machine-based fit tests to be conducted more quickly and increase the required score for passing them.

Neither of these measures will have any direct impact on the green industry. If standards development and enforcement are to increase, one must consider how it is paid for. Not surprisingly, the economic stimulus bill recently passed by the U.S. House contains more money for OSHA. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (H.R. 1) contains $80 million for “the enforcement of worker protection laws and regulations, oversight, and coordination activities.”

The Secretary of Labor would be able to divide the funds among OSHA, the Employment and Standards Administration, and the Employment and Training Administration.

President Obama has called for a reinvigorated OSHA that would put more emphasis on enforcement of existing safety regulations. The Senate has its own version of the bill. The two bills will have to be reconciled, with a final version passed by both houses of Congress.

A Word on H-2B

On February 5, Senators Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Arlen Specter (R-PA) introduced the “Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act of 2009.” S. 388 would extend the termination date for the exemption of returning workers from the numerical limitations for temporary workers. In this latest major action, the bill will be read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

In addition to the two lead sponsors, the bill has 27 co-sponsors on the Senate side.

In the House, Representatives Bart Stupak (D-MI) and Rob Wittman (R-VA) introduced the House version of “Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act (H.R. 1136). The House bill, which at last report had 55 bipartisan co-sponsors, seeks to make the H-2B returning worker exemption permanent.

As TCIA reported earlier, the arbitrary 66,000-visa cap for FY 2009 has already been hit, placing the entire green industry in economic jeopardy. Even the business owner who does not anticipate an immediate need for H-2B workers this year or next would be well-served to start planning for the future, by sending an e-mail in support of S. 388/H.R. 1136 to their Senator or Congressperson.

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for TCIA.
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Tim Johnson presented TCIA's 2009 Award of Merit

TCIA doesn’t give an Award of Merit every year, only when the TCIA Awards Committee feel it is deserved. The Committee wholeheartedly endorsed their selection to join this distinguished group of recipients for 2009, Tim Johnson, president of Artistic Arborist.

“Ten years ago, the industry was at a very different crossroads; one that was giving the Board some heartburn as it tried to find its footing going forward – both strategically and operationally,” said Cynthia Mills, TCIA president and CEO.

Andy Ross, president of RTEC Treecare in Falls Church, Va., was presented TCIA’s 2009 Grassroots Champion award during TCIA’s Winter Management Conference in the Bahamas in February. The award recognizes a green industry leader who most effectively educates elected or regulatory officials on how major issues affect the tree care industry’s vital role in the community.

TCIA Grassroots Champion

“The ability to recruit, educate and activate a Grassroots network is a vital part of TCIA’s government affairs program,” said Cynthia Mills. “Our members are very busy running their businesses, however, and their time to travel to Washington, call their legislators or attend a hearing is extremely limited. That is why we are fortunate when members step forward to volunteer to carry our message to Washington.”

The award honors the efforts of those who work at the federal, state and local level to promote professionalism and advance commercial tree care businesses as part of TCIA’s Transformation of the Industry. Nominees may work on state and local licensing, regulations and ordinances, or they may work with the Voice for Trees political action committee to further the association’s goals in Washington.

Ross served his industry in four important ways: First, he joined the VFT-PAC as an employer representative at TCIA’s breakfast fundraiser for Rep. Wilson. Secondly, he attended both of TCIA’s Legislative Conferences, where delegations of members meet with their elected representatives. Thirdly, he joined a TCIA delegation that met with Virginia OSHA and other regulatory officials to prepare a final draft standard covering arborist operations in that state. Finally, on his own, he has maintained personal contact with Rep. Frank Wolf and his staff to advocate for TCIA positions, especially on immigration and temporary visa issues.

RTEC’s Andy Ross is TCIA Grassroots Champion

Andy Ross, president of RTEC Treecare

RTEC Treecare's Andy Ross.

Samson fills R&D ranks

Samson has hired Greg Mozsgai, senior R&D engineer; Mark Pederson, R&D engineer; and Dylan Dundas, sales support technician.

Mozsgai has an MS degree in mechanical engineering (MSME) from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a BS in engineering science from Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas. He brings to Samson a strong theoretical background combined with a hands-on approach to product development. He will work on long-range, technology-development projects to aid in opening up new markets.

Pederson has an MSME from the University of North Dakota and his BSME from Michigan Technological University. He brings a strong hands-on mechanical background coupled with an analytical approach to problem solving and design to his position of R&D Engineer. He will be a technical resource, contributing to leading teams on technical projects that support strategic company goals.

Dundas has a combination of international teaching, fishing and project management experience that provides a solid foundation for training international crews on splicing and rope handling.
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April 6-7, 2009
ArborMaster Level I Arboret Rigging Applications
Biltmore Estate, Asheville, NC
Contact: (860) 429-5028; www.arbormaster.com

April 7, 2009
Comm. Forestry Mgt - Working Through 5-Year Plan
Rutgers Office of Cont. Prof. Ed.,
New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: www.cpe.rutgers.edu; (732) 932-9271 x625

April 11, 2009
Aerial Rescue
Seymour, CT
Contact: Steve Denette; 1-888-578-8320;
www.northamericantrainingsolutions.com

April 14 and 15, 2009
Advanced Climbing/Rigging Techniques for Arborists
Morris Arboretum,
Philadelphia, PA
Contact: www.business-services.upenn.edu/arbore-
tum/; (215) 247-5777 X125/156

April 17, 2009
Climbing
Clearwater, FL
Contact: www.northamericantrainingsolutions.com

April 22, 2009
Climbing
Lumberton, NJ
Contact: Dan McHugh (609) 405-0933;
www.northamericantrainingsolutions.com

April 22, 2009
Aerial Rescue
Sacramento, CA
Contact: Nate Anderson (916) 643-0999;
www.northamericantrainingsolutions.com

April 22-23, 2009
ArborMaster Level I Tree Climbing Methods
Taylor, MI
Contact: (860) 429-5028; www.ArborMaster.com

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

April 23, 2009
Tree Risk Assessment and Wind Loading
Albuquerque Marriott Pyramid No., Albuquerque, NM.
Contact: Ed Hayes, Safetrees, LLC (505) 282-5739;
www.safetrees.com

April 24-25, 2009
Level I Precision Felling & Chain Saw Handling
Taylor, MI
Contact: (860) 429-5028; www.arbormaster.com

April 24, 2009
Climbing English
Livermore, CA
Contact: Stephanie / Kelly (925) 454-3100;
www.northamericantrainingsolutions.com

April 25, 2009
Aerial Rescue
Hopkinton, MA
Contact: Pat Atwood 1-800-246-1768;
www.northamericantrainingsolutions.com

April 25, 2009
Climbing (Spanish)
Livermore, CA
Contact: Stephanie/Kelly (925) 454-3100;
www.northamericantrainingsolutions.com

May 1, 2009
Climbing / Rigging
Tallahassee, FL
Contact: Daniel Johnson 1-866-983-7633;
www.northamericantrainingsolutions.com

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

May 7, 2009
Climbing/Rigging
Billings, MT
Contact: Brian Maher (406) 656-2939;
www.northamericantrainingsolutions.com

May 8, 2009
Climbing / Rigging
Brampton, ON
Contact: Alan Sheldrick 1-800-668-9065;
www.northamericantrainingsolutions.com

May 15, 2009
Climbing
Boise, ID
Contact: Roger Coffman (208) 463-4573;
www.northamericantrainingsolutions.com

Industry Almanac

More almanac online!
For the most up to date calendar information,
visit www.tcia.org news industry calendar
May 21, 2009
Climbing/Rigging
Cranberry Township, PA
Contact: Eric Holby 1-888-213-8340;
www.northamericantrainingsolutions.com

June 17-18, 2009*
Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop
Coincides with TreesFlorida,
Sarasota, FL
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

June 25-26, 2009
ArborMaster Level 1 Tree Climbing Methods
Haddam, CT
Contact: (860) 429-5028; www.arbormaster.com

June 27-28, 2009 & June 29-30, 2009
Level 1 Precision Felling & Chain Saw Handling
Haddam, CT
Contact: (860) 429-5028; www.arbormaster.com

July 12-14, 2009*
Legislative Day on the Hill; PLANET/TCIA
Washington, DC
Contact: garvin@tcia.org; 1-800-733-2622

July 22-23, 2009*
Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop
Coincides with ISA Annual Conference,
Providence, RI
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

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

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

September 29-30, 2009
Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop
Coincides with ISA-Texas Round Rock, TX
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

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

January 3-4, 2010
2010 Western Annual Meeting and Trade Show
Western Nursery and Landscape Association
Overland Park Convention Center, Overland Park, KS
Contact: info@wnla.org; www.wnla.org

February 7-11, 2010
Winter Management Conference 2010
Big Island of Hawaii, HI
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; cyr@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

* Indicates that TCIA staff will be in attendance

TREE CARE INDUSTRY – APRIL 2009
Paper money and broken trees in the heartland

Written during the aftermath of the 2009 ice storm.

