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I recently went to Georgia to visit TCIA members, meet with Jerri LaHaie of the Society of Municipal Arborists, visit with another exec and consultant, and to see my former staff in Macon.

It was a bit of a nostalgic trip covering some of the same roads my husband and I traveled during our honeymoon many years ago, enjoying one of the most beautiful areas of the country when spring comes, and seeing people who were key to my leadership development.

What hit me during this trip that intersected my current professional work with my past was that the tie through all of it is the people. It’s true that you can never go back, and often we don’t want to. For instance, I wouldn’t want to be 20 years younger unless I could take some of the good sense I’ve gathered with me.

What you can do is realize how important the journey is and the impact that you have on others and that they have on you. It amazed me what had made an impact on others that people shared with me in conversations – ways that I had positively impacted their lives that I had no idea had been important to them. I also learned how strong the bonds can be when one former staff member still felt comfortable enough to dissolve into tears and share some current life’s troubles.

It also was fascinating to see my former city of residence through the eyes of a dynamite young business owner and to learn what was growing and changing.Sharing the excitement together of a business that is soaring and the impact that his leadership is having on the public’s understanding of tree care was tremendously rewarding for me. I felt like I was still able to positively contribute to a place I used to live and care about through my current work.

So the message I want to leave with you this month is to always think really hard about the people around you and the interactions you have on any given day. You may never know – or you may only know much later – how important what you are saying or doing is to the people around you. The journey is very important and the people who work with you are sharing that ride every day. If you move on – or they do – you may not be together every day, but they and you will carry the experience of that trip always.

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Cynthia Mills, CAE
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**Petzl Vertex**

Petzl has raised the bar once again with this impressive redesign of their popular Eoto series. The Vertex's highly adjustable suspension system allows high or low positioning on the head while the unique chinstrap design can be moved forward or back and wider around the ears. The vertex features a polycarbonate shell designed to withstand significant impact from above or side (meeting EN397 and EN12492 standards) at temperatures down to -50°C (-58°F). A slot design with closure over the ears accepts most muff type ear protection equipment. The comfortable suspension system is adjustable by single thumbscrew and has an integrated chinstrap designed to decrease the risk of helmet loss in case of impact during a fall (break strength of more than 10kN, EN12492 Rostarenning helmet standard). Five ventilation holes on each side can be instantly closed with integrated sliding shutters. The Vertex Vent (shown) does not meet requirements of the EN397 standard regarding electrical insulation where as the Vertex Best (not shown) does. All models meet ANSI Z89.1 - 2003 Type 1 Class C and CE EN12492.

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Evergreen trees keep a landscape cool and green almost all year. Deciduous trees, having shed their leaves in autumn, remain barren when Old Man Winter takes over a landscape. But the evergreens light up an area with their broad or narrow leaves with a wide range of shades of green (even some blue!), making them a great addition to any landscape.

While broad leaf evergreens are suitable for USDA zones that do not have severe freezing or below-freezing temperatures, narrow leaf conifers are suitable for almost all climatic zones in the United States. Conifers offer unlimited choices with regard to stature (size), form, foliage texture or color.

It is easy to create a visually appealing landscape with conifers as they come in every conceivable shape – rounded (globoid), weeping, narrow upright (fastigi), broad upright, prostrate, spreading, irregular, pyramidal or mounding. Conifers also provide a broad spectrum of colors: green, yellow, blue, orange and purple. Bicolor needles with stripes, spots or patches are not uncommon in conifers. Some conifers have leaves that are feathery, and others have stiff needles. All except the junipers and yews (which produce berry-like fruits) bear cones in an assortment of colors and shapes.

Conifers are gymnosperms. They are different from the flowering, fruit-bearing, seed-producing angiosperms we see in most landscapes. Unlike angiosperms, in which the seeds are enclosed within a fruit, conifers produce naked seeds. They belong to the order, coniferales, the cone-bearing gymnosperms. Some of the popular conifers that are suitable for home landscaping include Abies spp (firs), Cedrus spp. (cedars), Thuja spp. (Arborvitae), Tsuga spp. (hemlocks), Pinus spp. (pines), Juniperus spp. (junipers), and Chamaecyparis spp., Picea spp. (spruces).

Selection of conifers
There is a conifer for every landscape, large or small. Whether one lives in a huge mansion with acres of land or in a condominium, conifers offer unlimited choices to design an entire landscape or to use selectively as ground covers, a fence or wall to create garden rooms, accent plants or all of the above. Some factors to be taken into consideration in selecting conifers are:

- Climatic and soil conditions;
- Size with reference to annual growth;
- Final height and spread;
- Growth habits.

Conifers have a worldwide distribution under subarctic and subtropical conditions. Conifers prefer Northern American climatic conditions to the hot, dry southern climatic conditions. However, they can adapt to grow in stressful environments, such as drought, high winds, sizzling heat and numbing subzero cold. Junipers and ponderosa pine growing east of the Rockies are exposed to all of the above. Cypress can grow in the swamps of Florida and Louisiana. For best growth, grow them...
in full sun to part shade, and rich, loamy, well-drained soil. Conifers, especially when young, generally prefer soil rich in organic matter and with good drainage. Mulch them heavily with shredded leaves, pine needles or compost. When well established, they can tolerate a certain amount of drought and neglect.

Conifers are perennial shrubs and trees that are capable of living for thousands of years (for example, the giant sequoias, *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, of California and bristle-cone pine, *Pinus longaeva*) under favorable growth conditions. Giant conifers may not be suitable for home landscaping. However, as mentioned earlier, conifers range in size from a few inches to hundreds of feet. In almost every genus, an arborist can select the right size suitable for the landscape.

**Conifers for containers and bonsai**

In almost every genus, there are smaller versions of giant-size conifers that would neatly fit into a container of choice.

*Chamaecyparis*, or false cypress, is an interesting genus, halfway between arborvitaes and junipers. Most of them are dwarfs, as short as one foot high to as tall as 8 feet high. In general, the *Obtusa* types look like arborvitaes and the *Pisifera* like junipers. The latter are often harder. The very smallest *Chamaecyparis obtusa* are the best plants to give structure to container gardens or bonsai, where detailed foliage is important. They will also grow in the open ground, but protect them from wind and winter sun. Most *Chamaecyparis* are shade tolerant.

Some of the *C. obtusa* cultivars that are good as bonsai and container plants include: *C. obtusa* ‘Bess’ (1 foot by 1 foot) with deep green foliage in fan like swirls; *C. obtusa* ‘Kamani Hiba’ (18 inches by 18 inches) with gold and green whorled foliage and irregular compressed growth; *C. obtusa* ‘Kosteri Nana’ (1 foot by 1 foot) with tiers of fans of thick foliage; the slow-growing conical *C. obtusa* ‘Meroke’; the globoid *C. obtusa* ‘Split Rock’ (2 foot by 2 foot) with blue green foliage, and; *C. obtusa* ‘Torulosa Nana’ (2 foot by 3 foot) with tight, coral-like leaves on a dense cushion.

Equally beautiful as container and bonsai plants are the following *Chamaecyparis Pisifera* cultivars: *C. Pisifera* ‘Boulevard’ (3 feet by 2 feet) with irregular growth and beautiful two-tone blue and silver foliage; the globular *C. Pisifera* ‘Minima’ (2 feet by 2 feet) with deep green curved foliage; the slow growing *C. Pisifera* ‘Squarrosa Nana’ (18 inches by 18 inches) with tight, gray-green foliage, and; the hardy, beautiful bun-like *C. Pisifera* ‘Tsukumo.’

*Abies* (fir) offers quite a few dwarfs with pleasing shapes (globular, upright and weeping) and green to blue foliage that would fit beautifully into small landscapes, as accent plants in containers or on the ground. Some of them prefer part shade and others prefer full sun. Here is a short list of these gorgeous little gems: *A. balsamea* ‘Nana’ (2 feet tall), globular; *Abies concolor* ‘Candicans’ (concolor fir), (5 feet tall), narrow, upright open habit with long silver-blue needles and upright blue/purple cones; *Abies concolor* ‘Select’ (White Fir), (5 feet tall), blue-white colored needles; *Abies koreana* ‘Silberloche’ (Korean Fir), (15 feet tall), attractive recurved needles with silvery white undersides.

*Juniperus*, or junipers, grow best in sunny locations in well-drained soil. The miniature junipers are slow-growing, hence suitable for containers, rock gardens or bonsai. *J. Chínensis* ‘Saybrook Gold’ (4 inch by 2 feet) with star like pattern of growth and golden foliage; the conical *J. Chínensis* ‘Cáptita’ (2 feet by 8 inches); creeping *J. Communis* ‘Corrigeon’ (2 inches by 3 feet), and; the blue rug *J. Horizontalis* ‘Wiltonii’ (1 inch by 4 feet) would look great when grown in a container or on a slope.

*Picea* (spruce): Spruces prefer sun, but can tolerate part shade. Dwarf spruces are good as container or accent plants. Globular black spruce *P. Mariana* ‘Nana’ with bluish foliage, globular *P. Mariana* ‘Select’ (3 feet by 3 feet) with pretty blue-green foliage, the tiny *P. Omorika* ‘Pimeko’ (6 inches by 6 inches) with blue and green needles, the light green conical Alberta spruce *P. Glauca* ‘Conica’ (3 feet by 2 feet), the blue spruce prostrate *P. Pungens* ‘Glaucia Procumbens’ (8 inches by 2 feet) are some of the dwarf spruces worth growing.

Pines are the most popular conifers with a wide range of sizes, shapes (globular, pyramidal, pendulous, weeping or prostrate) and needles. Some can live for thousands of years. The dwarf cultivars, *Mugho* ‘valley cushion’ (18 inches by 24 inches), *Mugho* ‘Mops’ (3 feet by 3 feet), *Nigra* ‘Hornibrookii’ (3 feet by 4 feet), the Japanese white pine with irregular growth, *Parviflora* ‘Róka’ (3 feet by 3 feet) would make excellent additions to any small landscape.

The *Tsuga* spp., popularly known as hemlocks, are shade-loving evergreens. Canadian hemlock cultivars, compact *globular* ‘Cappy’s choice’ (8 inches by 10 inches) with gold green needles, the spreading ‘Cole’s Prostrate’ (6 inches by 3 feet), the petite, slow-growing (12 inches in 10 years) columnar ‘Harmon’, and the irregular, upright miniature ‘Hussii’ (1 foot by 10 inches) with tiny foliage are good choices for containers.
Columnar conifers

Columnar conifers add height to a landscape. Use columnar conifers as accent plants or walls. Your choices are almost unlimited, depending on how tall the conifer should be in a landscape or the desire to make a bold statement.

The dwarf upright spruces (Picea spp.) like full sun, and grow to a height of 3 to 7 feet in 10 years. They are hardy to Zone 3. Picea pungens ‘Fastigiata’, (columnar blue spruce), Norway spruces Picea abies ‘Cupressina’ and Picea abies ‘Hillside Upright’ (dwarf, dark-dark green upright with superior form), the pyramidal purple spruce, Picea purpurea with beautiful violet-purple cones, and Picea abies ‘Berry Garden Fast’ with short, dark-green needles and brown buds are some of the dwarf spruces suitable as accent plants on the ground or in containers.

For alpine or rock gardens, use miniature columnar trees such as Juniperus communis ‘Succica Nana’, ‘Pencil Point’, or ‘Compressa’, Swiss stone pine ‘Glaucia’ (Pinus cembra ‘Glaucia’) and Douglas fir ‘Fastigiata’ (Pseudotsuga menziesii ‘Fastigiata’). These grow well in sun or for part-shade areas receiving 4 to 5 hours of sun.

The white pine Pinus sylvestris ‘Fastigiata’ (30 to 50 feet tall, blue-green needles); ‘Spaan’s Fastigiate’, a slower-growing fastigate form that is less susceptible to breaking up under snow and ice, and; 60 foot tall by 20 foot wide Pinus prostrate or spreading conifers are well-suited to grow on a slope or in the garden.
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Pendula’ (weeping Alaskan blue cedar, blue green foliage, zones 5-7) or ‘Green Arrow’ (narrow form), and Pinus sylvestris ‘Mitsch Weeping’.

The weeping blue Atlas cedar, Cedrus atlantica ‘Glauc Pendula’, with its drooping form adds drama to a landscape. Use as a large specimen or accent. Pendulous branchlets with icy-blue needles make this evergreen simply stunning. It is a slow grower with spreading branches 15 to 20 feet wide. It prefers sun. It is heat and cold hardy (Zones 3-9). Once established, it is drought tolerant.

Stake the weeping conifer and train to give the desired height. The drooping branches would grow downwards creating an attractive form.

Prostrate forms such as Pinus sylvestris ‘Albys’ and ‘Hillside Creeper’ are more dramatic when grown on a slope or fall in the garden. For shadier sites, the Douglas fir, Pseudotsuga menziesii ‘Graceful Grace’ (slim plant with weeping branches and light blue-green needles, Zone 4), and Tsuga canadensis ‘Pendula’ (Canadian hemlock, Zone 3-7) are suitable.

Seasonal changes

Seasonal changes are not uncommon in conifers. Some of them highlight one color over the other in various seasons. Yellow color in the foliage during winter may fade to green in summer. Pinus sylvestris ‘Aurea’ (golden Scotch pine), P. virginiana ‘Wates Golden’ (‘Wates Golden’ Jersey pine) and P. strobus ‘Winter Gold’ (‘Winter Gold’ white pine) have more yellow in their foliage during winter and green in their foliage during summer. P. glauca ‘Rainbows End’ (‘Rainbows End’ dwarf Alberta spruce) has green foliage in spring, and yellow in midsummer. Chamaecyparis thyoides ‘Heather Bun’ (‘Heather bun’ false-cypress), produces purple hues in winter and soft blue-green foliage, resembling heather, in summer.