I am returning from 10 million broken trees in the Boot Heel of Missouri. We have stopped at Big Oak Tree State Park to find that our state champs are damaged. The crew has been sleeping on air mattresses in a heated garage bay thankful to have work. While governments are deciding how to spend trillions of dollars of pulverized trees (paper money), an opportunity is being blown over where five middle states meet. The ice storm of 2009 was unprecedented in scope. And the handling of it is like a broken tree topped even worse.

Local contractors out of work were giving reasonable bids for the brush pick-up. But instead of multiple awards fueling a depressed economy, FEMA money went out of state or to local governments. And where recent stimulus money could have gone to restoration of the broken urban forests in several states, the ‘green’ portion of the stimulus package is on its way to making government buildings environmentally comfortable, and other things that have nothing to do with an immediate ‘green’ need of millions of broken trees in thousands of urban forests.

The “disaster” hazard work needed for trees is passed from FEMA to the Army Corps of Engineers to large construction companies and then subcontracted to mid-sized construction companies and finally to tree care professionals. We, the tree care industry, should be the ones coordinating the hazard tree trimming and clean up effort. But entities that know little about tree management bid on the work entire, and then subcontract to others who subcontract to others who subcontract to the tree companies, last on a rung of a ladder that can run several rungs long.

While $250 million of recent stimulus money has been earmarked for Department of Conservation computers, tree care professionals are crawling up large cold, cracked hardwoods for barely the cost of food, fuel and a cheap hotel while away from loved ones. The mayor of a Boot Heel town described six conservation department agents showing up in crisp uniforms at his office notifying him they were in his town to help. He was briefly encouraged. They returned from viewing the priority trees he gave them explaining why they could not do any them. He did not understand what they said or why they left.

There were the three men from upper Michigan who, like 60 tree companies who had registered in this one town alone, were going door to door bidding on very large trees for very little. The climber had just come out of a huge river birch with all the laterals broken and, yes, he was wearing spikes. Did I scold him? No, how could I? This was their second day into a $700 job of cutting huge and hanging limbs out of huge and hanging trees.

We just stopped and met Tommy of Tommy’s Tree Service. He has grown up in East Prairie, home of James Bayou’s Cajun Cookies. Tommy has a chipper, and asked the city if he could help chip up the brush piles. The residents in town took their trucks and trailers with their private brush to the city dump where a city employee took a picture of the plates and the vehicle. The city itself then gets reimbursed from FEMA for each resident who dumps storm debris at the city dump.

Instead of a portion of the ‘green’ stimulus money going to the outdoor service industries, especially at a time when equipment rental and sales, construction, landscape and tree companies are on the verge of bankruptcy, the trillions of dollars of paper money from pulverized trees is being printed by government and for government. And the real workers this winter are getting thrown a bone; I mean – a stick, a big and broken stick.

The consolation of all this is that it is the Lord, and not man, who opens doors for us in our trade. It is He who causes the wind and ice to be released from His storehouses and keep us busy. It’s called windfall. It has to do with broken trees and not paper money.

W. Phillips (Phil) Berwick
president, Living Tree Care
Hillsboro, Missouri

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Send letters and e-mails to: Don Staruk at staruk@tcia.org
I don’t think Andreas Stihl had any idea of the consequences that his invention would cause. We started flush cutting branches and also suffered severe injuries from his efficient machine.

I personally have never had a chain saw injury. I do know a few acquaintances who have. Before chain brakes, a friend that worked for a private tree company was using a chain saw in a tree. A kickback caused a laceration on his face. After numerous surgeries, the scar, luckily, is long and thin. He never returned to tree work.

A co-worker didn’t want to back into brush on a cold snow covered day. He turned the chain saw upside down and pushed the powerhead from the bottom. A slip and he lost the tip of his finger. He had poor circulation and so did not bleed until after he got to the emergency room.

Two of my students received lacerations to their legs. Both accidents happened at home. Both students agreed with me that chaps were extremely important and, when fatigued, take a break. Neither were wearing chaps.

Those four were lucky (if chain saw lacerations can be considered lucky). On Wednesday, February 25, 2009, 56-year-old Marc Sugrue wasn’t so lucky.

I knew Marc from past experience when I had to inspect his logging work. I worked for the Town of South Hadley Tree Department and was also on the Forestry Committee. Marc and his crew also performed storm cleanup after a major storm in the 1980s. He had many years of experience using chain saws.

On February 25, he was up in a tree at a residential customer’s property. A kickback lacerated his neck and killed him. His crew called 911 but, according to two different articles, the South Hadley Electric Company was called to lower him. Marc was still dangling from his rope 30 feet up. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

[Editor’s note: One report indicated that the branch Sugrue was standing on broke, causing him to lose control of the saw.]

We all must remember three things that can hopefully prevent another tragic accident like this.

1) Keep your fingers and thumbs wrapped around the front and rear handles. With fingers wrapped, you have better control and will have a better chance of tripping the chain brake during a kickback.
2. Never cut above shoulder height.
3. While operating, keep both hands on the chain saw. (I can hear more comments on this one.)

Michael E. Lamontagne teaches in the Landscape/Horticulture Department at Franklin County Technical High School in Turners Falls, Massachusetts, and lives in and is tree warden of the Town of South Hadley, Mass.
While ground workers suffer most of the accidents that occur in our industry, climbers are exposed to some unique risks. There are many ways in which a climber can be injured, from electrical shock to lacerations and fractures. There are also an infinite number of potential situations for those injuries to occur while working aloft, from being pinned by a fallen branch to chain saw kickback. How then do we prepare for this array of potential situations and injuries? The answer is practice; the step-by-step practice of aerial rescue and emergency response.

The first step, of course, is making sure crew members know CPR and first aid. Understanding first aid means the workers also know the basics of emergency response. There are two rules in emergency response: 1) safety takes priority over speed; and 2) do not enter situations where the likelihood is that you will become a second victim.

Basic trauma life support, as practiced by emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics, can help arborists respond to emergency situations. This may sound complicated, but it does not have to be, as a key recommendation is generally to stabilize the victim as best you can until these professionals arrive. This is the main goal in most tree rescues, not a rapid extraction of the victim.

The basic process for emergency response can be found in the A, B, C, D and Es. The ABCDEs provide a process that the rescuer should perform at each factor (letter) in order and not move to the next factor until the proceeding one is stabilized or functioning properly.

- **A**ir goes in and out
- **B**lood goes round and round
- **C**irculation will make you happy
- **D**isability will make you frown
- **E**nvironment will keep you safe and sound

Here is an example on how this process would be used.

First, upon reaching the victim, check to see that their Airway is clear. If the victim is not breathing, rescue breaths may be effective aloft. But the airway could be blocked by vomit, blood or bone fragments and it may not be possible to clear the airway while in the tree. In these instances, rapid extraction is a key to survival as the victim must be lowered to the ground and rescue breaths or CPR administered, depending on the situation.

Alternatively, if the victim is breathing, start checking for any Bleeding. When checking for bleeding, look for external (visible) bleeding as well as the low spots for pooling blood (legs, arms, lower back, etc.) indicating an internal injury. If there is external bleeding, attempt to stop the bleeding by adding direct pressure to the wound. If internal bleeding is suspected, or the bleeding cannot be controlled effectively, it is recommended that the victim be lowered to the ground; again rapid extraction from the tree may be necessary.

If the bleeding can be controlled in the tree, or there is no bleeding, proceed to check the victim’s Circulation. While checking for circulation, the rescuer is also checking for broken bones or areas where ropes or other objects are constricting circulation of blood throughout the body. If constricting ropes or objects are present, they should be removed as quickly as pos-
sible. In the case of broken extremities, check for internal bleeding and try to stabilize the broken limb or bone.

If there are no broken bones and circulation is good, the victim should remain in the tree and his or her condition monitored while awaiting further medical help. However, if the victim’s condition worsens during this time and circulation becomes unstable, the victim may still need to be removed from the tree in order to stabilize. Monitoring while awaiting the paramedics is essential.