Cones

Flowers in conifers are rather inconspicuous, however, the seed-bearing cones that come in different sizes, shapes and colors enhance the beauty of conifers. Female cones are showier than male cones. Picea abies ‘Acrocona’ (‘Acrocona’ Norway spruce) has purple-red cones on branch tips in spring. Abies concolor ‘Candicans’ has blue purple cones in spring.

New growths also show variable colors in different seasons – lighter shades of green, yellow or even red. For example, Norway spruce Picea abies ‘Cruenta’ and P. abies ‘Rubra Spica’ have red new growth in spring, and later green, in warmer temperatures.

Evergreen conifers are low maintenance plants. Some may show discoloration, winter burns, sagging, etc. during severe winter. When warm weather returns they will bounce back. Remove the dead branches. Give them support when young. Insects or microbial disease may attack some conifers, but one can easily take care of the problems using appropriate control measures.

One can shape small conifers to create exotic shapes (topiaries) or just enjoy their natural shapes. Huge columnar conifers can be cut to any desirable height. Considering the longevity and diversity of conifers, a little care would go a long way in creating a whimsical landscape.

Lakshmi Sridharan is a scientist with a Ph.D. in molecular biology, botany and microbiology. She is author of A Practical Guide to Growing Roses Successfully, and can be reached via www.lakshmi-sridharan.com.
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Today’s tree care specialists use technology such as PDA/personal digital assistant and GPS/global position system units to track locations, record data and map the field. However, one wrong move means loss of information and the device itself. Enter the OtterBox Armor 1900 drop-proof, waterproof, dustproof case from Otter Products. The OtterBox Armor 1900 features a glass-reinforced polycarbonate shell, flexible screen membrane for user interaction, protective flip-up screen cover, rubber overmolding for optimum grip and impact absorption, easy-open/secure-close latches, infrared (IR) usability, access to SD/secure digital and CF/compact flash card slots, and adjustable neoprene hand strap. Optional POD (portable on demand) attachments allow addition of GPS units, and accessories such as the neck lanyard and belt clip permit easy carrying. Rugged field computers range from $1,000 to $5,000, which doesn’t even include GPS capabilities. With the Armor 1900, users can ruggedize traditional units for thousands less. Just drop it in and relax. Contact Otter Products, LLC at 1-888-695-8820 or via www.otterbox.com.

Growth Products 18-3-6 with natural L-amino acids

Growth Products new 18-3-6 combines its best selling fertilizer with natural L-amino acids, providing an important hybrid of organic based and synthetic fertilizers. This combination has both the benefits of slow release nitrogen from Growth Products’ Nitro-30, which enhances the foliar uptake of all nutrients, and the chelating and soil conditioning properties of natural L-amino acids. 18-3-6’s organic component contains 17 amino acids and a broad spectrum of vital complex organic nutrients that aid in chelation, nutrient uptake and healthy turf green-up, with a noticeable increase in turf quality. Recommended for all turf grass applications, including bentgrass, rye, fescue and warm season grass. 18-3-6 with L-amino acids can be safely used over newly seeded areas. 18-3-6 is ideal for both foliar spray on all plant materials or used for soil injection of trees and shrubs. 18-3-6 is compatible with herbicides, fungicides and insecticides. Growth Products, Ltd. provides a broad range of liquid fertilizers, chelated micronutrients, natural organics and patented biological fungicides to all segments of the green industry. Contact Growth Products at 1-800-648-7626 or via www.growthproducts.com.

New England Ropes Therma-Shield Prussik

New England Ropes new Therma-Shield Prussik utilizes New England Ropes HRC, the “Heat Resistant Cover” that is a blend of braided Technora and Spun Nomex. This unique cover material combines abrasion resistance with exceptional resistance to surface melting. This new prussik line comes standard with a braided core of 100 percent Vectran, a liquid crystal polymer that has very high strength, a high melting point and ultra low stretch. The product has a superb hand, is supple out of the box and maintains this suppleness throughout its useful life, and provides maximum grip. Therma-Shield Prussik is available in 8mm diameter only and has a tensile strength of 6,100 pounds. It can be purchased pre-tied or by the foot through leading tree care suppliers. Making ropes for more than 38 years, New England Ropes pioneered the 16-strand climbing category with the introduction of industry-standard Braided Safety Blue and Hi-Vee. Contact New England Ropes at (508) 730-4524 or via www.neropes.com.

RedMax’s powerful G5000 chain saw

RedMax’s G5000 chain saw is powered by a durable 49.3 cc (3.0 cu. in.), 3.6 hp engine, and is offered with a 16-, 18- or 20-inch bar for serious, heavy duty cutting. The G5000’s engine is equipped with RedMax’s exclusive, dust-free intake, which keeps sawdust and other dirt out of the engine, increasing reliability. The engine’s closed transfer port results in increased power and stable RPMs, leading to higher productivity. The crank case is made of strong, lightweight aluminum alloy, and the spark is delivered through a CDI ignition (Capacitive Discharge Ignition). The chain tensioner for this rugged 11 pound saw is on the side for easy adjustment and worry-free operation. The G5000 carries RedMax’s one year commercial warranty. Contact RedMax, Komatsu Zenoah America Inc. at 1-800-291-8251 or via www.redmax.com.

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Fox Paws remote shut-off protects workers

A new product developed by Ted Lacy of Red Fox Enterprises is designed to prevent injuries or death caused by workers being caught in machinery. Fox Paws, a small wireless device worn on a belt or badge clip by one or more workers, cuts all power to a machine with one touch of the button. Fox Paws is easily adaptable to almost any piece of machinery whether it’s electrically powered or requires diesel or gasoline as a fuel source. Up to four separate transmitters are available with each unit so that multiple workers can have easy access to the shut-off device. Because it was designed for farmers and others working alone in remote areas, one of the four models of Fox Paws operates a GPS tracking device, which uses orbiting satellites to establish coordinates on the ground. The Fox Paws with Fox Tracker will not only shut down the machine, but will also automatically alert a call center operator that there is a problem at that location. The call center will then notify the proper personnel. “This product will save lives,” says Lacy. “We made extensive studies of industrial accidents in the U.S. and have found that a Fox Paws unit would have prevented deaths on machinery from small concrete mixers or wood chippers, all the way to large refuse compactors or industrial bailers.” Fox Paws come in four different models: 100, 200, 300 (with GPS option) and 400, each varying for use on different types of equipment and power sources. Contact Red Fox Enterprises at 1-877-733-3693, (208) 231-5625 or via www.redfoxenterprises.com.

Vermeer HG6000TX grinder adds track undercarriage

Vermeer Manufacturing Company’s new HG6000TX horizontal grinder has a track undercarriage, with 20-inch or 24-inch double grouser track pads, that uses sealed track rollers and compressed coil springs to provide increased traction in unstable ground conditions. The boxed track frame is set at a 2-degree tilt to provide increased ground clearance at the front of the infeed, helping this unit move around without additional support equipment. The anvil design allows convenient removal for maintenance and/or replacement from ground level, enabling all anvil work to be performed outside of the machine. For easy maintenance, the entire millbox lid opens from the top of the machine, allowing the operator to quickly remove or change a screen. A 48-inch “V-cleat” single discharge belt provides a smooth transition of material flow from the machine to loadout, allowing for increased discharge volume. The Duplex Drum System offers the industry’s latest technology in hammer design and replacement procedures. A standard microprocessor-controlled PT Tech hydraulic PTO handles transfer of power and torque from the engine to the mill. The patented SmartGrind system monitors engine RPMs and adjusts the feed rate to maximize performance. The auto-reverse system will maintain a constant feed rate and reverse the feed system only when engine RPMs drop below efficient operating range. The operator can also reverse the feed roller independent of the feed table to reposition irregular material. The wireless remote allows adjustments and monitoring without climbing in or out of the cab. Contact Vermeer via www.vermeer.com.

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Cutting Edge News

Local firms emulate Giving Tree for Arbor Day

In Forest Park, Ohio, TCIA members Back Tree Service, Asplundh Tree Service and Rayco Manufacturing chipped in on a volunteer effort to clear trees in preparation for April 29 Arbor Day ceremonies.

Back Tree, Asplundh, Rayco and Wessling Tree Service donated labor and equipment to assist the Hamilton County Park District, Cinergy Electric and the City of Forest Park remove undesirable trees and chip brush at Winton Woods, a Hamilton County Park District park. This volunteer work occurred on March 3 at the site of the 2005 Arbor Day ceremony.

“These companies are truly what community service and giving is all about,” said Tim Boehmer, Hamilton County Park District arborist, “It was a good feeling to be around those who care about trees and the environment. The teamwork of all involved was superb.”

Volunteers from General Electric, Hamilton County Park District and the City of Forest Park were going to replant the area with trees and plants that grow low at maturity in the area. The plants were being chosen for both their aesthetic beauty and contributions to the habitat. “Arbor Day 2005 got a great head start thanks to these companies,” said Boehmer.

Summit launches ArborMAX insurance program

Summit Insurance Services, Inc. has launched a new insurance program designed specifically for tree and landscape contractors—ArborMAX. Available since March 1, 2005, the program is underwritten by Alea North America Insurance Company, rated “A-” by A.M. Best and S&P.

ArborMAX offers general liability, property, inland marine, automobile and umbrella coverage along with value-added services. It also provides a wide range of coverages tailored to meet the specific needs of the tree and landscape industries, such as:

- Pesticide & herbicide applicator coverage
- Workmanship error (including consulting) coverage
- Tools & equipment coverage
- Per project & per location coverage
- Coverage for additional insureds

ArborMAX provides administration, loss control and claim service. Ward North America will administer claim service. A Summit loss control representative will also help clients evaluate potential business risks and develop workplace strategies to control these risks. ArborMAX is committed to the tree and landscape industry and will focus on delivering the services, coverages, and competitiveness that this class of business requires.

ArborMAX is currently available in the states of CA, CT, FL, MI, NJ, NY and PA, and has plans to expand. The minimum premium requirement is $5,000, with many payment options available. ArborMAX will be distributed exclusively through Summit appointed “Green Industry” specialists. For further information, contact Mike Rook at Summit Insurance Services, Inc. at 1-800-409-0226 or mrook@summitins.net.

RedMax honors Michigan sales rep. Mark LaDouce

RedMax, Komatsu Zenoah America Inc. recently honored Mark LaDouce of Power Equipment Distributors for outstanding sales performance. RedMax regional sales manager Dusty Patterson presented LaDouce with a Taghauer watch as a symbol of the company’s appreciation.

LaDouce is with Power Equipment
Distributors, headquartered in Richmond, Mich., distributor of RedMax outdoor power equipment in Michigan, Ohio, northern Indiana, western Pennsylvania and eastern Wisconsin.

Oregon donates equipment for quake recovery

Oregon Cutting Systems Group of Blount Inc. joined forces with other members of the Japan Forestry Machinery Association and Japan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to provide much needed equipment to earthquake-stricken Sumatra, Indonesia.

The donation of replacement saw chains manufactured at the Portland, Ore., plant will be shipped from the company’s Yokohama, Japan, distribution center. These chains will be combined with chain saws donated by Japanese chain saw manufacturers.

The saws will be used in the clean-up of downed trees and damaged wood structures. The heavy use that these saws is expected to receive will be complicated by the debris on the downed trees and damaged structures, resulting in greater wear than would occur during normal use. The Oregon replacement chains will help speed the clean-up.

The chains provided were selected to match the brands and models of the donated chain saws. Providing chains to match specific saws was not an obstacle as Oregon manufactures original-equipment chain used by most chain saw brands. The company also manufactures replacement Oregon brand guide bars to fit nearly every model of chain saw.

ArborSystems hires sales and marketing manager

Brent Doolittle has joined the ArborSystems team as sales and marketing manager. Doolittle will manage the company’s sales and marketing efforts with a focus on expanding markets in the western United States. ArborSystems primary product line is the Wedgite Direct-Inject Tree Treatment System. This includes the innovative Wedgite trunk injection unit plus a wide line of Direct-Inject chemicals.