The next step is to check for any Disabling injuries. If there is a possibility of the victim having an injury that could disable him in any way, the victim should not be moved until the EMTs or paramedics arrive. Then, either working with them or, if requested, staying out of their way, the victim can be packaged and lowered in a way to reduce the possibility of causing further injuries. Neck collars and back braces are just two examples of equipment that can be used to limit movement while the victim is being lowered. They may also be a valuable means of stabilizing the victim while awaiting medical help.

Finally, the surrounding Environment must be stabilized and made safe for the victim and other rescuers. Any remaining loose wood or other hazards that may be present should be removed from the tree if they increase the risk to the victim or rescuers.

This ABCDE process can help arborists in deciding what to do, or not to do, in an emergency. In the past, our industry’s focus in aerial rescue has often been a speedy extraction of victims, not the best option in most rescues. If the victim has a broken back or other severe internal injury, rapid movement may have serious and life-long consequences. But, if the victim is not breathing or has severe bleeding, they may need to be rapidly removed from the tree to stabilize the condition. Following the ABCDE will hopefully assist arborists in determining what is best for any particular situation and injuries.

An important reminder is that, in any emergency response, the rescuer’s life should not be compromised. You may not be able to begin the ABCDE process if it is not safe for you to reach the victim. If the tree or rescue scene is not safe for the rescuer to enter, no rescue should be attempted until the environment can be made safe. However harsh it may seem, one death is preferable to two. The double fatalities that occur in our industry often involve a worker trying to save a fellow worker who has already been electrocuted, and then the second worker suffers the same fate.

Another reminder is that tree care companies should meet with and, if possible, have sessions with the local rescue organizations and services to become familiar with their approach to rescues. This meeting can accomplish many things. First, the rescue organization will become acquainted with you and the unique hazard to our industry. Secondly, the transfer time at an accident site may be significantly reduced due to improved communication between the two parties, the arborists and the EMTs or paramedics, thus increasing the chance of saving a life. Finally, insight may be gained in newer or alternative first aid practices that can be used, in addition to refinement of current practices. This is a very important process as most rescue crews throughout the country are not prepared for emergencies in trees.

Arborists work in a very high-risk profession. Safety should be the No. 1 concern. By training our workers to be prepared for the vast array of possible aerial emergencies, rather than just focusing on a speedy removal from the tree, we are giving our workers the tools to help save workers aloft.

Sam Kezar is an aerial rescue specialist with North American Training Solutions and adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota – Crookston. John Ball, Ph.D., is a professor at South Dakota State University in the Horticulture, Landscape, Forestry and Parks Department. Some of this information was obtained as part of Sam Kezar’s graduate research at South Dakota State University under a matching grant with the U.S. Forest Service and ArborMaster Training. Kezar spoke on this same subject at TCI EXPO 2008 in Milwaukee.
For Jay Maier, owner of Maier Forest and Tree in Rochester, Minnesota, the most rewarding part about pursuing TCIA Accreditation for his company wasn’t just receiving the designation. Rather, it was also the opportunity to examine – and improve upon – every detail of his business.

“The thing the Accreditation process helps with the most is the little details,” says Maier, who became a TCIA member in 2008 and achieved Accreditation this past January. His company is now the first and only in Rochester with TCIA Accreditation. “It’s the little details that separate the good from the great. We were a good company, and now, through the Accreditation process, we have a standard that will make us great.”

Maier, who had worked as an arborist and a consulting forester immediately after college, had always dreamt of owning his own business. He launched Maier Forest and Tree in 2000 and made his name with tree and shrub pruning, removal, consulting and plant health care, with the help of six employees year round and as many as 10 in the height of the season.

“There’s not a day that goes by that I don’t enjoy what I do,” says Maier.

The company markets aggressively, but Maier most values the business he gets through word of mouth.

“We’d prefer everybody find us that way,” he says.

While many tree care companies in the area employ arborists as salespeople, says Maier, his business is the only one in Rochester that has arborists actually working in the field.

“What distinguishes us is our quality work, exceptional customer service and having certified arborists on site all the time,” he says.

Last year, Maier decided to distinguish his company from the pack by going one step further: pursuing TCIA Accreditation. Carrying that badge could help his business stay competitive, he knew, and ensure his business operates with the safest, most efficient and highest quality standards possible.

The Accreditation process took about eight months. While Maier Forest and Tree already had the required business plan and employee policies, the compilation and organization of required information was the most challenging part of the process, Maier says.

Yet every minute spent poring over information and analyzing company policy was worth the effort, says salesman Mark Cummins.

“As we were going through the Accreditation list, we found things that we could better ourselves on,” Cummins recalls. “That’s what it’s all about – you take it to the next level. And once you get there, you find something else to tweak and get better at.”

Cummins, who has been in the green industry for almost five years, says that aspect of the business is what he loves. “That’s the kind of thing I really enjoy: how we can always better ourselves and keep learning, whether it be in climbing, business or sales,” he says. “It never ends. It changes every day.”

That eight months of work and commit-
ment was all put to the test last December when a TCIA auditor arrived to inspect the tree crew on the job site – another bone-chilling day typical of Minnesota winters. Despite a wind-chill that had plunged well below zero, everybody at Maier Forest and Tree worked hard to show the auditor their best.

“(The auditor) still scoured us pretty good to make sure everything was (up to standard),” recalls Maier, who accompanied the auditor during the frigid inspection. “But he didn’t waste any time with small talk when it came to the outside part.”

Cummins believes the company’s new accredited status will mean a lot to current and potential customers in Rochester and beyond. Just last year, he recalls, several individuals asked him on separate occasions for more details about Maier Forest and Tree’s insurance and training.

“What we do can be risky. I wouldn’t do it if I didn’t feel 100 percent safe and completely satisfied with the industry standards,” he says. “The Accreditation is just another (way) to say we care, and we’re a safe company.”

Maier, who takes his stewardship of nature seriously, says he cares just as much about his employees’ safety and well being.

“Earning Accreditation wasn’t just to make Maier Forest and Tree better than other tree care companies, but to make it a better place to work and for us to feel safe, and to feel good about what we do,” he says.

While having one Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) on staff is an Accreditation requirement for companies with 10 or more employees, Maier Forest & Tree already has two CTSPs on staff.

Maier has high hopes for the future of Maier Forest and Tree and has set his goal at doubling business in the next five years. TCIA Accreditation will definitely play a part in reaching that goal, he adds.

“If we can develop that culture of pride and professionalism within, it becomes the sales tool that everyone else will see.”

“No that we have that Accreditation and we’re the only (tree care company with) Accreditation in Rochester, we’re certain that we’re going to have a great year,” Cummins says.
Yes, it’s true. TCIA has teamed up with General Agency Services and ArborMAX to deliver the first full-service, endorsed commercial insurance program including workers’ compensation. The program is designed to increase safety and lower insurance costs.

**Building for Your Future**

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Workers’ Compensation at last!
The coverages above, with the exception of workers’ compensation, are available to all companies in the industry. Importantly, the TCIA agreement with ArborMAX includes workers’ compensation – and that coverage has eligibility requirements to assist the program in succeeding for the long term.

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- Complete all elements in the Accreditation profile report and provide TCIA with copies of annual 940 or equivalent payroll reports on an annual basis
- Agree to participate in the TCIA Loss Control Program.

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For more information, contact Mike Rook, underwriter and program manager, or Jenny Mortell, operations manager, toll free at 1-877-602-7267, or at (860) 760-8445, or via e-mail at mrook@gasinsurance.net or jmortell@gasinsurance.net.

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Please circle 3 on Reader Service Card
My teacher, Alex Shigo, had many wonderful things to say. That is, he taught the wonder of trees; but I often wondered what he meant. For example, he often said that, “trees are not individuals.” It is obvious that trees live naturally in communities, but the way that a tree is community is more difficult to discern. Science has only recently discovered that individual trees are a composite of organisms, but some pre-scientific peoples seemed to understand this.

The tree of many faces

Human history is filled with tree stories and images because people have been living with trees for as long as there have been people. And many of these trees have had voices and faces. In my childhood, I was frightened by the sinister apple trees in the Wizard of Oz, which my family watched once a year in black and white. I knew how Dorothy felt as she faced the uncertain road ahead. Alexander the Great was similarly troubled, at least in legend. Fifteenth-century Persian art depicts the talking tree, bearing fruit of various heads of wild beasts and monsters. When Alexander encounters this tree during a military campaign he is chastised for his ambitions and told of his imminent demise. Dorothy fares much better with a tin woodsman by her side. But our future may not be so bright if we continue to ignore the warnings.

It is not all bad news, however, because the mystical Persian trees of poetry and art of this period have something hopeful to say as well. In the love story of a young woman Jamal (“beauty”) and her suitor Jalal (“glory”), every leaf of a sacred tree bears her name and even the flowers sing her name to the lovelorn and hormonal boy. As his love remains unrequited, he continues to search the woods in the promise of true love.

A much older story from half way around the world also features a miraculous talking tree. The ancient Mayan text Popol Vuh tells of the sacred gourd tree sought by the young maiden Xquic. Despite warnings of certain death, she tries to pick the fruits, which are actually the heads of the sacred and long dead Hunahpu brothers. While revealing the fate of human arrogance (like Alexander’s tree), the spittle from the mouth of the speaking gourd falls on the young maiden’s hand. The sacred sap impregnates her and she carries twin sons in her womb. Unlike Jalal, whose woodland sojourn only increased his longing, Xquic’s trip was more fruitful to say the least.

The way of community

These trees and countless others grow in human history and imagination, bearing potent truths about human nature and the nature of trees. It might help to remember that the words “tree” and “truth” share a common root. Just to clarify, I am not claiming that trees have human faces, possess the capability for human speech, or that they can cause unintended human pregnancy. The solid botanical truth behind ancient tree images and stories from around the world is that these mystical, magical trees are a mixture of creatures.

Long before Xquic looked pregnant with tree-twins and lovesick Jalal chased Jamal through the Persian woods, a different kind of coupling had taken place. Evolutionary biologists believe that plant cells are a union of previously distinct organisms that have developed such a close symbiosis that they have become one. Each cell of all
multi-cellular organisms contains internal bodies called organelles, each with a particular function. But plants have a special organelle called a chloroplast that is green in color because it contains chlorophyll.

These chloroplasts were originally bacteria that had the capacity for turning sunlight into food. Their DNA most closely resembles that of blue-green algae (more accurately called cyanobacteria), the true originators of photosynthesis. I find it most intriguing that the massive oaks of Nebraska feed themselves with remnants of oceanic cyanobacteria. Cooperation is as much of a driving force in nature as competition. But cooperation doesn’t sound very sexy. Given the resulting explosion of energy and fertility, this joining of organisms was more like a passionate love affair worthy of Persian poets.

Life in the world wide web

Trees have survived for eons without human help. They nourish the web that sustains them. Photosynthesis made life on earth possible, and the life of every tree is made possible by the universe of creatures it directly or indirectly feeds. Therefore, sound arboriculture seeks an understanding of tree systems and ways to support them. This inevitably includes the world of roots, which is also the world of fungi.

Many tree-lovers can identify and describe the functions of ectomycorrhizae, the external “fungus-root” organs formed in symbiosis. It is remarkable that in the long span and universal breadth of human-tree relationships, fewer than 150 years have passed since Albert Frank introduced mycorrhizal relationships to science in 1885. Most botanists would agree that virtually all trees require some type of mycorrhizal infection to thrive, and the fact that endomycorrhizal types (inside the root) are not easily seen has led many to assume that they are obligate only to certain tree species. Like the coupling of single-celled organisms with chloroplasts that formed the basis for plant life, the union of tree and fungus in one organ is the basis for life in soil.

Infections are encouraged and enhanced by two sugary compounds: mucigel and glomalin. Mucigel coats nonwoody roots and is composed of sugars exuded by the tree, essential elements, water and microorganisms. Growing in this soup are root hairs, which are tiny extensions of individual epidermal cells that increase the surface area of the roots and transport elements into the tree. It is somewhat inaccurate to refer to this action as absorption, which sounds passive, because nonwoody roots actively take what is needed from soil with the indispensable aid of bacteria and fungi.

Glomalin serves a similar purpose, but is produced not by the tree but by mycorrhizal fungi. It is a glycoprotein (combined protein and sugar) that holds soil particles together on mycelia. It further aids the element-gathering capacity of mycorrhizae and creates a healthy habitat for bacteria and other microbes. Glomalin is not only
essential for healthy root function, but for healthy soil structure as well. Like the relatively recent discovery of mycorrhizae, the existence and importance of glomalin is new to science, having been discovered in 1996 by Sara Wright.

Mycorrhizal fungi only infect the fine tips of nonwoody roots. As the infection progresses the root is stimulated to produce more tips for infection, while a mycorrhizal mantle grows over the root. Fungal infections not only make it possible for trees to get what they need from soil (in exchange for sugar from non-woody roots) but also feed soil organisms by sloughing off deciduous root tips, mantles and entire external mycorrhizal structures. Moreover, mycorrhizae connect trees to an incredibly vast and complex web.

In native soils, trees belong to the underground network of the string-like bodies of fungi called mycelia. The web that consists of interconnected mycelia of mycorrhizae, plant roots, and hundreds of millions of microorganisms forms a mycelial mat that have been known to occupy thousands of square acres in the wild and live to be thousands of years old. It functions like a single organism with an energy grid and neurological pathways, sharing energy and information throughout the system. Mycelial mats consist of countless and diverse species, and trees are just one of many creatures held in ancient and intimate embrace.

Tree care as match-making

Intimacy requires space. Sometimes our passion for trees means we love them to death; our aggressive designs ruin their love life when we really just need to let trees be trees. The wisdom of trees is the way of community, and wise tree care promotes healthy relationships. The vital web that has always sustained trees is too complex to recreate once damaged or destroyed, but we can preserve the vestiges of lost fertility and help create new possibilities. Sometimes this simply means staying out of the way.

It can be said that trees don’t grow in
soil, they grow in air. Roots, mycorrhizae, mycelia and countless members of the soil web live and grow in the spaces between particles. The right combination of moisture, oxygen, decaying organic matter, essential elements and everything else that keeps the community alive is destroyed by compaction. We sometimes love our trees so much that we cozy up to them, injuring soil and roots during construction of homes and roads. We apply fertilizers that are high in nitrogen, install sprinkler systems, install fabric and rock, drench or inject soil with broad-spectrum pesticides, sometimes doing more harm than good. Many common practices increase compaction and make normal life in the rhizosphere more difficult or impossible.

The most reliable way to relieve compaction and grow subterranean wildlife is the simplest. Properly-applied mulch replicates the natural conditions in which most species of trees evolved. Wild soils are covered with decaying vegetation and animals and contain varying amounts of humus in each soil layer. Compaction is relieved by the movement of soil organisms that inhabit and digest this material, creating compost and opening spaces between soil particles. Each cubic meter of wild forest soil contains hundreds of thousands of insects, mites, arthropods, worms and other small animals, and one handful of this soil contains billions of bacteria belonging to thousands of species. Soils in developed and built environments will never reach this richness or diversity, but by nurturing the life in soil, we create the possibility for intimate and meaningful relationships.

Dr. Shigo’s little friends

Every aspect of arboriculture has enormous implications for the life of trees. The ecological web to which trees belong is more vast and complex than we can imagine and is shared by countless creatures yet to be understood or even discovered. Humans are only one small part of this community, but we possess the capacity to do irreparable harm. The consequences of every treatment we impose on trees, despite our best intentions, must be carefully considered. The way of community has sustained trees for eons. The best that we can do is to approach them with a sense of wonder and the desire to learn something of their wisdom.

One early spring day, Alex Shigo sent me into the woods to collect samples, as he often did. He instructed me to collect some of the black scum that had formed on the surface of the stream that ran through his back yard. I scooped some into a plastic dish and discovered that it contained thousands of tiny black flecks. I took them inside and put them under a microscope. I was looking at snow fleas, tiny plump black springtails of the genus Hypogastrura, that had been washed into the stream by spring run-off.

Alex looked over my shoulder and said: “I see you found my little friends. Do you know why they’re so important?”

I had no idea at the time, and I’m still working on the answer.