Doolittle studied business with an emphasis on marketing at George Fox University in Newberg, Ore., and received his BA in psychology from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Va. Prior to joining ArborSystems, he worked in business development at SAIC, a high-tech engineering firm focused on defense contracting.
Events & Seminars

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

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

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

May 3, 2005
ISA Cert. Arborist, Util. Spec., Tree Work Municipal exams
Oakland Community College, Auburn Hills, MI
Contact: (571) 337-4999; mtpfa@acd.net or (217) 355-9411; cert@ise-arbor.com;
www.isa-arbor.com

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

May 11, 2005
ISA Cert. Exam & NJ Arborists/ISA Gen. Member Mtg
Northeastern Associates, West Paterson, NJ
Contact: Matt Simons (609) 635-6021;
www.NJArboristsISA.com

May 13-17, 2005
Level 1 Climbing & Level 1 Precision Felling modules
ArborMaster Training, Inc., Madison, WI
Contact: Gary Lovallo 1-888-873-3034

May 21-27, 2005
Level 1 Climbing & Level 1 Precision Felling modules
ArborMaster Training, Inc., Madison, WI
Contact: Gary Lovallo 1-888-873-3034

May 25, 2005
IPI for Landscape Professionals
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK
Contact Mike Schnelle at (405) 744-7361;
mike.schnelle@okstate.edu

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

June 7-9, 2005
National Lawn & Garden Show
Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, IL
Contact: www.nlgshow.com

June 8-11, 2005
Snow & Ice Symposium/Snow & Ice Mgt Assoc.
Louisville, KY
Contact: (814) 337-4999

June 10, 2005
Tree ID Workshop, Mich. Forestry & Parks Assoc.
Kellogg Biological Station, (near Gull Lake), MI
Contact: mtpfa@acd.net or call (571) 337-4999

June 11, 2005
NJ Tree Climbing Competition
Cadawalder Park, Trenton, NJ
Contact: Steve Chisholm Sr. (732) 928-5747

June 11th
Clbing Competition
Pre-Climbing Competition Workshop June 10, 2005
Contact: Steve Chisholm Sr. (732) 928-5747

June 14-15, 2005
American Association of Botanical Gardens & Arboreta 2005 Annual Conference
The Fairmont Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
Contact: Sharon Malgire (302) 655-7100, ext. 18;
www.aabga.org

June 17-23, 2005
Plant Biology Workshop
Frogmore, SC
Contact: (202) 326-6321; www.bomaconvention.org

June 20-26, 2005
Office Building Show, Bldg Owners Mgrs Assoc. Int.
Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA
Pre-conference seminars June 23-26

June 24-26, 2005
North Amer. Commercial Real Estate Congress & The Office Building Show, Bldg Owners Mgrs Assoc. Int.
Pre-conference seminars June 23-26
Contact: Sharon Malgire (302) 655-7100, ext. 18;
www.aabga.org

June 27-29, 2005
American Society of Landscape Architects
The Westin Innisbrook Golf Resort, Tampa, FL
Contact: floridaisa@comcast.net; floridaisa.org;
The Westin Innisbrook Golf Resort, Tampa, FL
Along with TreesFlorida 2005 meeting

June 30-July 7, 2005
American Association of Botanical Gardens & Arboreta 2005 Annual Conference
The Fairmont Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
Contact: Sharon Malgire (302) 655-7100, ext. 18;
www.aabga.org

July 15, 2005
2005 Woody Plant Conference
Scott Arboretum, Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, PA
Contact: (610) 388-1000 x 507;
www.longwoodgardens.org

For the most up to date calendar information, visit www.treecareindustry.org/bright/bright More almanac online!
9 ft utility body. bucket
2 man end-hung basket, joystick controls, 16 ft steel flatbed.

3 hyd exts, remote ctrls, 20½ ft steel flatbed. $62,500.

97 GMC TOPKICK: CAT 3208, 210 hp, 5 speed + 2 speed rear, 33,000 lb GVW, with 6 TON IMT 725 crane, picks 2,950 lb at 25 ft max reach, 17 ft steel flat / dump. $16,900.

9 ft utility body. 42 ft work ht, joystick ctrls, dual joystick controls, articulating boom
90 ft hook ht, cap alert / shut-down, roofers pkg, 20½ ft steel flatbed. $79,500.

2000 FORD F550 SUPERDUTY: ENET075, 7.3L diesel, 460 hp, 6 speed, A/C, 42 ft work ht, John Deere powerтор, 20 ft hose & reel, spray bar, PTO driven fill pump. $29,500.

90 WHITE / GMC GW64: CAT 3406C, 355 hp, 8 speed +lo, +lo/lo, 55,000 lb GVW, with 4 ton Effer 165-4S knuckleboom, 18 ft flatbed / dump. $32,500.

95 MACK RD690S: 300 hp, 7 spd, A/C, 74,000 lb GVW, with 12 TON HIAB 250-3 crane. picks 2,000 lb at 51 ft max reach, 3 hyd exts, remote ctrls, 20½ ft steel flatbed. $74,500.

97 MACK RD690S: 300 hp, 7 spd, A/C, 74,000 lb GVW, with 6½ tons HIAB 175 crane, picks 2,510 lb at 38½ ft max reach, 4 hyd exts, remote ctrls, 22½ ft steel flatbed. $62,500.

97 GMC TOPKICK: CAT 3208, 210 hp, 5 speed + 2 speed rear, 33,000 lb GVW, with 6 TON IMT 725 crane, picks 2,950 lb at 25 ft max reach, 17 ft steel flat / dump. $16,900.

99 VOLVO FE42: CAT 3116, 215 hp, 6 spd, 33,000 lb GVW, with 1990 HIAB 140 crane, 6½ ton capacity, picks 1,870 lb at 34½ ft max reach, remote ctrls, 18 ft steel flatbed / dump. $32,900.

98 INTERNATIONAL 4700 4x4: DT466, 190 hp, Allison 6 spd auto, 25,000 lb GVW, with 42 ft work ht, 20 ft hose & reel, spray bar, PTO driven fill pump. $29,500.

99 FORD F800: Cummins 215 hp, 6 spd, 33,000 lb GVW, with 67 ft ALTEC AM900 BUCKET. 2 man end-hung basket, joystick ctrls, 16 ft steel flatbed. $64,500.

99 FORD F800: Cummins 215 hp, 6 spd, 33,000 lb GVW, with 67 ft ALTEC AM900 BUCKET. 2 man end-hung basket, joystick ctrls, 16 ft steel flatbed. $64,500.

2000 INT 4900 6X6: CAT 3126, 275 hp, 8 speed +lo, +lo/lo, 46,000 lb GVW, with 33,000 lb GVW, with 20 ft STEEL FLAT / DUMP. $32,500.

2000 FORD F850 SUPERDUTY: 235 hp Turbodiesel, automatic, 47,700 lb GVW, with 86 REINCO HG30GX-239T Hydroseeder, 3,000 gal tank, John Deere power, 200 ft hose & reel, spray bar, PTO driven fill pump. $29,500.

98 FORD F900: 7.8L diesel, 13 spd, 48,000 lb GVW, with 12½ ton JLG 1250BT crane, 77 ft hook ht, 20 ft steel flatbed. $34,500.

97 FORD F800: 429 gas engine, 5 spd + 2 speed rear, 31,000 lb GVW, with 66 ft ALTEC AM900 bucket, joystick controls, 14 ft steel flatbed. $29,500.
July 18-21, 2005
TCIA Legislative Conference
Washington D.C.
Contact: Mark Garvin 1-800-733-2622; Ext. 108
garvin@treecareindustry.org or www.tcia.org

July 25-28, 2005
Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show
Fort Washington Expo Center
Fort Washington, PA
Contact: 1-800-898-3411; www.pantshow.com

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

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

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

September 8-10, 2005
Lake States Logging Congress
Marquette, MI
Contact: (715) 282-5828; www.timberpa.com

September 12, 2005 (week of)
Mich. Forestry & Parks Assoc Summer Conference, &
ISA Cert. Arborist, Util. Spec, Tree Work, Municipal exams
Location TBA
Contact: mfpa@acd.net or call (571) 337-4999

September 25-28, 2005
ISA Pacific Northwest Annual Conference
Victoria, BC
Contact: ISA (503) 874-8263, or Brian Fisher (250) 755-4722; brian.fisher@bchydro.com

October 14-16, 2005
International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo
Louisville, KY
Contact: 1-800-558-8767 or (812) 949-9200; expo.mow.org

October 21-22, 2005
Plant Biology Workshop
Frogmore, SC
Contact: Don Marx 1-888-290-2640; dmarx@plantthelathcare.com

October 21-22, 2005
NJ Shade Tree Fed. 80th Annual Meeting
Hilton Philadelphia/Cherry Hill, Cherry Hills, NJ
Contact: Bill Porter (732) 246-3210; njshadetreefederation@worldnet.att.net

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

December 7, 2005
ISA Cert. Exam & General Membership Meeting
Frelinghysen Arboretum, Morristown, NJ
Contact: Matt Simons (609) 625-6021; www.NJArboristsISA.com

Send your event information to:
Tree Care Industry,
3 Perimeter Road Unit 1,
Manchester, NH 03103
or staruk@treecareindustry.org

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Join Us For
The World's Largest
Tree Care Industry
Trade Show!

Hosted by the Tree Care Industry Association
Tree care industry enthusiasts who attended the second annual EXPO and TCI EXPO Spring, held in Encinitas, Calif., March 10-12 were treated to a great indoor show followed by a demonstration area at Queen Mary Events Park. From aerial lifts and cranes to fertilizers to see and test the latest wares.

“I’m a huge advocate,” Brian Bishop, owner of Bishop’s Tree Service in Milwaukee, Wisc. “As a result of going to that show, his business has invested in about $350,000 worth of equipment in a three-year period. He is no longer undercutting Bishop or giving tree care providers a black eye on an EXPO since. He knows the value.”

And it wasn’t only attendees raving about EXPO Spring. “We had a lot of people in the Southwest to come out and see what is going on in the West Coast,” said Mike Gann, Altec Industries Inc. “We think that TCI should continue to invest in the West Coast show.”

“We were excited with the response,” says Cynthia Mills, TCIA president and CEO. “We were particularly liked the Demo Day. “People who came to Demo Day were looking at what we had to offer.”

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who attended the second annual TCI EXPO Spring in Long Beach, said, to a great indoor show followed by a superb Outdoor Demo Day at aerial lifts and cranes to fertilizers and software, buyers had a chance

Anne Baldwin, with Baldwin Tree Care Inc. of El Cajon, Calif., uses a Future Forestry Products fetching arch to move a log across the Exposition ground.

Jill Balwin, with Balwin Tree Care Inc. of El Cajon, Calif., uses a Future Forestry Products fetching arch to move a log across the Exposition ground.

Rich Boardman of Terex Utilities talks with a potential customer on the show floor. More than 900 tree care industry attendees checked out the equipment and services on display.

Woodmizer portable sawmills at the Outdoor Demo Day. Directly above, at the top of the demonstration area at Queen Mary Events Park.

At left, an employee from Bee Tee Equipment in Livermore, Calif., a Husqvarna dealer, demonstrates Husqvarna chain saws during the Outdoor Product Demo Day in Queen Mary Events Park.
Managing **Contracts** Improves Risk Management

By Dennis Gardner

You have just sent a crew of employees to take down several large trees on the edge of a lot adjacent to the parking lot of a retail shopping center. XYZ Stores instructs its employees to park at the edge of this lot. During removal of a large tree, the ropes break and the tree falls onto several vehicles parked in the parking lot. Are you covered?

Contracts are an integral element of doing business, particularly in a complex industry such as tree care. Regardless of whether a firm is removing dead trees for a homeowner, landscaping an office building or trimming back branches for a utility, the importance of contracts cannot be overemphasized. Well-written contracts clarify agreements, improve project outcomes and create good working relationships between the contracting parties.

Generally speaking, an organization may be legally responsible for its people’s actions – or inaction – that directly lead to injury, or property or economic damage. However, common state and federal laws generally permit parties to a business agreement to make contractual arrangements that deal with the financial burden of losses.

Unfortunately, contracts are often an under-addressed or even an overlooked step in the risk-management process. In this article, we will focus primarily on how contracts can be used to transfer risk.

**Understanding the contract**

A contract, by definition, is a legally enforceable promise between two or more parties which creates legally enforceable obligations. These agreements often require one of the parties to pay or indemnify the other party for a loss it suffers in fulfilling the terms and conditions of the contract. For a contract to be enforceable, there must be an offer, an acceptance and valid consideration – something of value exchanged for a promise of performance.

Since a contract forms the framework of the agreement between the parties and establishes which party has assumed or negated a particular risk, you should not enter into an agreement without the advice of an attorney familiar with contract law.

Contracts have important legal and insurance consequences that impact your business. They may be written or oral. Written agreements, when properly drafted, clearly delineate what each party agrees to do and under what circumstances. Unwritten or handshake agreements, while legally enforceable, create misunderstandings because they often are not specific and there is nothing written to which the parties can refer. Agreements and understandings negotiated in good faith are sometimes misinterpreted at a later date, particularly after a loss has occurred, so oral agreements may not be the best approach to managing risk.

In drafting a contract, you should consider three key points:

- **The scope of the agreement.** Contracts that do not address all of the terms and conditions of the agreement may cause unintended and undesired outcomes.
- **The legal enforceability of the contract.** Contracts that violate public policy or statute are unenforceable.
- **The ability of the parties to manage risk.**

**Key elements of a contract**

If you decide to use a contract to determine indemnification, your contract should address the following elements before you begin doing the work. At minimum, a contract should specify:

- **Who the parties are,** including names and addresses.
- **The work being done.** The description of the job should be specific, particularly if some of the work is being done off-site. You’ll also need to address how you’ll handle change orders, completed operations and defective work claims.
All the terms and conditions of the agreement. Agreements that are incomplete, or those not executed in a timely manner, often lead to problems. Be sure to include every aspect of the job, even if it seems inconsequential.

Choice of law. Generally, parties should specify which state’s law applies to their contract. In the event of a claim, this will help a court interpret the agreement consistent with the intent of the parties. You should also understand that even with this agreement, courts will use their good judgment in attempting to arrive at an equitable resolution.

Incorporation by reference problems. The contract should include all of the agreements as part of the document. Generally, courts look unfavorably upon agreements that attempt to expand a party’s liability by referencing another document. If you carefully consider and address this issue beforehand, you’re more likely to persuade the court to interpret the agreement in a way that is consistent with your intent.

Workers’ Compensation. Indemnification (loss compensation) agreements may cause an employer to lose its protection from employee lawsuits under the exclusive remedy laws found in Worker’s Compensation. This would make it easier for an injured employee to bring a lawsuit against an employer.

Attorney’s fees. When a party is entitled to compensation for loss and has sued to enforce its rights, it may be entitled to recover attorney’s fees incurred in the litigation. These fees may be significant.

The actual indemnification agreement.

Insurance requirements, if appropriate.

Managing risk through indemnity agreements

With an indemnity agreement, one party to the contract, the indemnitor, agrees to pay another, the indemnitee, if the latter suffers a loss. These clauses are widely used in arborist and construction contracts to identify who must pay and how much.

The three types of hold-harmless clauses used in contracts are broad form, intermediate form and limited form.

Broad Form – This form transfers the entire risk of loss from one specified party to another, regardless of who is at fault. This might be used, for example, when a commercial property manager gives an arborist the entire contract to plant and care for the trees in an office park. In such a case the arborist using the broad form would indemnify the property manager for any type of loss arising out of the project whether caused by the arborist, a third party, or even the property manager.

Intermediate Form – With this agreement one party, the indemnitor, assumes all liability, except for the actions where the other party is solely at fault. Under this form, the indemnitor could be liable for up to 100 percent of the claim, even if he is only 10 percent at fault. An intermediate form might be used when the arborist subcontracts part of the work and agrees to be responsible for damages partially caused by the negligence of the subcontractor.

Limited Form – The limited form is a restatement of the common-law principle that one is liable for the consequences of his or her actions that lead to injury or damage. This is the same standard of conduct we are held to in our everyday activities. For instance, if you are driving a car and your negligence causes an accident in which others are injured, you are responsible for compensating the injured parties.

How courts view indemnification clauses

Typically, courts apply the general principles of contract law in interpreting agreements presented to them. They will try...
today, 42 states have statutes that prohibit broad form indemnification (where the all the risk is clearly on one side, regardless of cause), and many of these states also limit intermediate form language. Because they excuse one party from responsibility for negligent acts or omissions, both forms are sometimes considered unfair to at least one of the parties or inconsistent with good public policy. However, some states will allow these agreements if they are expressed in clear and unequivocal terms. Your lawyer will no doubt advise you to consider state statutes when negotiating your contracts. If you don't, you may have no indemnity protection in the event of a loss. It is also important to be cautious regarding differences in state law. Contractors involved in multi-state operations, should be aware of state statute differences and properly address them in their contracts. What is enforceable in one state may be unenforceable in another.

Managing risk through insurance agreements

If one party to the contract has an obligation to pay without the means to fulfill that obligation, there could be serious consequences. The indemnitee to the agreement often avoids the issue by requiring the indemnitee to purchasing liability insurance to cover the indemnification requirement. You should understand what is covered in your liability insurance policies and those of the other parties. Generally, contractual provisions obligating one party to obtain insurance for the other do not violate anti-indemnity statutes. If the firm you’re doing business with is using an insurance company, there are important issues to consider, including:

- Insurance Requirements – All contractors should be required to maintain insurance for workers’ compensation, general liability and commercial automobile. The contract should also specifically state
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the required limits. There is no hard and fast rule as to the "right" limits since the amount of coverage each business needs depends on many specific factors. You should also consider whether the coverage is being offered on an occurrence or claims-made basis or as part of a self-insured-retention (SIR) program. It could make a difference. And finally, it’s wise to check the insurance carrier’s claims-paying ability from a rating agency like A.M. Best Company. It is considered prudent to select an insurance company with a Best’s rating of A or higher. An insurance agent can help with this.

- Named Insured – Regardless of your status, arborists should resist all requests to add named insured coverage onto the policy. Named insured coverage could trigger coverage for events neither intended nor contemplated. There are more effective ways to handle these requests.

- Additional Named Insured – When state statutes invalidate indemnity provisions, the agreement to name the indemnitee as an additional insured on the indemnitor’s insurance policy can effectively reallocate the cost of risk. This coverage grant can address the indemnitee’s coverage needs for a specific job. However, the language needs to be precise.

- Primary Insurance – A primary insurance clause can ensure that one policy will be primary to any other insurance. Typically, the party providing the primary insurance should have its insurer endorse its policy accordingly.

- Severability of Interest/Cross Liability Clause – This severability of interest endorsement ensures that claims by one insured against another are treated as if separate policies had been issued to each insured. This could be an issue when more than one additional insured is being defended under a single policy of insurance.

- Indemnification and Hold Harmless – These agreements generally reflect a conscious risk assumption by one party, and a risk transfer by the other.

- Waiver of Subrogation – In all cases, the right of subrogation may be waived prior to the occurrence or accident. This could be a significant form of protection for both parties.

- Cancellation Provisions – All insurance contracts contain cancellation provisions. While it is often difficult to keep track of the other party’s insurance policy, you need to be certain that the information provided to you is accurate and current.

- Certificates of Insurance (COI) – COI are intended to be evidence of insurance, not an insurance contract. The document should include relevant information, such as the named insured, policy number, policy terms, limit and coverage by line of business. Watch for nonstandard forms and wording.

Additionally, depending on circumstances, it may be desirable to consider a separate policy to provide Owner’s and Contractor’s Protective (OCP), Railroad Protective or Joint Venture coverage. With careful planning, you can create a contract that effectively manages risk while improving project performance, reducing costs and establishing a strong working relationship among all the parties involved. Your attorney, an independent insurance agent and an insurance carrier can help you develop a program that responds to your specific insurance and risk management needs.

Dennis Gardner is a loss control consultant for The Hartford.

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Get your gears in motion for safety...
Those of you in the commercial tree care industry are the ones who recognize the importance of integrated pest management (IPM) and plant health care (PHC) and how your companies are going to be changing over the next few years to adapt to this technology, even though it has been around for quite some time.

IPM started around the early 1970s, but mostly on the “agriculture” side. IPM didn’t make a big impact in the landscape and tree care industries until recently. People today are not only concerned about what they are eating, but also various legal and environmental issues regarding pesticides.

IPM is the more socially acceptable and environmentally sound practice today. People weren’t so interested in it 10 years ago, but now regulations are coming down the line and once you start regulating something then all of a sudden everybody gets interested because you are going to get fined if you don’t follow the rules. All over the country, waterways – whether they are streams, creeks or lakes – are being tested for pesticides. When certain amounts of pesticides turn up, mitigating action is required to reduce the pesticide. Many times, that mitigating action is the elimination of certain pesticides.

Your customers may tell you that they don’t really want to know what you are doing, that they just want you to take care of the problems and make their property look good. That puts you up against a wall, in a way, because integrated pest management actually takes a bit longer to really show its success than just coming in and spraying. However, moving into an IPM program shows your company is progressive, not stuck in the old “spray and pray” syndrome. Your customers want to see people coming in with their handheld computers and they want to know that the company that they have hired is technologically astute. Your clients are astute enough to go with a professional company and they want to see professionalism. The more you can do to show that you are technological-
ly advanced and professional the better.

People want to know you are doing something to protect their trees. When they see somebody with a spray tank out, they think they are getting something for their money as opposed to you going there and looking at the tree and telling them that it doesn’t look bad and you will be back in a couple of weeks. On the other hand, more and more companies, homeowner associations and individuals are looking for something that is safe around their pets and children.

IPM isn’t just spray, go away and then come back and spray again in two weeks. It is something that you really have to think about and figure out what you can do to minimize spray applications. What long-term things can you do – whether it is fertilization, pruning or plant selection – to actually mitigate and minimize when and what you are going to have to spray?

To move to an IPM program, you will need to increase training. With IPM your staff has to buy into it, and that means you have to buy into it. The philosophy of your company has to be expressed from the top down. The president or the owner of the company has to take the attitude that they are going to adopt IPM and then talk your staff through training and adopting the philosophy. Once you and your staff agree, then you have to get your customers to buy into it. Think big and think differently.

One challenge with moving toward IPM is that it likely will involve more site visits. I know owners don’t like call-backs, because a call-back is seen as time lost. More visits will be needed because you are going to be monitoring more and looking at what is going on in the whole site as opposed to just telling your technician that it is time to spray. With IPM, you have to figure out what is going on and talk about the situation and decide what will be sprayed and when. There is a lot more customer hand-holding because people are very risk averse. You have to convince them to hang in there and trust you.

If you are thinking about releasing bio-logicals for pest reduction, you need to explain what will happen. You need to explain to customers that the results are not instant; it isn’t like the spray where you can see the results in a matter of days. Have a back-up plan also because they are going to say that they waited three weeks and the problem is still there. You need to be able to acknowledge that they have been patient and step in and take care of the situation another way.

I don’t want to tell you that moving to an IPM program is easy; there is a lot of education involved. Supervisors will be the point person when people have questions. Everybody needs to be able to interact. You need to educate yourself and your staff needs to be trained, too. They need to understand why this is important. If you explain why these changes are good and why it is important, then they will understand and buy into it. You have to provide your staff with the tools necessary to move into IPM. They should have a good reference book with the color pictures of the pests for your area. You have to make a commitment that they will get training.

You need training yourself because you are the source of information for your staff. There are a lot of pesticides out there; review what they are because some new ones are less toxic than what you have been using. You might want to consider releasing beneficials or at least maintaining those...
that are there. You also should be able to understand the plant biology and the pest biology to understand the timing of when you should be controlling something with pesticides and when you should be waiting.

Train your staff to understand where and when to look for problems. It isn’t helpful to go out to a site one week and take a look and not see anything and not go back for another four weeks. You need to get out on a regular basis because monitoring is one of the basic requirements for IPM. You have to know at what point you are going to take some kind of control action. Your field staff will have to take detailed notes, and this is where a handheld computer would come in handy. It is great for record-keeping and producing a report for your customer. Your customer sees the technician but they don’t really see him or her doing anything. If you hand them their weekly report that explains why you did or did not do something, it satisfies them.

Your staff should be able to understand what pests are in the area and recognize the diseases. They should also recognize when they have beneficial insects or other beneficials active. That is important – if you have beneficials you want to maintain them as best you can – because if you spray something that kills them, you may then have problems you didn’t anticipate. Your staff should always have a stash of handouts ready to answer questions and for the customer to refer to later.

As you are thinking about moving your customers to IPM, recognize that it is all about choices needed to get reduced pesticide use. You should survey the site on a regular basis. You can evaluate non-chemical alternatives or least-toxic products. You can change your priorities and concentrate your pesticide use on a section at the site that is more public, rather than a remote section on the site where you can

There are several ways to get your customers to buy-in as you move toward an IPM program. Tell them it is going to benefit children, pets and the environment. Generally, when you bring children and pets into the equation, people buy into that 100 percent. A lot of times, they don’t care what happens to themselves, but when you add the other two, they really change their minds.
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[Image: PureSpray poster with feet on a tree]

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Your customers also have to be trained. You have to explain to them that as they go into an IPM program they may not have a perfect landscape. IPM allows a client to accept a threshold of damage before you will do anything. They have to be able to accept and tolerate some damage or something that doesn’t look absolutely perfect. They also have to agree that if you make some recommendations or changes that they will follow through with them. For example, you tell them that they can’t irrigate so much because a particular tree is getting too wet, leading to a collar root rot. They have to agree that they are going to be active participants in their program. The No. 1 thing is to keep your customers informed.

There are several ways to get your customers to buy-in as you move toward an IPM program. Tell them it is going to benefit children, pets and the environment. Generally, when you bring children and pets into the equation, people buy into that 100 percent. A lot of times, they don’t care what happens to themselves, but when you add the other two, they really change their minds.

Advertise that IPM is more environmentally sound pest management. Print brochures that will explain the benefits of IPM. They should be easy to read and have a lot of pictures because most people are not interested in insect life cycles or disease spread, but they should understand why IPM is better. They should also be aware of what to expect. Again, they should be able to recognize that their landscape is not going to absolutely perfect. Contact phone numbers are always important, as is a Web site they can visit that explains the role that reducing pesticides can play in improving water quality and the environment.

Often requests for bids will include IPM requirements. The more you can put in that explains your IPM program, the more likely it is you will get that contract. Commercial properties and condo associations are not just looking for the direct use non-chemical alternatives.

IPM isn’t just spray, go away and then come back and spray again in two weeks. It is something that you really have to think about and figure out what you can do to minimize spray applications.
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IPM is all about choices needed to get reduced pesticide use. You can change your priorities and concentrate your pesticide use on a section at the site that is more public, rather than a remote section on the site where you can use non-chemical alternatives.

What happens if the client isn’t satisfied? You can try to educate them or ask them what it would take for them to be satisfied. Do you have to move toward spraying? You tell them that if you spray, it will take care of the pests, but explain that you will have to come back every week and that they may run into issues with water contamination or children or pets playing in the area. There are ways to get people to think about the consequences of their decisions.

Dr. Cheryl Wilen is IPM advisor for the University of California Cooperative Extension and UC Statewide IPM Program. This article is taken from a presentation she gave at TCI EXPO Spring in Long Beach in March.
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To discuss crane safety, it is important to understand some history of crane use, the beginnings of best management practices for crane use and tree care, and a little bit about what is happening with related legislation in New Jersey. I also want to go over some changes to the ANSI standard for the 2005 revision.

I started working off a crane back in 1969, but I have never operated a crane. Today, I choose my crane operators very carefully before we go out into the field. We generally use a fellow who has been working specifically with trees and cranes since 1974, so he is very familiar with tree cutting operations.

The tree care industry has been using cranes for quite some time, since at least the 1950s – roughly 20 years before OSHA came into existence. But, being a smaller industry, we didn’t even make a blip on the radar screen for either OSHA or the ANSI/ASME B30 committee when regulations were being drawn up. And that is sort of why we are in the situation that we are in today, with potentially restrictive regulations and standards looming.

As with any other modern piece of equipment, we have been using cranes to make our jobs easier. And cranes have actually improved safety for our industry. We use cranes because we can move larger sections of a tree, and it makes it easier for the climber. We spend less time on conventional rigging and crane use reduces the amount of chain saw cuts that you have to make to dismantle the tree. From our perspective, it is less effort for the climber and less effort for the ground crew; therefore, a safer application.

Cranes are carefully designed, tested and manufactured. When they are used properly following the appropriate standard, you will save time and labor as well as improve safety for all those on the job site.

Cranes can move large sections of the tree with less effort on the part of the climber and crew. If the job is worked following the appropriate ANSI Z133.1 standard, you will save time and labor as well as improve safety for all those on the job site.