Jack Phillips is a Registered Consulting Arborist and curator of the Omaha Downtown Arboretum. He also teaches on the faculty of Arboriculture Canada Training and Education Ltd.
**Accident Briefs**

*Trimmer pinned by fronds*

A tree trimmer was trapped 20 feet up in the palm tree January 7, 2009, in Phoenix, Arizona, after a ring of palm fronds collapsed on top of him. A neighbor reported hearing a loud boom and saw the man struggling up in the tree. The man had been cutting away the palm fronds from the bottom, which caused a bulk of dead fronds to fall. The man’s harness held him in place. Firefighters on a ladder removed the debris with hand tools, not wanting to risk using chain saws that might injure the man. The man had several injuries but they were not life-threatening. The incident caused a power outage in the neighborhood.*

*Tree falls on DPW worker*

A Fairfield, Connecticut, town worker suffered serious injuries to his left leg January 16, 2009, when a tree he was cutting down on Berkeley Road fell on him, trapping him for nearly an hour. Dan Garlock, 42, an automotive equipment operator for the Department of Public Works, was working with a crew cutting down trees. By the time firefighters arrived, the worker and his crew had managed to cut away most of the tree, but the lower half of Garlock’s left leg was trapped. It took firefighters 40 minutes to free him. While firefighters used hand tools to extricate Garlock’s fractured leg from beneath the tree, he was administered intravenous fluids. Once freed, he was transported to Bridgeport Hospital, where he was reported in fair condition later that day.*

*Landscaper falls after electric shock*

A landscaper working on a ladder received an electric shock January 13, 2009, in Miami, Florida, and fell 30 feet to the ground below. The 45-year-old man was trimming the top of a mango tree when he received a shock through the ladder, which had touched a power line. Rescuers said the man had several injuries but they were not life-threatening. The incident caused a power outage in the neighborhood.*

*Campus arborist survives 20 foot fall*

Kevin Otten, campus arborist at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California, fell 20 feet through a skylight at the school January 29, 2009. Otten suffered injuries and was taken to the hospital where he underwent some minor surgery, according to the *Sonoma State Star*, the university newspaper. He spent four days in the hospital before being released.

Otten had fall-protection training, regularly works with heights and was wearing a hard hat while trying to remove a tree that had fallen against a building. How he fell is unknown as he suffered a concussion and does not remember any details of his fall.

*Landscaper dies in fall*

The body of a landscaper who died in a fall January 29, 2009, in Scio, Oregon, was found the next morning after his customers noticed his truck still parked nearby. James Edward Lovell, 48, of Albany, Ore., operated his own landscaping business. He was working alone trimming trees at a residential care home for the elderly. Investigators believe Lovell lost his footing while trimming trees and fell six feet to the ground. The cause of death has yet to be determined but evidence at the scene suggests a neck injury, according to investigators.*

*Cut tree falls on worker*

A Woodbury, Illinois, city worker was seriously injured January 30, 2009, when a tree he was cutting down fell on his back. The man was cutting and removing dead trees in the area at the time. After the tree was removed, the man was conscious, but was having difficulty breathing. He was transported to the hospital with serious, but non-life-threatening injuries, according to a statement from city officials.*

*Man killed cutting tree*

A Bloomington, Wisconsin, man died January 31, 2009, in Bloomington after a tree he was cutting fell the wrong way, (Continued on page 35)
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Sailing into the Future of Arboriculture
By Rick Howland

Your personal assets are hanging in the trees – and the breeze! Is your climbing rope up to the task?

Properly cared for, a modern rope (which is synthetic due to tensile strength that is about one-third greater than manila plus other qualities) will last a relatively long time before normal use calls for its retirement or redeployment for less critical tasks. That means protecting it from dirt, debris and weather, handling it with care and always checking for damage.

Not caring for your rope is courting disaster. Take one story we heard regarding a champion professional climber who had climbing ropes and gear from all the top manufacturers, but went climbing one day with his favorite, old ropes. That decision became his downfall, quite literally.

When it comes to tree care professionals, the industry standard for a climbing rope is a half-inch diameter line with a minimum 5,400-pound capacity. You’ll find a standard half-inch along with nominal (approximate) half-inch lines (11mm-plus) that are engineered and manufactured to climbing standards. Regardless of the exact dimension, final selection is about personal preference.

In researching this article, we found many differences of opinion on what to do with a climbing rope that’s outlived its usefulness, but they agreed that, sooner or later, the time will come when it’s necessary to take that rope out of service.

While dollars may be tight in this economy, skimping on rope is not a smart or acceptable business decision. Not caring for your rope is courting disaster. Courtesy of Samson.

What signs do you look for? The first and best rule regarding when to retire a rope is to contact your manufacturer for guidelines. However, there are some basics you need to know and share with your staff.
or co-workers as part of your ongoing training and daily prep work.

Knots can reduce a rope's strength due to tight bends, sometimes upward of 50 percent. Rope makers say that's one good reason not to exceed a work load limit of, say, 20 percent of a rope's stated strength. (Again, consult your manufacturer.)

Before starting any climbing work, check to see that you've stored your rope clean and dry and away from heat sources. These environmental issues can attack your rope quickly, as debris cuts into the fibers, or insidiously over time, as sunlight heat and ultraviolet light slowly erode its capability and capacity. Consider a special protective rope bag; rope is a tool, after all, and should be treated like one. Check your ropes during the day, too, not just before starting work. Things happen!

The joke about when to retire a rope is that you need to do it before it breaks. Seriously, the best way to determine if it's time to retire a climbing (or any rope) is to check it often, every day. There are no standards for retiring a rope, because so many variables come into play, such as construction, loading, bending and exposure to elements and debris, but there are a few guidelines.

Remember that as soon as a rope goes into service, it likely will “fuzz-up.” This is normal, and actually good, because the roughened rope “fuzz” acts as a cushion, an extra sleeve, actually, protecting the fibers, cord and braid beneath. Too much “fuzz,” though, spells wear, and it can be anywhere from 10 to 20 percent or more of fuzz along the line before it's time to retire that rope. Consult your manufacturer and use wise, conservative judgment. If in doubt, toss it out.

An inconsistent diameter – that is, flat areas, bumps, lumps and thinning – generally means internal rope damage, likely from overloading or shock loads. This alone is enough reason to retire that rope.

Check also for consistency of texture or feel and brittleness and stiffness. Both can be signs of contamination, (as unusual discoloration can be) or possible excessive shock load.

Friction and heat are major and silent enemies. Glossy or glazed areas are signs of damage from exposure to heat sources or from heat/friction. Glossing/glazing may be the tip of a larger iceberg of damage beneath the surface. Adjacent and hidden fibers may be compromised, even though they look OK. Obviously, the greater the initial friction, the greater the heat buildup and thus the greater the chance for damaging your rope.

Ropes under tension crossing one another can be a major heat problem.

With today’s synthetic lines, variations...
in content and blends mean rope performances vary widely with respect to heat. Melting ranges can be from about 180 degrees Fahrenheit to 900 degrees or more. Keep ropes away from exhaust systems!

Lower-rated ropes may do the job safely and well and within spec, but since you’re using more of the stated capacity strength, you’re likely wearing out your rope more quickly. Check for breaks and uneven rope structure.

Pulled strands may or may not be a problem. Generally, if they can be worked back into the rope, it’s ok. If not, retirement is at hand. Check with the manufacturer!

We found little new recently in terms of rope products or technology advancements, other than in coloration, which is largely a cosmetic issue. However, at least two major rope manufacturers are anticipating new product announcements later in the year.

Bill Shakespeare, marketing manager for New England Ropes, Inc., explains that there are different sizes and types of approved arborist climbing ropes that have emerged over the past few years, nominally in the half-inch class. These are 7/16-inch and 11mm sizes and some thicker, up to 13mm.

“With climbing ropes, for years the half-inch was a standard, and people have gotten used to it,” he says. “The newer sizes are thicker or thinner to provide a range to better fit people’s hands. Thinner and lighter ones are easier for some workers to throw, rig and handle, but they all do the same work.”

To illustrate his point about ease of use, Shakespeare says New England Ropes introduced a new 11.5mm rope within the
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last couple of years, called Tachyon, for climbing. (The name is derived from quantum physics and refers to a theory of the fastest and lightest.) This rope is a double-braid with a third part, an inner core. He says the rope stays rounder and firmer regardless of use and remains spliceable, permitting spliced eyes in one or both ends of the line using a double-braid splice. Sold into the professional arborist market, this rope is popular with competitive climbers because it is fast to use and strong.

The 11mm-class rope is seen as more high performance and “cutting edge,” says Shakespeare, although it’s essentially the same as half-inch rope. The difference lies in ease of use and speed. “If you’re lugging, packing and unpacking 150 feet of rope, a few pounds make a difference during the day,” he adds, adding that a thinner rope may have a shorter life than the standard half inch due to less material being used, but a lot of that depends on how the rope is used and cared for.