ANSI Z133.1-2000, 6.7 Log Loaders, Cranes and Related Hoists: 6.7.6.9 The crane operator shall remain at the controls when the arborist is attached to the crane.

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Where does this job planning begin? It begins with the salesperson, who needs to know when the job requires a crane. He needs to relay that information to the crane operator and the climber. With that out of the way, it is necessary to have a crane operator and a qualified arborist visit the site to develop a work plan. When the crew arrives, the job briefing should be carried out so that everybody on the crew knows what their individual tasks are.

The operator and the climber need to be highly qualified and they need to communicate effectively. The climber needs to know that the crane operator he/she is working with knows how to work with cranes and trees and how trees react, both in cuts and picks. A lot of times we have to give specific information to the crane operator and tell him how much weight we are going to pick. We will use his capacity chart and radius to determine whether it is a safe pick.

If the job is worked according to the plan following appropriate ANSI Z133 standards, which we always follow, you will see a time and labor savings. And this is the overall goal – safe efficient crane operations.

Best practices

Best practices for cranes that my company uses were developed through collaboration with Don Smith, our crane operator of choice. Smith established his company in 1974, and has many years of experience removing trees with cranes.

We assess the location of the tree and obstructions, such as whether there are wires, other trees, limbs or buildings in the way. We want to know the size of the area where we have to lay sections of the tree down, since they will have to be cut to fit the area. We try to place the crane as close as possible to the tree to get the most strength from the crane. Remember, the greater the boom angle and shorter the stick, the more strength there is. The farther the radius, the less strength there is. One has to plan picks accordingly.

If the boom is to be extended quite far from the crane and you have to come out at an angle, you’ll want to take a smaller piece, a piece more appropriate for the angle following your crane’s chart or instrument readout and using a green log weight chart.

The crane must be set as level as possible. Outriggers should be extended fully. The operator needs to understand the ground conditions he is dealing with. Is it sandy, rock, or backfill, wet or dry ground? There needs to be a wider shoring area on poorer soil conditions. Cranes should back in over plywood, fiberglass or other matting to do less damage to lawn areas. One needs to know if there is anything belowground to avoid when setting up the outriggers, such as septic, dry well or sewer, and what kind of pressure will be placed on that ground.

The area of operation is important. The crane should be operated in the direction

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where there is the most stability. The best area of stability is over the rear. When the boom swings to the side, stability is lost. When we set the outriggers down, we generally extend the boom and put a little bit of a load on to test it, before we put the boom up in the air, to see if we are going to have any problem with the outriggers collapsing in that ground area.

Again, communication is the key. Everybody needs to know what is going to happen with the piece being removed. They need to know if it is going to be lifted up, lowered or come straight up. Here again, if somebody is uncomfortable with the way the operation is laid out, the crew needs to change the plan.

The operator and climber need to know each other’s ability. Does the operator have experience in tree removal? Depending on whose crane is available, we may have to go through the routine of describing how a tree reacts when the operator is taking the piece if the operator is not experienced in tree removal. The climber has to have experience working with a crane as well. You don’t want to put a guy on a crane or up in a tree with six months or even two years worth of experience without them having any experience with a crane operation.

The crane operator needs to be at the controls at all times – and the signals between the crane operator and the climber are key for that safe pick. Knowing crane hand signals is very important. The crane operator, if qualified and competent, will know these hand signals.

Although there are many variations, there are two basic methods of tree removal:

1) The climber works out of the tree. This is only if the tree is healthy and safe to work in. A lot of times the climber is more comfortable because he is used to that environment. The disadvantage is that the climber has to continually go back up to place the slings.

2) The climber works off the crane. This method is used when we have a dead or overly hazardous tree or where there is no available tie-in point in a sound tree. The advantage to this is that there is always a safe tie-in point. The disadvantage is that the tie-in point moves with the crane.

Strap placement for picks is very important. Straps should be placed with chokers in the uphill position. There shouldn’t be any twisting or swing when the piece comes off. Straps should be placed in such a manner that the pick will come up as...
We have yet to meet a foot we couldn’t fit. By today’s standards, it seems a dated philosophy. But when you make shoes to fit a foot instead of a quota, the way you go about it is decidedly different. Unlike other shoemakers, we build more than one hundred different combinations of sizes and widths, so our shoes match the unique shape of each foot. The result is an unrivaled level of fit. And comfort that lasts all day. So, whether you’re a size 4B or a size 18D, Red Wings are built to fit.

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smoothly as possible, which eliminates shock load on the crane. If necessary we use multiple straps. The goal, obviously, is to create a balanced pick.

Some people have the impression that we expect the crane to catch the tree sections we are cutting. This is not how we operate. You need to know where to place your slings so that you can have a level pick.

With a lift cut, the butt end must be slightly heavy. The piece is raised up as in traditional rigging. When a crane lowers a piece, it should do so in the same manner as one would do with rigging: gently, slowly and in control of everything.

With a crane pick generally the first cut is an undercut – just like with drop cuts – and the second cut is straight through. When raising a limb, the top side is notched and the back cut is on the underside so that the crane can pull the piece up. With lowering it is the reverse: notch on the bottom, back cut on the top and then lower it gently.

Knowing the tree species characteristics is also important. You need to know how that wood is going to react when it is cut. Is the wood going to snap, or have a lot of hinge wood like an oak?

I maintain that cranes make tree work safer. New Jersey’s Fatality Assessment Control and Evaluation (FACE) program, part of the State’s Department of Labor, compiled the fatality listings in New Jersey from 1990 to 2004. In that time, New Jersey suffered 34 tree industry fatalities by tree failure. Ten of those, roughly 30 percent, were due to the climber being attached to the tree, the tree or the limb failing and the climber falling to the ground. By contrast, we had only one fatality where the climber was attached to the crane, and that was caused by electrocution.

New Jersey is attempting to implement crane operator certification and we are seeking an exemption for tree care operations. Arborists in New Jersey aren’t opposed to certification per se; however if the law went into effect it is quite possible that our operations would be considered non-conforming and we could be subject to stiff fines. In New Jersey the penalty for a first offense is between $100 and $10,000. A penalty of not less than $500 and no more than $100,000 for subsequent offenses could put an arborist out of business.

We actually want to be included under the law, but only if the ANSI Z133 standard is the standard governing our activities.

Steve Chisholm is president and owner of Aspen Tree Experts in Jackson, N.J., chairman of the TCIA Safety Committee and a member of the ANSI Z133 Committee.
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Protector may save teeth, cut stumps faster and more safely

By Don Staruk

Bernie Reisselman has been making a living with stump cutters for 31 years. Now he thinks he has, in effect, developed a better mouse trap.

The product he has designed, tested and patented is called the Stump Cutting Tool Life Extender, or the Pocket Protector. It is a disc-shaped piece of roll steel, 15/16 of an inch thick and 3 inches across, that mounts on a cutting wheel. It is designed to take the impact of rocks so that the cutting teeth don’t.

Reisselman says the Pocket Protector reduces:

1. Whole carbide loss
2. Shank breakage
3. Damage to first-stage bracket bolts
4. First-stage bracket wear
5. First-stage shank wear
6. First-stage tooth pullout loss
7. The number of first-stage cutters without fear of increased shank breakage
8. Wheel vibration while in cutting mode

The Protector also:

9. Results in less wrap around, fewer thrown rocks
10. Increases flywheel effect
11. Stops cutter wheel draw-in
12. Changes angle of wake in dirt and rock, same as wake produced by second- and third-stage brackets
13. Can be rotated to a new wear surface
14. Can be used for bracket and shank protection anywhere on cutting wheel
15. Mounts using single bolts, double bolts or slotted slice-bolt systems

“The advantages of the protectors are more than likely understated,” says Reisselman. “I think I have a much better cutting wheel that I run on my machine than what’s currently out there. What’s going on now is the wheel manufacturers are setting up the cutting pattern to clear rocks with a cutter. That doesn’t work very well – you just end up with more dulled cutters to drag through the stump and to hook and throw larger rocks. It takes much more horsepower to run that type of cutting wheel.”

“What I have done is put rock jammers on the cutting wheel, out of the cutting stream, in place of the extra rock clearing cutters. Now if my lead cutters are dulled, they still cut pretty well otherwise because they’re taking a bigger bite out of the wood already. Fewer cutters on the wheel make for a larger bite per cutter. (You are) using all the carbide, really hogging the wood out without fear of breaking shanks or losing whole carbides. Also, the fewer cutters on the wheel, the faster it cuts.”

The result is a faster, safer stump cutting wheel, says Reisselman.

“I’ve field tested the cutting wheel for more than four years, running Vermeer, Rayco, Border City and a few other cutter and pocket arrangements. The cutting wheel is drilled to adapt to both wide and narrow bolt patterns. I’ve been running stump cutters for 31 years for a living, and have never run a cutting wheel as fast and as maintenance-free as this one,” says Reisselman. “It stays sharp much longer with the Protectors and very, very seldom breaks a tooth – and whole carbide loss is a thing of the past. And never once did I have to get the torch out to cut a pocket off the wheel. I went from using around 150 cutters a year to around 20. Overall, machine maintenance was cut in half.”

When sharp, the cutting wheel can cut up to a 4- by 12-inch pattern in most types of wood, says Reisselman. His wheel is pulled with three BX 95-inch belts powered by a 65 hp Wisconsin engine. This is all mounted on a modified Vermeer 630 with an automatic drive-belt tightener clutch and a 7-gallon-per-minute Webster hydraulic pump (the usual is about 3-gallons per minute, he says.). The flow holes have been drilled larger in the hydraulic line restrictors, and the hydraulic cylinders have been replaced with somewhat longer ones. The machine also has a wider wheelbase.

“I have currently made 50 protectors to operate strictly on my own stump-cutting machine. The stump-cutting wheel that I have installed the protectors on is the only cutting wheel that I have made. It has been drilled to adapt CEI pockets, Vermeer cutting teeth and pockets, Rayco cutters and the original Border City ½-inch cutters and pockets.”

The Protector is protected by patent number 5,996,657.

“The protectors could be mounted on most stump cutting wheels currently in use today. However, I feel the purchaser of patent would have the option of making their own cutting wheels with the protectors mounted on the wheel, along with cutters and pockets, which have expired patents,” says Reisselman. He says he believes the product would retail for approximately $8 per protector.

For more information about Pocket Protectors, visit www.stumpcuttingwheels.com.

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The soils in most manmade landscapes have little organic matter needed to drive natural soil and root processes, are compacted with poor aeration and low water storage capacity, and frequently have a creeping soil pH caused by alkaline or effluent irrigation water or fertilizer treatments of turf. For these trees to have the capacity to produce new functional absorbing roots, the soil must contain effective inocula of mycorrhizal fungi needed to form abundant mycorrhizae on the new roots, and the soil must contain the proper organic matter and associated microbes to carry out the main essential natural soil and root processes.

Photosynthesis

All life is dependent on the availability and utilization of carbon. This carbon occurs as the basic chemical skeleton of carbohydrates, proteins, amino acids, fats and oils, etc. These organic chemicals are needed by all forms of life as building units for growth and for energy. Carbon is the most abundant organic chemical on our planet. Of course, we all know this! But, do we fully appreciate that nearly all of this organic carbon comes from one primary source – photosynthesis?

Photosynthesis is the process by which light energy from the sun is captured by chloroplasts in leaves to make glucose, the photosynthate, from inorganic carbon dioxide and water. This chemical reaction releases oxygen and energy by splitting water. The importance of photosynthesis cannot be overemphasized, since all life is dependent on this fixed carbon, energy and the oxygen.

Respiration

Excess energy from photosynthesis is stored in phosphorus-containing carbon compounds, such as ATP, for later use. All of this stored energy can be traced back to the light energy originally captured by the chloroplasts during photosynthesis. This stored chemical energy is released by the oxidation of carbon-based chemicals (i.e. substrates like glucose) – the process is called respiration. There are two main forms of respiration. Growth respiration provides energy needed to synthesize new tissues, and maintenance respiration provides energy needed to keep existing tissues alive and healthy. These respiratory activities can utilize from 30 to 60 percent of the daily production of photosynthate.

Trees have three main meristems, or growing plant tissue – stem tips, root tips and the cambium. They grow up, down and around. The partitioning of tree growth between roots and shoots is a functional balance between the production and allocation of carbon and the absorption and utilization of soil resources.

Carbon allocation

Carbohydrates produced in leaves are translocated to the meristems, reproductive structures and other growth sinks. The main translocated sugar is sucrose. Some carbohydrates are diverted to produce secondary or defensive chemicals and for other processes. What signals the tree to move these carbohydrates? Very simply, the plant growth regulators are the carbon traffic police in that they direct the flow of carbohydrates from their site of production to where they are needed for growth and respiration. Since all growth occurs at meristems, that’s where most plant growth regulators are produced and concentrated.
Any process affecting leaf area, pruning, insect defoliation, storm damage or intense shade will reduce the rate of photosynthesis and reduce the allocation of the carbohydrates to the roots. A consequence is reduced root function, which contributes to less water and mineral absorption. The result is usually root dieback. Any process affecting root activity and vigor, such as root pruning via B&B and trenching utilities, soil compaction or root disease, will induce allocation of carbohydrates to the root system to repair this damage. This belowground allocation is at the expense of the carbohydrate in the canopy to fulfill the physiological needs of the canopy. The result is usually top dieback.

**Water and mineral nutrition**

Root systems are composed of primary and secondary roots and different orders of lateral roots. Different orders of lateral roots vary in their growth rates, life spans, structural features, etc., as well as their capacity to obtain water and mineral elements or to support mycorrhizae.