“We are finding that, in this economy, people do try to stretch the budget, and that sometimes includes delaying rope purchases,” he says. But people need to be aware of how much material has been lost to wear, Shakespeare says, and to check for nicks and how many fibers are actually broken.

Jim Cass, Northeast regional sales manager for Samson, says, “Cuts are the biggest problem. Technically, a rope can last forever if you keep it clean. Dirt inside between the braids and fibers will cut a rope over time.”

There are numerous rope constructions, but probably the most popular overall is the 16-strand, and for climbing, a polyester 16-strand, which Samson features with a stabilized nylon core. “We use nylon to prevent “milking,” when the core can come out of rope on its own. Our process eliminates that.”

“Popularity is drifting toward lighter ropes,” he says, “which are easier to use for smaller hand sizes. That explains the interest in 7/16-inch and 11mm, 24-strand construction polyester rope.” A half-inch rope will feature an 8,100-pound break strength versus 6,000 pounds on a 7/16-inch, exceeding the ANSI standard of 5,400 pounds. “We aim to produce all our rope with at least a 10 percent buffer above minimum standards,” Cass says.

“About 90 percent of purchase decisions come down to feel. Some people like small ropes, others with large hands like the larger half-inch or even what we call a beefy half-inch, which is slightly larger. Whatever a climber is weaned on, it’s difficult to get him or her to switch to another because they’ve gotten secure with the rope’s feel. Feel is why women and smaller climbers like more of the 11 or 11.5mm lightweight ropes and why competition climbers insist on lightweight rope; speed is of the essence.”

Regarding wear and tear, Cass points out that if you cut only one of the 16 strands in a rope, you’ve lost a sixteenth, or more than 6 percent, of a rope’s capability over its entire length. His opinion? “Basically if you cut strands, retire the rope. It’s your lifeline. Don’t mess with your lifeline. People may switch the rope to a lowering line to drop light loads. If an 8,100-pound rated rope loses a sixteenth of its capability, it may still be strong enough to lower limbs.” (Just be sure to clearly mark that the rope is not for climbing!)

We asked Jamie Goddard, East Coast sales manager for Yale Cordage, about rope construction. “Twelve-strand is more or less commercial grade; a standard, economical single-braid construction eliminating the core with a nice nubby feel commonly preferred by climbers because of the hand feel and not used as much with mechanical hardware.

“Sixteen-strand is most common and considered professional grade. It has a smoother cover than 12-strand and runs well through cam devices. Our XTC 16-
strand is known to have the tightest cover in the industry to keep out contaminants, and features a nice tight over-braid.”

“A 24-strand is considered our competition grade for competitive climbers. It features the smoothest cover and lowest elongation, resulting in minimal bounce and getting to top quicker. Typically,” Goddard says, “a 24-strand refers to smaller diameter rope, less than a half inch, in the 11 to 11.7mm range. These are more favorable to recreational climbers because of their light weight,” he adds.

According to Goddard, however, the half-inch, 16-strand, 6,200-pound rated rope is pretty much the tree care standard.

With regard to retiring rope, if more than two adjacent strands are cut, “throw out that rope immediately!” warns Goddard. He recommends cutting an unsuitable rope into unusable pieces to avoid reclamation by and possible future liability from, “dumpster divers.”

“Some will downgrade a climbing rope to a lowering line, but my thinking is that if the rope is not good enough to hold you at, say 250 pounds, what will you do if the shock load exceeds the capacity of the damaged rope,” Goddard says. “The way I see it is, you buy a rope for a purpose. When its life is over for that purpose, it’s over. Period.”

You can help prolong your rope by taking care of it, Goddard says, and that includes keeping it clean. Wash it! He recommends no abrasive detergents, but rather a petroleum-based cleanser. Wash, rinse thoroughly and let air dry – without using heat or sunlight. Both heat and UV light will attack rope.

Another tip. Use both ends! By utilizing both ends of a rope, you get even and longer wear.

Regardless of its diameter or construction, rope is not to be taken lightly, whether you’re using it for climbing, rigging or lowering. One bad decision can bring down you, your material and even your business. Consider rope to be a serious tool that can make you or, literally, break you.
The TREE Fund is always looking for ways to maximize the impact and relevance of our research dollars. And while we receive more excellent proposals than we can fund, we don’t always hear from researchers who are ready to start projects in areas we think would most benefit the industry and the public.

In pursuit of those goals, a couple of years ago the TREE Fund Board of Trustees approved the creation of a fellowship that would let us choose a direction for research and engage a new generation of scientists in well-funded, longer-term projects. The fellowship was envisioned as a series of overlapping three-year projects, each devoting $100,000 to topics the Fund and its stakeholders agree would help shape the future of tree care.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Connecticut Tree Protective Association (CTPA), the first of those projects will be the Dr. Mark S. McClure Fellowship, to be awarded this year to a researcher working on tree biomechanics. The CTPA raised $100,000 in 12 short months — and in a tough economic environment — to honor Dr. McClure, their long-time leader and a noted researcher in the management of the woolly adelgid and other pests.

The TREE Fund’s Research Committee is currently reviewing proposals in the areas of root pruning and structural loss, tree risk assessment, long term effects of drought and root loss, soil biology and amelioration, radar and other analysis devices, along with any other areas of biomechanics talented researchers are driven to explore.

In addition to producing high-quality research in an important field of study, the fellowship is also intended to provide support and encouragement to the young scientists so important to the future of

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**Three Projects Win Duling Grants**

The TREE (Tree Research and Education Endowment) Fund has awarded three John Z. Duling Grants for 2009. The project name, amount of the grant, the recipient and a brief description of each project are as follows:

**Effects of Container Types and Root Pruning on Root Quality and Tree Stability – $10,000**
*Dr. Edward F. Gilman, University of Florida*

This research seeks solutions to root defects caused by container production by evaluating what root pruning strategy (slicing, shaving, bare rooting or butterfly) works best.

**Changes in Soil Microbial Populations and Functioning in Managed Urban Landscapes - $10,000**
*Dr. Les P. Werner, University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point*

This project will characterize changes in the chemical, physical, and biological properties of soil exposed to the process of urbanization and urban landscape management regimes, and will establish critical baseline information that will enhance the arborist’s capacity to manage landscape trees and/or the urban soil that supports these trees.

**Controlled Environment Evaluation of Aerated Compost Tea (ACT) - $10,000**
*Dr. Laura Jull, University of Wisconsin – Madison*

The proposed research will optimize ACT preparation for use in a controlled environmental greenhouse experiment that will allow control of highly variable environmental factors that naturally occur in the landscape. Varied rates of ACT will be applied to four commercially significant species of trees and shrubs and will be compared to conventional fertility practices.

The goal of the John Z. Duling Grant Program is to provide seed money or partial support for research and technology transfer projects that advance arboricultural knowledge and address topics that have the potential of benefiting the everyday work of arborists. Priority areas include:

- Root and Soil Management
- Planting and Establishment
- Plant Health Care
- Risk Assessment and Worker Safety
- Technology Transfer
- Urban Forestry

Projects are expected to be completed within one to three years. Grant award amounts vary depending on the adjudged value of the project relative to the needs of the arboriculture community. Awards are limited to a maximum of $10,000.
The TREE Fund Board believes that providing significant funding for a three-year project will help new researchers, working under the mentorship of established scientists, to see arboriculture as a vital and viable career path.

The McClure Fellowship has already become a reality, but new opportunities are available for future projects and researchers. If you or your organization is ready to take a big-picture approach to arboricultural research, please contact TREE Fund Executive Director Janet Bornancin to discuss the possibilities. The future of arboriculture could be in your hands!

Don’t miss this important date

The fellowship isn’t the only path to the future of tree care. Applications are due May 1 for the Hyland Johns Grants, the Robert Felix Memorial Scholarships and Education Program Grants. Applications and other information are available at www.treefund.org.

**Stihl now Tour des Trees title sponsor**

The Tree Research & Education Endowment Fund (TREE Fund) is pleased to announce that its long-time event partner, Stihl Inc., has become the title sponsor of its 2009 Tour des Trees! A well-known leader in outdoor power equipment, Stihl will take a lead role in the Tour, America’s largest fundraising event for tree research.