Apoplastic transport is the movement of soluble inorganic (minerals) and organic (carbohydrates, etc.) chemicals in connecting cell walls of stem and root tissues. This does not require energy from the plant – it’s passive. This transport is thought to function via water column effect, i.e. water transpiration (evaporation) from leaves “pulls” water from soil to leaves in the xylem – the wick effect. Apoplastic transport takes place in nonliving tissues.

Symplastic transport is the movement of soluble inorganic (minerals) and organic (carbohydrates, etc.) chemicals from cell to cell through plasmodesmata, e.g. cytoplasmic (membrane) bridges, between cells. This transport across membranes requires energy output by the plant. The symplast is the living parts of plants and is contained within a continuous membrane system.

Water is the universal solvent in which gases, salts and other solutes move within and between cells and from organ to organ. The rate of water absorption is controlled by the rate of transpiration from leaves and the efficiency of the absorbing surfaces of the root system. A deep wide-spreading root system occupying a large volume of soil with a large amount of surface area from nonwoody roots, especially mycorrhizae, are important attributes in how plants in natural environments postpone desiccation injury.

**Root and soil biology**

Have you ever wondered how the giant redwoods in California, the old Douglas fir in Oregon or the majestic live oaks in the coastal South became established and are able to sustain themselves without irrigation or fertilization?

Many millions of years ago, trees and other land plants began evolving and eventually formed dynamic sustainable ecosystems. They were confronted with many natural stresses, including different amounts of available soil water, soil infertility, catastrophic fires and storms, poor soils and competition within the plant community. They had to develop many physical, chemical and biological attributes in order to survive these hostile environments. The survivors formed many lateral roots that occupied soil volumes sufficiently large for them to obtain enough essential available (soluble) minerals, nitrogen and water from the soil to support their ever-increasing needs. The most competitive plants in these ecosystems are those with the largest expanses of functional root systems. The key words here are “large and functional.”

One biological attribute evolved by trees and other land plants in natural ecosystems was the development of partnerships with specific soil microorganisms that are associated with their fine, nonwoody roots. Most of the fine absorbing roots are formed on lateral roots in the upper 6 to 8 inches of soil. In order to survive, plants came to rely on these shared benefits provided by these microorganisms in their rooting zone. Beneficial bacteria and fungi living on fine root surfaces (rhizospheres) solubilize many essential mineral elements, such as phosphorus, from insoluble mineral sources for eventual uptake by roots. They
decompose organic matter, recycle minerals from shed plant parts, produce plant growth regulators that support root growth, improve soil structure, and some even deter pathogens that cause root diseases. These rhizosphere microorganisms flourish in great numbers because that is where their organic food supplies (organic carbon) are the most plentiful.

**Biological nitrogen fixation**

Air is nearly 80 percent nitrogen gas. Not man, animal nor higher plants can use elemental nitrogen. It first must be “fixed” by combining it with other elements such as hydrogen, oxygen and, of course, carbon to synthesize amino acids, peptides, protein, etc. before the element nitrogen can be assimilated by any life form.

This fixed nitrogen ends up in the food chain for everything living. N-fixation is second only to photosynthesis in importance to plant sustainability in natural ecosystems. Nitrogen is the most limiting factor, after water, for plant growth. Only certain soil microorganisms, mainly specific bacteria and actinomycetes, can fix atmospheric nitrogen. Since 80 percent nitrogen gas is in the atmosphere, this same 80 percent nitrogen gas is in the atmosphere of soil-air spaces!

There are three basic microbial systems involved in this fixation. Gaseous nitrogen can be fixed:

1. Symbiotically by root nodulating bacteria on legumes, and by specific actinomycetes on certain tree species forming actinorhizae;
2. By certain bacteria living in the rhizosphere of plants; and
3. By some free-living bacteria in the soil.

The nodulating microbes obtain their organic carbon nutrition directly from their organic union with the plant host. The rhizosphere bacteria get their carbon from sloughed root cells or root exudates (i.e. rhizodeposition). The free-living bacteria obtain their carbon nutrition from the organic matter in the soil. Without these carbon sources these microbes cannot fix nitrogen. The nitrogen fixed by these specific bacteria, after many biochemical transformations, is eventually released as either ammonium or nitrate into the soil for plant use.

**Mycorrhizae**

Most green plants form symbiotic relationships with mycorrhizal fungi. These unique, root-inhabiting fungi colonize either the outside of fine absorbing roots (ectomycorrhizae) or the inside of the roots (endomycorrhizae). Ectomycorrhizae occur on about 10 percent of flora or about 2,000 species of trees. In North America there are more than 2,100 species of fungi that form ectomycorrhizae. Worldwide, there are more than 5,000 species. Most ectomycorrhizae can be recognized with
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Endomycorrhizae are the most widespread of all mycorrhizal types and comprise three general groups. Ericaceous endomycorrhizae occur on four or five families in the Ericales. Orchidaceous endomycorrhizae occurs only in the plant family Orchidaceae. Vesicular-arbuscular mycorrhizae (VAM) are the third group of endomycorrhizae. Vesicles and/or arbuscules are structures produced by these fungi in or on colonized roots. VAM have been observed in roots of more than 1,000 genera of plants representing some 200 plant families. More than 85 percent of the 300,000 species of vascular plants in the world form VAM. These include agricultural crops (except Brassica), most wild and cultivated grasses, fruit and nut trees, many hardwoods, vines, desert plants, flowers, and most ornamentals (except ericaceous plants). There are about 150 total species of VAM fungi identified, to date, worldwide. VAM roots are not changed in either color or shape from nonmycorrhizal roots. VAM can only be confirmed microscopically and, thus, cannot be identified with the unaided eye. Because of their location on roots and their large size, VAM fungal spores are disseminated very slowly to new areas by soil animals and insects.

Mycorrhizal fungi cannot obtain essential dietary carbon nutrients from any other source other than that produced by host photosynthesis. This means, very simply, that the mycorrhizal fungi cannot grow and develop unless they are in mycorrhizal association with their plant hosts. In return, the fungi extend mycelia far into the soil, increasing the surface area of the roots to improve absorption of water, nitrogen and essential mineral elements for its plant host.

From a practical perspective, it would
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require approximately 100 times more sugars and energy from photosynthesis for a plant to form enough nonmycorrhizal absorbing roots to produce the same surface area formed by the mycelia of mycorrhizal fungi and the mycorrhizae. Mycorrhizae persist longer than nonmycorrhizal absorbing roots, and increase the tolerance of their tree host to drought, soil compaction, high soil temperatures, heavy metals, soil salinity, organic and inorganic soil toxins and extremes of soil pH. They also depress many root diseases caused by pathogenic fungi and nematodes and suppress the attacks by certain insects. In natural forests and grasslands, many species of mycorrhizal fungi share common plant hosts and form a continuous, interconnected network of mycelia on roots between the plants.

Recently, VAM fungi were reported to produce a glycoprotein exudate while in mycorrhizal association. This organic chemical, called glomalin after the VAM fungal genus Glomus, plays a significant role in soil aggregate stability and can represent 4 percent to 5 percent of total soil carbon and nitrogen in forest soils.

Practical considerations

In our efforts to domesticate forest trees and other plants, we have removed them from their natural settings and are now growing them in a variety of unnatural manmade landscapes. They occur in these landscapes following one of two events.

Either they existed as a forest plant in the area before manmade development or they were transplanted after development. Roots of preexisting plants, especially trees, are routinely damaged during construction by trenching utilities, by drain fields, by grading, by compaction and by the ever-present urban forest floor of concrete/asphalt roads, driveways and sidewalks.

Transplanted trees are routinely moved to their new environment with less than 10 percent of their original root system developed in the nursery. These transplanted trees may need 10 years to replace the original lateral and absorbing root systems. Roots not only need large soil volumes for proper development but also they must have favorable soil conditions (oxygen, proper temperature, available soil water, soluble nitrogen and essential minerals) that allow them to develop.

Good quality organic matter in soil, an organic mulch over the rooting area of shrubs and trees, the largest possible volume of quality soil (preferred pH, good water storage and physical properties, high reserve of mineral elements) for maximum root expanse, and adequate inoculum potential of mycorrhizal fungi and beneficial rhizobacteria are a few prerequisites to healthy root development and function of plants in our man-made landscapes.

Dr. Donald H. Marx is chairman and principal scientist at Plant Health Care, Inc. This article was adapted from a presentation at TCI EXPO in Detroit.
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Two TCIA members are about as far apart geographically as they could be, but Chris Frank in Massachusetts and Mike Kraus in Hawaii have one thing in common – the weather.

While their local weather conditions may differ, the fact that they use technology and weather predictions in these active zones to improve their businesses is what they share. And there’s a new wind blowing, based on a whole new skill set, that lets us predict short-term weather more accurately, get a better handle on the medium-range outlook, and even get a feel for the long-term forecast and changes in climatological models, all of which spell profit opportunities.

A generation ago, weather was a vague enemy for those working outdoors. The ability to predict the weather was part skill, part experience, part knowledge of the locale and part black art. And luck. Whether you’re a one-man shop or a multinational organization, the daily weather has an impact on whether or not you work, and whether or not you are efficient and therefore profitable. The ability to look ahead and around the corner has improved, and that means our ability to operate more safely and more efficiently, and to schedule more cost effectively, has also improved.

Think about the weather in two ways. First, knowing today’s forecast means we can schedule our crews better day-to-day and week-to-week, and we can be safer and more efficient. That part is easy. But looking at near-term weather and long-term climate trends as a business tool can also help us make better informed decisions.

You may know the name Dr. Greg Forbes from The Weather Channel, where he is a severe weather expert. His expertise is tornadoes, so this time of year, he’s pretty busy. TCI caught up with him the day after a busy tornado outbreak in April.

“There have been huge changes in predicting the weather over the past four decades,” says Forbes. “Back in the ’60s we had virtually no numerical guidance – nothing – (and our weather maps were) very coarse, with 400-mile imagery resolution. These days, we have satellites and multiple computers, some with resolution down to a mile, for extremely accurate short-term forecasting.” Simultaneously, Forbes says, the skill to form a 10-day forecast accurately has improved to where it’s as good and just as accurate as the 24-hour forecast of 40 years ago.

“If we go back prior to 1990, we didn’t have Doppler radar, just basic radar showing where it was precipitating and, maybe, if a storm was exceptional, wind and sleet. Now we can see winds within a storm and more accurately predict hail or damaging winds – even tornadoes. We know more about weather hazards and can actually name communities likely to be affected, not just counties – such as Marietta, Georgia, versus downtown Atlanta.”

“Before ’61,” Forbes notes, “we had no satellites. Now we have great satellite coverage and can see fine lines of thunderstorms and track hurricanes as they head toward land.”

Over the longer range, as forecasters go out on their predictions, the accuracy goes down. “We are VERY good at one day and shorter and pretty good on the daily forecast up to five days. The longer out we go,
the more the accuracy goes down, but we can talk about above and below average temperatures and precipitation averages over the coming period," he says.

Forbes points to the popular annual reports from Dr. William Gray of Colorado State University, who issues initial and updated forecasts on Atlantic Seasonal Hurricane Activity and U.S. Landfall Strike Probability. (As bad as the season was last year, Gray's statistical modeling, based on more than 22 years of hurricane prognostications, shows "an above-average hurricane landfall for the Atlantic basin in 2005." (For a full report on his forecast and past forecasts and verifications, log onto http://hurricane.atmos.colostate.edu/forecasts, or do a word search for hurricane predictions.)

The good news is that we are getting better about longer term forecasts – even climate trends such as global warming, El Nino, hurricanes, etc. But Forbes warns that "We can’t take these as gospel and we have no storm predicting skills. We have to remember that in long-term forecasting we are dealing with probabilities and that there will still be exceptions.

"Take William Gray’s tropical storm report. There’s a lot of skill involved, but these are storm count predictions, not landfall. Some years hurricanes all stay at sea, some come inland. 1992 was a below normal year, but it produced Hurricane Andrew, which is still the costliest single hurricane in U.S. history."

On the other hand, he says, we appear to be in a 40-year hurricane (cycle) where the trend shows an increasing number of landfall hurricanes. The frequency of these storms oscillates and it looks like we are in for a couple of active years, but it's just another climate factor to figure into the equation.

So, how can a tree care professional make money armed with this knowledge. From Forbes' perspective, just look at the clean-up business.

After a weather event, Forbes, were he a tree care professional, says he would log onto the National Weather Service Web site and go to the storm prediction center and check out preliminary reports of areas where wind, tornado, hail and ice damage is reported. (www.cpc.noaa.gov – click on storm reports). There, he says, you can find out what recently happened and see the local outlook for the next few days, including where storms are anticipated and where wind damage has or will create an active cleanup area.

To the other extreme, for climate fore-
casting of extreme weather of anywhere from two days to several months to seasonal trends, go to www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/forecasts. What’s of interest here is the ability to search for drought monitor status or very wet areas to plan for plantings and care.

He says you can visit www.nws.noaa.gov and go to the pop-ups for country maps, click on a location you’re interested in and find the local forecast, right down to a specific county where you’ll get warnings as well as forecasting.

If you are really interested or anxious, there are services that will contact you to notify you of weather warnings. The Weather Channel offers NOTIFY! which will automatically contact you by e-mail, pager or phone to notify you of a warning for an area. Sign up online in advance and provide the location of interest.

Forbes also noted that lighting sensors are now available for personal use. They are essentially “static stations” that listen in for electrical atmospheric action and will warn you of activity within a range of 10 miles. That may sound like a lot, but not if you consider that a violent storm can move at more than 60 miles an hour and a renegade lighting bolt can strike at up to 10 miles from its source. (A bit of advice from the doctor: Apply the 30-30 rule with lightning. First, if you can see it, stop operations and seek shelter immediately. If the time between lightning and thunder is less than 30 seconds, seek shelter. And wait for at least 30 minutes after the last rumble to resume outdoor activity. (For more on lightning and its consequences, see TCI magazine June 2004.)

“Certainly weather is important to a lot of communities in the U.S. where the number one danger during storms is not tornados themselves, but falling trees,” says Forbes. “In Atlanta it may be trees falling in neighborhoods and taking power, video, cable and phone lines. Elsewhere it may be blown trees falling on mobile homes.”

As for long-term and climate forecasting, iffy as it is, the trends can signal the potential for disease, insect infestation, or wet periods that will make trees susceptible to uprooting. “There’s a tremendous relationship between weather and the tree care industry,” concludes Forbes.

Mike Kraus, owner of Tree Works Inc. on the island of Hilo in Hawaii, knows a lot about weather from having researched upper atmospheric weather as an observer in the US Army and a ballistic meteorologist in combat during the Vietnam war.

“I live in a unique weather environment on Hilo. At our office, the annual rainfall is 135 inches – one year we recorded over 212 inches – and we’ve rarely missed a day of work. This is an area of micro-climates,” he explains. “The other side of the island may get only 10 inches or less because of the trade winds.”

Kraus relies on a WeatherPro system from Weather Services International in Andover, Mass., (similar to the systems used by the Department of Defense, most major airlines and most TV weather forecasters.) For its utility-related services, WSI touts that it has “solutions to help our clients profit from better weather knowledge, and manage their risks through proactive preparation.”

Regarding very long-term and climate forecasting, Kraus isn’t a major proponent.

“I wouldn’t base investments on one. Take global warming and its impact on North America. Global warming is absolutely happening, but the question is will melting in the Arctic trigger an Ice Age as melting waters prevent warm water from circulating and plunging the Northern Hemisphere into a freeze?”

He’s more bullish though on making decisions based on six-to nine-month outlooks, citing the current El Nino.

“One place is in the western U.S. where we know Pacific warming is in place and Southern California will get rain and mud. Other areas will be dry, and this is much more predictable forecasting on which to base a business decision, like what, how and when to care for trees and whether or not to buy equipment.” Looking ahead to a near-certain mud season in Southern California, Kraus would look at a Bobcat as a good investment right now.

Another source he uses is the Internet Weather Underground (www.wunderground.com), which provides close-in weather for locales as little as a mile from your point of interest. There you can get exact “micro” conditions and forecasting.

On the right coast is Chris Frank, owner of C.L. Frank & Company in Northampton, Mass. Twenty years ago he took over the western office of the now-defunct Frost & Higgins and remains a full-service arboriculture company. (A major proponent of the TCIA, his company was the first TCIA Accredited company in Massachusetts and second in the nation.)

Frank uses a system by Meteorologix of Minneapolis, Minn. “I stumbled across them while working with a golf course groundskeeper who used it to plan his work,” says Frank.

Meteorologix (www.meteorologix.com) describes itself as a “business weather solutions provider: Every day, businesses rely on us to help them manage weather-
related risks and protect their bottom line.” Meteorlogix in March introduced the latest version of its MxVision WeatherSentry Construction Edition. The weather information management system is designed “to help construction companies increase productivity, efficiently schedule crews, increase employee safety, manage customer expectations, decrease payroll spending and reduce costs that result from ruined materials.”

Similar to Kraus, Frank operates in micro environments within his territory in Western Massachusetts, north and south along the Connecticut River. Frank explains that his business simultaneously covers growing Zones 4 to 6.

That means weather over the Berkshire Mountains, into Pittsfield, Northampton, Brattleboro, Vt., and into Hartford, Conn., can be dramatically different on the same day and in the same place from day to day. And it can change very quickly, too. Any additional weather (information) makes for a better decision, says Frank. He’s proud of his crews’ ability to work in just about any condition, but says he wants to be more productive over the course of each day and minimize “broken days,” when the job can’t be finished due to weather.

“Knowing the weather provides great peace of mind, to be able to double check at 6:30 in the morning to see if anything changed. He monitors five regions simultaneously and doesn’t rely on broadcast forecasts for the broader region. “A lot of times rain won’t go up and over the Berkshires. The forecast may (predict) something, but that something never gets here.”

Ryan Swier is field personnel manager with Asplundh Tree Expert Company, which does line clearing for utilities nationally. “Most of our customers have detailed, complex weather forecasting, and...
we work with them and their systems,” he says.

Looking back on last year’s hurricane season, Swier reflected, “I worked in the field for many years and remember waiting for a storm to hit, then going to the scene. In today’s world with forecasting as accurate as it is, our customers can, and we can, identify where a storm will hit. Last year, we got our crews to mobilize into areas to be hit beforehand. Working with the customer, we were prepared and moving quicker.”

From a corporate standpoint, Asplundh relies on notification services like impactweather.com – especially during hurricane season when conditions are more complex. “At corporate we get weather e-mails with outlooks on tropical developments weeks in advance.”

He concluded by noting that with a storm heading up the east coast, for example, not only can area crews be mobilized in anticipation of storm, but customers hundreds of miles away are notified as well so they can make plans, too.

From a long-term forecasting perspective, Chris Frank began years ago tapping into seasonal forecasting for the agriculture industry. He monitors the NOAA climate forecast sites, which are updated monthly, usually around the 20th.

“I certainly factor that into my thinking. If it looks like mid-to-late summer that we might get a milder winter, I would be more aggressive in landing winter work. If it looks like above-average storms and cold, I would push work out to the following season. It also changes hiring when it comes time to keep or let go of seasonal help – or look for different seasonal skills to keep an extra crew on during the winter.”

Ultimately, that kind of knowledge and planning makes him more valuable to his long-term clients who also need to plan.

“Whatever the system is, it is a heck of a lot better than nothing. Now we’re not dependent on tuning into the radio or TV or to make calls to see what’s going on an hour away. I check at the tail end of each day to see what I have planned for the next day. I check the radar to see where it’s best to send crews. They’ll work in any weather,” Frank says, then concludes, “But I try to make it pleasant for my people – they’re my biggest asset.”
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OPERATOR ADVANTAGE

- Variable Swing Speed Control lets operators work at a comfortable pace.
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OPTIONS

- Variety of gas and diesel engines to choose from:
  - 27 HP Kohler Gas
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Find out more about the SP4012, call JP Carlton today at 800-243-9335
or visit us on the Web at www.stumpcutters.com (some equipment shown is optional)

Please circle 12 on Reader Service Card
As businesses move into full swing in the summer season, there are a number of legislative and regulatory issues to consider.

Cuts in Extension offices?

President Bush’s FY 2006 budget request has proposed a 50 percent reduction—representing $89 million—in the funding that helps support agricultural experiment stations at land grant universities. This could result in the loss of thousands of professors, research scientists, extension specialists and other staff positions unless Congress restores the funding somehow. Cuts this deep could have a profound impact on tree service providers that rely on extension offices for all sorts of tree, shrub and pest information.

Guest worker legislation

The “Save our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act,” S. 352 and H.R. 793, continues to gather momentum in both the House and Senate. At the time this was written, 33 senators and 73 representatives had signed onto the bills.

The legislation’s objective is simple. Currently, non-U.S. workers who have recently worked in the U.S. and re-apply for an H-2B Visa are counted in the Visa quota. The bill would exclude from the quota any H-2B-status worker from the most recent three fiscal years.

If your state’s senators or representatives have not signed on to this legislation, you should urge them to do so. You can use www.senate.gov or www.house.gov to research the respective bill.

OSHA focuses on green industry

If your company operates in OSHA Region III (DC, DE, MD, PA, VA and WV), you should be aware that OSHA recently informed the green industry of a two-part outreach initiative to all landscape and tree care operations within the Region.

OSHA Region VIII (Mont., N. Dak., S. Dak., Wyo., Utah, Colo.) tried a similar program last year.

In the first phase in early summer, OSHA will offer assistance through its consultative offices and in the second phase, they start enforcement visits and fines. Inspections will concentrate on sprains & strains, electrical hazards, noise, amputation, heat stress, fall hazards, struck-bys, and any other “plain view” hazards encountered.

Please keep in mind that just because your firm may not be on OSHA’s mailing list to have received this notification, or if you fall below the size that triggers OSHA recordkeeping requirements, you are nevertheless affected by the initiative.

Now is a very good time to give your safety & compliance program a checkup, and to take measures to avoid problems in the future. TCIA can assist you with specific safety and compliance questions — please call 1-800-733-2622 to learn more. You may wish to call your local OSHA office to arrange for a consultation visit or to find out about potential safety/compliance workshops being offered in your area.

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.
From coverages such as pesticide and herbicide application to workmanship errors, our experience and knowledge of the arborist industry enables us to offer you the tailored, comprehensive coverage you need. To find out more, contact your local Hartford Agent or visit mb.thehartford.com/treecare.
The 10 Ts of Customer Acquisition & Retention

By Steven S. Little

Trying to grasp all the factors that determine whether a customer buys from you and keeps buying from you can be overwhelming. That’s why I’ve developed the 10 Ts of Customer Acquisition and Retention. These are the most important elements for any organization interested in improving in this area.

1. Training

Do your new hires know what makes you tick? Do they know why you exist and what matters to your customers? The training I’m talking about is customer-driven training, not internally driven training. Most small businesses have some rudimentary form of initial training, but it is focused on how to work the cash register, how to input data into the computer, or how to file the paperwork. Yes, those things are necessary to learn, but they come with time. Most of that kind of training has little to do with what really matters from a customer standpoint. The answers to the following questions are what effective employees really need to be trained about:

- Why do people buy from us?
- What do our customers care the most about?
- When people buy from the other guys, why do they do it?
- What makes us unique?
- What do our customers care the most about?
- What are the primary tasks you need to know, and how do those tasks relate to the customers’ needs?

When you can answer these questions and train people on those topics, you will have a powerful training program. You assume that customer satisfaction is obvious, but it is not. Most new employees have no idea what matters to your customers. The answers to the following questions are what effective employees really need to be trained about:

2. Touches

Every time you come in contact with a customer, it’s a “touch” and an opportunity to shine.

I worked as president of a company making apparel with corporate logos. Our competition was detailed as the packing slip – because when we got the order, that was just the first step. In the world of apparel, people return things, even if you do everything perfectly. The personal touches – how we handled the two returns out of 42 shipped – was how we won over the customer and got more business. We took what the customer perceived to be a potentially negative experience and turned it into a big positive. Removing the proverbial thorn in the lion’s paw allowed us to move beyond simple satisfaction. We were building lifetime loyalty and value.

What is far more common, especially with the big companies you are competing with, is the dropped ball, the wasted opportunity, or the negative that gets even more negative. We all have far too many examples of these in our heads, but here is an example of customer touches that the company should have had complete control of related to outbound correspondence.

When I travel, I’m generally flying to one of a handful of specific airports. More than half of my speaking engagements are in the big convention and convention cities: Orlando, Las Vegas, New Orleans, Atlanta, and Chicago. Some of the online travel agencies offer a free service that will alert me by e-mail when the lowest fare falls below a certain price that I determine. Recently, I was happy to see one of the fares drop way below the threshold, so I clicked on the link. Instead of a screen offering me a way to buy tickets, I got a blank screen with this message:

HTTP ERROR: 403 Forbidden
Directory access not allowed

I’m no techie, but it was obvious somebody inserted a dead link of some kind in the e-mail, and whoever is supposed to check these things went home early or didn’t do his or her job. Regardless, here was a point of customer contact that could have resulted in a sale of three tickets to New Orleans, Atlanta, and Chicago. Some of my speaking engagements are in the big convention and convention cities: Orlando, Las Vegas, New Orleans, Atlanta, and Chicago. Some of the online travel agencies offer a free service that will alert me by e-mail when the lowest fare falls below a certain price that I determine. Recently, I was happy to see one of the fares drop way below the threshold, so I clicked on the link. Instead of a screen offering me a way to buy tickets, I got a blank screen with this message:

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never know how much money they lost that day because most of their customers won’t say anything. I certainly didn’t. Most people just bought from somebody else that day and thought a little bit less of that company forever.

Every contact with the customer is important—and can have a direct impact on your customer acquisition and retention. This includes the initial phone call, credit terms, confirming e-mail, returns—everything that your customer sees and hears from your organization. Remember, finding and keeping customers is a touchy subject.

3. Total View

As it relates to customers, everyone in your organization should be able to access everything they need to know, anytime or anywhere. This is difficult, yes, but not impossible.

How many times have you heard, “that’s not my department” or “that’s not my job”? That’s a pitiful response, and if anyone in your company says that, you should be embarrassed. He or she is costing you money and stifling your growth.

There are plenty of reasons this attitude surfaces. Maybe your employees don’t personally have the technical knowledge to address the request. Maybe there are too many territorial disputes in your organization. Maybe that particular person is just plain lazy. You need to fix these problems, either through better training, better people, or better technology—probably all of these. The problem of inadequate technical knowledge is one of the easiest problems to address. Technology allows you to solve problems seamlessly, without ever showing what steps got you there.

How many times does it look like the right hand doesn’t know what the left hand is doing in your organization? See if any of these look familiar:

• Have you ever sent out marketing materials to people who are on credit hold?
• Have you ever invoiced people with standard terms after they’ve negotiated custom terms with your sales organization?
• Have you mailed out brochures to people who haven’t worked at that company for two years?
• Has your marketing department advertised services that the sales department says nobody wants to buy?
• Has your shipping department sent packing slips that bear no resemblance to the customer’s invoice or sales contract?
• Have your people answering the phones been clueless about what your customers have ordered and what offers you have sent them by e-mail?
• Have customers ever tried in vain to return a product that they purchased online to your physical location?