Stihl Tour des Trees riders will travel primarily through New England this year on a route that offers a week of classic New England scenery and enough challenges to keep the “hammerheads” pumped up. The 2009 Tour will officially roll out Sunday morning, July 19, from New York City with a kick-off event that’s shaping up to be a great showcase for the arboriculture profession.

The ride will finish up six and a half days later with a Grand Finale at the ISA Field Days events at Roger Williams Park in Providence, RI. A pre-Tour warm-up ride and banquet hosted by the New Jersey Arborists and an optional “Challenge Ride” into Maine bring the potential number of states tagged on this tour to eight! Online registration is open at www.tourdestrees.org.

“Stihl’s support of the TREE Fund, and its involvement in the Tour des Trees over the past nine years, clearly demonstrates why they are so well respected in the tree care industry,” said TREE Fund Executive Director Janet Bornancin.

“We at Stihl are committed to projects that echo our support for socially responsible environmental stewardship,” said Roger Phelps, promotional communications manager for Stihl Inc. “Just as Stihl invests resources into making energy-efficient products that minimize environmental impact, we also invest in organizations like the TREE Fund that finance research that has a significant impact on future generations.”

Please circle 34 on Reader Service Card

TREE CARE INDUSTRY – APRIL 2009
The long winter of our economic discontent got a little shorter for 287 people who made their way to the Our Lucaya resort on Grand Bahama Island for Winter Management Conference 2009. Once settled in, the group took full advantage of the business education, social activities, networking opportunities and outdoor excursions to advance their businesses.

The debate over the best part of the conference – the all-star speaker lineup, lively poolside forums, or kayaking through Lucayan National Park – won’t be settled anytime soon. What’s certain is that attendees enjoyed a memorable experience that sent them home with a lot of new information to digest in order to help their businesses survive, thrive and grow in 2009.

From the opening keynote session by Chip Eichelberger, who challenged the room to action for dramatic results, to Robert Stevenson’s closing session on how the best get better, the conference featured nonstop opportunities for learning, growing and enjoying leadership in the tree care industry.

As the economy slows while the pace of business increases, the time-tested formula for Winter Management Conference seems to work better and better – especially since TCIA has kept the conference fee the same for the past three years! Each day begins with a group breakfast, where attendees can renew their conversations from the previous evening or make plans for the day ahead. Following breakfast, sessions on sales, leadership, employee motivation, safety and business development inform and serve as springboards for conversations the rest of the day. Those conversations, networking and sharing opportunities for learning, growing and enjoying leadership in the tree care industry.

(Continued on page 52)
Free Financial Survival Guide for Members

This month’s free Member Giveaway, included with the April Reporter mailed to TCIA members, is an updated chapter from TCIA’s Business Boot Camp Survival Guide – “Business Survival 2: Financial Control.”

Financial statements come in two complementary forms – a balance sheet that shows your assets and liabilities, and an income statement that shows your profit vs. loss (income vs. expense). From these a number of important financial ratios can be tracked.

Having an understanding and control of your finances helps you:
1. gauge how your business plan is working
2. determine your actual hourly production rates
3. set hourly sales rates based on revenue targets
4. identify embezzlement before extensive damage is done
5. avoid other costly accounting mistakes
6. assess a defensible valuation to your company

In addition to using this chapter, you should review the rest of the TCIA Management Guide series for finance on the Management Guide CD or on the members-only section of TCIA’s Web site at https://secure.tcia.org/Login.aspx.

Within the Management Guide there is a Model Tree Care Company Balance Sheet with debt and liquidity ratio calculators and a Model Tree Care Company Income and Expense Statement with expense ratio and hourly sales rate calculators. There is also a Management Guide that reviews IRS record retention requirements.

Upcoming TCIA webinars

April 8  Tim Walsh – Setting Up a Safety Program
April 21 Mary McVicker – Developing a Monthly Operating Budget for Your Tree Business
May 5  Keith Sheriff – Setting Up a Formal Employee Training Program
May 12 Peter Sortwell – How to Grow Your Business Through Commercial Contracts
June 9  Market Hardware - How to use Google & Yahoo to find and land new clients
June 24 Doug Malawsky - Chasing Storms and working with the insurance industry.
WMC provides chance to reenergize, refocus

(Continued from page 50)

of information happen during afternoon outings, over meals, or at informal poolside forums – organized or spontaneous.

There’s as much learning, socializing or family time as desired. Some spent most of their time chasing education, information, networking opportunities and new ideas. Others spent most of their time chasing a Titleist around the course or their kids around the pool. Either way, the Bahamas proved an enjoyable venue to help make a long, tough winter move toward spring a little faster.

Make your plans now to attend WMC 2010, February 7-11, 2010, on the Big Island of Hawaii.

From left, Lindsay Bockoven, Katelyn Cleveland, Christopher Hunt and Kevin Cleveland at the opening reception. The younger crowd sees the value, too!

Poolside forums are really open discussions that may focus on sales, leadership, employee motivation, safety, business development or a combination of those and other topics.

At the WMC first-timers reception, Board members, staff and second timers ease everyone into networking opportunities and tips on navigating the conference.

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

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

To learn more about how your company can benefit from this and other TCIA Affinity Programs, please call 1-800-733-2622.
Robert Felix Memorial Golf Tournament

A brisk wind kept the temperatures down at The Lucayan Country Club on Grand Bahama Island – site of the 2009 Robert Felix Memorial Golf Tournament. Nevertheless, several groups of golfers got hot on the course, as birdies were drilled in abundance. The annual fund-raising tournament to benefit students of arboriculture put 12 groups on the course for good times and a good cause.

The winning foursome of Rod Soderstrom, Chris Nichols, Pepper DeTuro and Paul Markworth blew away the field with a net score of 56. Second place was taken by a threesome of Tim Gamma, Chris Smith and Patrick Covey. Stacy Hughes brought home the longest drive prize and Mike Rook stopped his ball closest to the pin. No one won the Rotochopper Challenge – a $10,000 prize for a hole-in-one on the challenging 172-yard par three 11 hole.

The Tree Care Industry Association Foundation and the students of arboriculture would like to thank the players, major sponsors, and hole sponsors for their continued support of this event. Our thanks to Bandit Industries, Inc. for sponsoring the golf carts, Vermeer Corporation for sponsoring the Awards Ceremony. Rotochopper, Inc. for sponsoring the Hole-in-One competitions, Bandit Industries, Inc. and Cummins Bridgeway, LLC for sponsoring lunches and the beverage cart!

Thank you to our Hole Sponsors:
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Buckley Tree Care Specialists
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Collier Arbor Care
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Gamma Tree Service
Gamma’s Shield Shade Tree
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Ogilvy Hill Insurance
Rhizofuel
Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care
Tanke Tree Experts, Inc.
The Davey Tree Expert Co.
The F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Co.
Wright Tree Service

Planning has already begun for next year’s Robert Felix Memorial Golf Tournament at the Hilton Waikoloa in Hawaii. See you there … Aloha!

The second place winning threesome included, from left, Chris Smith, Tim Gamma and, far right, Patrick Covey, with Cynthia Mills and Mark Garvin presenting them their prizes.

Cynthia Mills with the winning foursome of, from left, Rod Soderstrom, Chris Nichols, Pepper DeTuro and Paul Markworth.
Accident Briefs
(Continued from page 34)

Man killed by cut tree
A man was killed February 6, 2009, in New Derry, Pennsylvania, when a tree he was cutting down fell on him. Brian M. Shean, 37, of New Derry, and his father were helping a friend cut down the tree in a wooded lot when it became lodged in another tree nearby. As the men tried to pull it down, the timber, which was about 50 feet tall and 12 inches in diameter, fell toward them, crushing Mr. Shean. He was pronounced dead at the scene.*

Tree falls on worker
A man attempting to remove a 100-foot-tall tree February 7, 2009, at Big Creek Golf Course in Memphis, Tennessee, was killed when the tree fell on him. The man, Cruz Ayala Delgado, died at the scene. Big Creek employees attempted to help Delgado by lifting the large tree but were unsuccessful. It took the Shelby County Fire Department more than two hours to remove the body.*

Man falls from ladder while trimming tree
A 54-year-old Ocklawaha, Florida, resident fell from the top of a ladder while trimming a tree branch at his home February 7, 2009. He was airlifted to a hospital in Gainesville. Donald Albritton was using a chain saw to remove a large branch when one end of the branch struck him, knocking him off the ladder, according to a report in the Ocala Star Banner. Albritton was found lying face down, unable to move. His chain saw was still running beside him. Albritton’s wife told the officer that she saw her husband fall from the ladder, hitting his head against the tree trunk as he fell. The injured man was able to tell the officer that he felt “tingly” all over, but could not move or feel anything. When placed on the stretcher, however, he was able to move his arms.

Tree truck, cars collide
A tree-trimming truck lost control, flipped over and hit several cars at an intersection in Independence, Missouri, February 10, 2009. Emergency crews had to cut one driver out of the wreckage, according to a report from KMBC-TV Channel 9, Kansas City, Mo. The most serious injury was a broken leg.

Tree-trimming handyman electrocuted
A handyman was electrocuted February 13, 2009, after being hired to trim a tree in Huntington County, near Fort Wayne, Indiana. Michael Myers, 43, a self-employed handyman, was moving an aluminum extension ladder when it got caught in the tree limbs and hit a 7200 volt wire, according to a report on www.wayne.com out of Fort Wayne.

Experienced tree worker dies in tree
A man became trapped and died while helping a friend cut down a tree February 14, 2009, in Cicero, New York. Nick Glagola, 25, died after one of his safety ropes snapped causing him to slip and get caught in his harness. Part of the tree hit his upper body causing multiple critical injuries. Glagola was suspended about 15 feet in the air for about half an hour as rescue workers labored to get him down. Firefighters had to use several ladders to get him out of his harness and then out of the tree. Police say Glagola was using all the proper equipment, and he was wearing a helmet. Relatives told police Glagola was an experienced tree cutter who worked with tree cutting companies before.*

Trimmer dies in palm fronds
A tree trimmer crushed by a ring of palm fronds that slipped over him, pinning him to the roughly 70-foot tree, died February 18, 2009, in South Los Angeles, California, before firefighters could free him. The 23-year-old worker was in a harness 50-60 feet up the tree when a heavy, ring-shaped section of fronds came loose above him, according to a CityNews Service report on myFOXla.com. The man was unresponsive when firefighters arrived. It took more than 90 minutes to get him to the ground, where he was pronounced dead.

Trimmer rescued
Firefighters used aerial ladders to rescue a tree trimmer dangling from his safety harness about 60 feet up in a tree in Long Beach, California, February 18, 2009. The worker was uninjured.

Man crushed by falling tree
A man died on or about February 20, 2009, in Catawba County, North Carolina, after a tree fell on top of him. The man was clearing brush in a wooded area when the tree crushed him. Someone found the man February 22. The man’s wife reported him missing February 20, but it was unclear when the accident happened.*

Landscaper breaks leg in fall from bucket
A Medford, Massachusetts, landscape company employee was injured February 24, 2009, when he fell about 30 feet from the aerial lift bucket he was working in. Luciano Almeida, 21, was trimming tree branches for the Medford Housing Authority when he fell, according to The Medford Transcript. Almeida fractured a femur bone in one of his legs. He was taken to Mass. General Hospital for treatment. A witness speculated that Almeida struck an air conditioning unit that broke his fall before he struck the ground.

Recycling worker killed in wood chipper
An Edison, New Jersey, recycling company employee was killed February 24, 2009, after being caught in a wood chipper. The man became entangled in a conveyor belt attached to the wood chipper.*

Climber cut by chain saw dies
A Belchertown, Massachusetts, man was killed February 25, 2009, while cutting a tree in South Hadley.
Marc Sugrue was part of a tree care crew clearing land so a property owner could build a house. He was 40 feet up in a tree with a running chain saw when the branch he was standing on broke. Sugrue slipped and his chain saw cut his neck, killing him. It took several hours for fellow tree workers to lower him down.

### Florida tree worker killed dumping mulch

A man delivering mulch at a home for a Gainesville, Florida, tree service was killed February 28, 2009, when a boom on his truck touched a power line, causing a fire in the cab. The man’s identity was not immediately released, according to a report in The Gainesville Sun.

While dumping the mulch, the man got out of the vehicle and observed the mulch bunching up in the rear of the vehicle and that he needed to pull forward. To dump the mulch, he would have had the boom in the air, according to the report. When he pulled the truck forward, the boom hit the electrical lines, resulting in electrocution.

It was not clear if the worker was killed by the electrocution or the subsequent fire. The homeowners, a man and his wife, tried to pull the man away from the truck, but were unable to do so. The husband said he felt an electrical current near the truck. The homeowner reporter that the man yelled and then was on the ground outside the truck. Official speculated that he was killed trying to exit the truck.

### Tree trimmer electrocuted

Jose Cruz, 35, owner of a Lakeland, Florida, tree care company was electrocuted March 3, 2009, while working on a tree in Lakeland. An employee working about 30 feet up on a ladder had asked Cruz to pass him a long, metal hook. Cruz had climbed up the ladder and was attempting to pass the metal piece when he lost control. The hook hit a power line, electrocuting him, according to a report in The Ledger. Cruz fell to the ground and was taken to Lakeland Regional Medical Center, where he later died.

### Man falls, dies, trimming tree

Joel Barajas, 46, of Fort Worth, Texas, fell and died after trying to cut a tree branch near his home March 5, 2009, according to The Dallas Morning News. The local medical examiner’s office did not immediately list a cause of death.

### Tree falls on, pins man

A Vidor, Texas, man was in serious condition after a tree fell on top of him March 8, 2009. The man was using a tractor trailer to clear his land when a tree came down on him, pinning him. It fell across his chest, according to a KFDM-TV report. First responders had to lift the tree and cut him out. A helicopter transported him to a local hospital.

*Items submitted by Paul M. Mautz, CTSP.*

Submit your locally published accident reports to staruk@tcia.org.
It’s not easy being green, but the motivation was compelling. As unleaded gas reached $4.50-$5 last summer, I knew a drastic change was necessary.

My old Chevy truck has a 30-gallon gas tank, and had recently developed a roaring sound when I accelerated. It appears the sound is caused by a whirlpool forming in the tank as my gas, and profits, spew out the tail pipe.

I had a solution. My wife had recently bought a car made by Toyota called the Scion XB. It looks like a toaster with wheels and no plug. In fact, my wife had named the car The Brave Little Toaster after a popular children’s movie.

The most frequent comment from strangers was, “that’s so ugly I almost like it.”

It was the 35 mpg that I liked better each day. With a little coaxing, I was able to secure the car for some work, mainly consulting where tools and dirt were kept to a minimum.

I’ll admit it was difficult to show up to construction job sites where I was the only one without four-wheel drive, mud flaps and had at least two too few cylinders. Sometimes I would park a block away or behind some screening trees and walk to the meeting. I was a little afraid that Howie Long (Oakland Raiders DL and Chevy spokesman) might pull me over and make fun of me.

When my truck developed chronic problems (the mechanic said it was similar to massive heart failure), I began to use the Scion for occasional pruning jobs. I was careful to keep everything in containers and very clean, and left the car smelling like fresh cut pine, which my wife enjoys.

Then I got a job reducing the height of a large western red cedar. It had grown to about 25-feet tall, and the local regulations required nothing exceed fifteen feet or so. The cedar had been topped years ago, and so was really more of an enormous multi-trunked shrub than a tree. The project had to be completed quickly.

This was going to be a lot of bio-mass. I looked for other people with respectably sized pickups or chippers to haul the brush away, but none were available on such short notice. I took a long critical look at the Toaster. With the seats lowered, it might hold about one, maybe one-and-a-half cubic yards. I started packing.

I packed that poor car from floor to roof, from front to back windshield, and hung a few branches on the mirrors. There were several large long limbs which stretched the length of the car, hanging over the passenger seat into the front.

As I was driving the Toaster to the county landfill, I noticed my vision to the right was partially obstructed by some dangling branchlets. Reaching for my trusty Felco No. 2s, I snipped away at the offending vegetation – just in time to clear a line of sight to a county sheriff car parked on the side of the road. The officer was looking right at me. I think his eye twitched as he registered the situation.

I could almost see his mind working: “Driving under the influence of brush? Operating a vehicle while climbing?” I quickly looked straight ahead and kept driving – right at the speed limit, knuckles white on the wheel – and waiting to feel the blue lights beating on the back of my head.

Nothing happened.

I reached the landfill and unloaded with no more mishaps.

I can only guess that the sheriff either took pity on a fool, or couldn’t decide how to write up such a convoluted infraction.

Richard Hefley is an ISA Certified Arborist and owner of Gardens By Design in Nordland, Washington.

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