To grow your business, you need a total view. You need to make sure anyone who interacts with customers in any way has a total view or at least knows where to go to get the answers in a hurry. Through training and our next T, technology, you can make it happen.

4. Technology

This book has a whole chapter on technology, but here I talk about technology that impacts your customers. Technology is making it increasingly easier to gather, store, and interpret information about our customers.

It has become popular in recent years to put...
in customer relationship management (CRM) systems. U.S. companies have spent billions to set up formal CRM software systems. This software allows companies to determine which customers have spent the most, get a view of customers’ past transactions when they call, and route them to the person who can serve them best. When it all works as advertised, a CRM system can be a powerful tool. But much of the time it doesn’t, as we have all experienced when calling a big company’s customer service department.

That kind of CRM can cost a fortune. But remember, you have some kind of CRM system in place now, whether it is in file folders or an in-house database. Don’t confuse a software solution with the important function we all share – managing the customer base. Improving true CRM, especially for a small company, can be what makes or breaks the business.

Simply put, technology can improve your customers’ experience. I’m not saying make your company robotic. Technology can make your organization more responsive and more humanistic by allowing your people to do their jobs better. Technology can free up your people’s time so they can handle the things that human beings do best.

Too often, small business owners believe that their customers always want to talk to them. That’s not true. What is true is that we’ve trained our customers that talking to us in real time, by phone or face to face, is how you get things done. When I speak about automating mundane tasks, many business owners think I am advocating a soulless, mechanized customer encounter. Far from it – the idea here is to provide a higher level of service in those areas where technology is the best tool.

Most business owners agree that face-to-face contact is the most valuable contact you can have with a client or customer. I agree. Nothing is more valuable than face-to-face contact in any business. According to Cahners Research, the cost of the average face-to-face sales call was $329 in 2001. It is a tremendously valuable tool that should be used properly. Due to the high cost of face-to-face communications, we’ve found other ways to communicate with our customers, and there has always been a relationship between the cost and the value.

We have the telephone, which is a very effective tool. While not nearly as valuable as face-to-face contact, it is still a tremendous tool for certain applications. The telephone has an auditory component, a real-time component, and a two-way interaction component that makes it extremely valuable. Everyone has it, and we can all use it. However, while it is significantly less effective than face-to-face contact, the telephone is still an expensive tool. Taking an inbound order from a customer can make it anywhere from $15 to $35. Taking an inbound order from a customer can cost you an average of $7 to $12.

Mail is also an effective tool in the right circumstances. Most businesses still mail invoices. They still mail catalogs. Many companies still use mail to distribute compelling offers. Compared to real-time, two-way communication, mail seems limited, but the corresponding costs still make it a good value. Fax is cheaper still, but the limitations of color and format reduce its value.

With e-mail, for the first time ever, we have a touch tool that does not obey the laws of previous business communication techniques. With
e-mail, there is no correlation between the cost of a contact and the value of that contact. While the cost of all your communication options continues to increase, the value of e-mail communication continues to increase. (Some of you are thinking, “Hey, my long-distance bill has dropped in half in the past five years.” But remember, it’s people on the phone that really cost you money. Why do you think big business is outsourcing their call centers to places like India and the Philippines?)

Let’s say your company sends a promotional e-mail introducing your latest product or service to 100 random, existing customers already on your e-mail list. It goes well. Technology now allows you to expand that effort with confidence at relatively little additional cost. If you want to send the same offer to all 20,000 of your customers the next day, there is no real incremental increase in costs. And the future of e-mail will offer an even more valuable contact. Imagine your bright, smiling face yipping and yapping in your customer’s inbox (for those who request it, anyway), describing your daily specials or latest innovations. E-mail will have an auditory component and a visual component close to real time, at a cost below that of a fax on a per-contact basis. That is powerful, amazing, and just around the corner. The same is true of a Web site. The incremental cost for 100,000 Web site visitors a week rather than 1,000 is next to nothing these days.

This is one of the reasons the Web is still a really big deal. I talk about technology in more detail in Chapter 7, but the bottom line is that the Internet has indeed changed everything. Don’t let the dot-com meltdown make you think you can avoid using the Web and e-mail for your business. No matter what business you are in, you have to get good at using these technologies because your customers need you to be.

5. Tailored

Customer communication is going to look far different in the near future than it does now. The key is going to be honing your database to give all customers what they want, when they want it, the way they want it.

There was a term in vogue in the late 1990s—mass customization. The notion was that many successful companies had gone beyond the old paradigm of mass production and had put processes in place to give customers what they need. It centered on Dell building you the computer you wanted when you called or Levi Strauss sending you custom-tailored jeans.

But we’re past that now. Now the idea is what my friend and noted direct marketing expert Tracy Emerick calls “mass customization.” The notion of customizing for each customer needs to go beyond mere production. I talked about custom invoices earlier, and this same concept needs to apply to every touch point. It is especially important in terms of marketing communication.

In direct marketing, for example, the main components are the list, the offer, the format/medium, and the copy. Nearly all companies I’ve worked with spend the bulk of their direct offering time on copy and format. That’s the opposite of what they should be doing. Everything comes from the list and the offer. The rest are details. If you are offering the right deal to the right people at the right time, you can deliver it on a napkin or explain it in a two-minute phone call.

6. Trenching

Trenching is a term I use to refer to the process of finding actionable information in customer data and using that to grow your business. Some people would call this data mining, but you don’t really dig for it and remove it. Instead, you move along a trench looking at the stratification, like a geologist. (Besides, data mining doesn’t start with the letter “t,” so that would blow my whole premise.) When trenching, you are trying to find answers to the following key questions:

- What kind of customers should we serve?
- What kind of customers do we currently serve?
- How can we describe our best types of customers?
- What patterns can we find in our customers that predict future lifetime value, potential offers, or potential actions?

You can nearly always find patterns in the data: why people buy, when they buy, what they buy, what kind of offers elicit a response. If Tony buys only logo hats from me year after year like clockwork and nothing else, I’m probably wasting money sending him a shirt catalog 12 times a year. If Candlewic president Bill Binder has a customer who buys only soap supplies from him, it wouldn’t make sense to continually offer that customer special pricing on candle supplies. Maybe once or twice a year, he would offer special pricing to see if he could elicit a trial, but certainly not as often as he would to his known candle supply buyers.

Who owns your customer data in your organization? If you’re like most companies that have gone beyond a few employees, the data are all over the place. Finance owns one chunk, purchasing or shipping owns a chunk, marketing owns another, and sales has different pieces altogether. Many of the salespeople might have half their info scribbled on notes somewhere, and the other departments are each protecting their fiefdom from intruders. You need to figure out who owns all the pieces and pull them together so the data become meaningful. There are software vendors who want to help you with this, some of...
them quite good. But even the best software is only as good as the legacy data you can input. The data are only as good as the ongoing processes for gathering and sharing that data.

Some people will find this information of great value. Others will say, “Hey, Steve, I just own an ice cream shop. How is trenching data going to help me grow my business?” That’s a legitimate question, and here’s your answer: How difficult would it be to gather customers’ e-mails in exchange for a free sample? Maybe you can even ask for their favorite flavor, too, and get the entire family’s birthdays. Every birthday you send out a coupon. If you ever want to send out a survey, you’ve got your list. You’ve got the idea.

Who creates information in your organization? There is a big difference between data and information. Fifty lines of customer data is still just data. Information is this: Ellen is the key decision maker, but she asks Joe for input; the company’s fiscal budget year starts in July, and they respond best to extended payment terms.

Don’t be data rich and information poor. Getting raw data is easy. What you need to get is actionable information. Fifty pages of data is often useless, but one page of actionable information can be gold. Getting information is more difficult, but that’s what’s going to fatten your bank account.

When you get to the point where you can analyze your data and create real information, you can start making product/service decisions that are based on more than gut instinct. Finding this information takes more expertise but creates more value. You start profiling customers and predicting outcomes. You can expand your business and say, “My models show me that if I spend this amount of money to acquire these people, who have this much lifetime value, I will have this much money at the end of it.” That not only allows you to make good spending decisions but also builds information you can take to the bank—literally. Find experts who can make this happen. The companies who really know their customers and know where to find them will improve dramatically.

PrintingForLess.com has set up a system where every order is being tracked at all times. Orders that are close to being in trouble set off an alarm in the company system.

When there is an alarm on this dashboard, the whole place goes nuts trying to figure out what went wrong, how to fix it, and how to keep it from happening again. The project is not late at this point. It’s just in danger of getting that way if people don’t react. It’s a time bomb.

In your organization, how many times do you or other key people find out about a problem after it’s too late to really fix it or at a point where it is twice as expensive to fix it as it would have been earlier? The worst is when you hear about a time problem for the first time from your customer. Find a way to warn your organization of impending time problems.

8. Tractable

Tractable is defined as: (adj.) susceptible to suggestion; a personality sensitive to other’s desires [syn: malleable, responsive].

This isn’t a word you hear every day. Being tractable means you are susceptible to suggestion. You are sensitive to other people’s desires. To be successful as a growth company in today’s economy, you need to be malleable and responsive. Satisfaction is not on a continuum. People don’t move along in stages from “completely unsatisfied” to “completely satisfied.” By being malleable and responsive, I can grab customers and immediately move them from the bottom of the scale to the top. If I can solve
that customer’s problem in a way that’s far beyond what they were expecting, I’ve now got a loyal customer. I have that customer’s satisfaction and repeat business. Most importantly, I probably have the customer’s recommendation to their colleagues, family members, and friends. A potential negative is now a positive.

The best way to accomplish this is to drive decision making down to the point of contact. The person serving the customer needs the power to turn a negative into a positive immediately, with a solution that goes beyond the customer’s expectation.

Please understand that I am not suggesting that you give away the store for free. For many of you, that simply is not economically feasible. I am suggesting that the vast majority of customers simply want to be treated fairly. If things don’t go exactly as planned and you are able to rectify a situation beyond their expectations, you will win in the long run.

If you gain a reputation for going above and beyond on customer issues and complaints, will there be some cheaters? Sure, you will get a few opportunists and freeloaders. Usually, however, the positive effects of exceeding customer expectations such as increased loyalty and word-of-mouth advertising far outweigh these rare occasions of abuse. A customer who will recommend you to others is the most valuable customer you can get.

At the very least, be sure that you never hear words like these uttered by people in your organization:

• “I’m sorry, but that’s our policy.”
• “If I do this for you, I’ll have to do it for everybody.”
• “You’ll have to speak to my manager. I don’t have the power to do that.”
• “I don’t know if I’m allowed to do that.”
• “If it were up to me, you know I would do it.”

9. Telepathy

You and your employees need to have telepathy. You have to be able to anticipate the future. Your organization must assume a proactive stance as it relates to all your customers’ needs. You have to foresee any and all potential problems that could crop up before they do crop up. You also need to recognize the patterns that are indicative of future success or failure or future opportunities.

I was in a focus group with business owners where the moderator asked what kind of TV character summed up what their organization is like. What character defined their company’s personality? There were some really interesting answers from everyone, with a wide variety of characters from the past few decades—everyone from Mary Tyler Moore to George Jefferson. The best answer I heard was Radar O’Reilly from M*A*S*H. In case you are too young to remember Radar, he had the uncanny knack for understanding what was going to happen before it ever did. He was always in the right place, at the right time, with the right solution for that particular crisis. He continually saved the day, but he always did it in a quiet, unassuming way. He didn’t expect to get the credit; he just wanted things to go well. While his loyalties may have been split internally at times, he never wavered from his clear customer focus. The wounded and the maimed were his only priority, and he would do literally anything to improve their condition. To that extent, Radar O’Reilly might be the most customer-driven character in TV history.

You want to have that kind of predictive power in your organization. One of the best ways to do that is to make it easy to communicate with your company, especially to complain. You want your best customers to tell you how they think things are going, even when they are not going well. That tells you what they really want and what they are willing to pay you to do for them. They will give you the best indication of the actions you need to take to improve and grow. You need to understand your customers better than they understand themselves. Your customers may not know how you can solve their problems, but they can certainly tell you about their points of pain. Find a way to solve those pain points. You then need to find out what they really want but haven’t told you yet.

10. Tenacity

Growing a business is hard work. Customer acquisition and retention isn’t an event. It isn’t a new program. It is a way of thinking about customers. It is a way you go about business. It takes the right attitude, continual effort, and constant monitoring.

The question that should really matter in whether you are going to retain your customers and grow your business is not whether they are satisfied. The only question that matters is, “How likely are your customers to recommend you to their colleagues, their partners, their families, or to other people they do business with?”

If you’re getting straight 10s on customer satisfaction, good for you. That means you’re going to stay in business at least another year or two. That’s nice, but not enough. If you get straight 10s on whether people would recommend your company to someone else, now you’ve really got something going on. You are not just going to survive. You are going to grow. At PrintingForLess.com, fully one-third of their new customers come from referrals. How does that compare with your business? Think about how much impact that has on the company’s marketing budget, customer acquisition costs, or lifetime value of customers.

This article was excerpted from The 7 Irrefutable Rules of Small Business Growth by Steven S. Little, published by John Wiley & Sons Inc. It was edited for length.

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TREE CARE INDUSTRY – MAY 2005

71
Help Wanted

Tree Climbers and Crew Leaders

Wanted: Experienced climbers and foremen to join our company in beautiful Pensacola, Florida. We offer health insurance, paid vacation, paid holidays, paid personal time, and uniform allowances. Wages depend on experience and are competitive for our area. Please contact Tressa Greenler at Bobrosstreets@hightec.com or call (850) 477-4967.

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ALASKA tree service seeks seasonal climber, (or relocate). Season runs from April to October. Prefer well rounded climber with excellent pruning skills, but will consider all applicants. MUST be drug free, clean cut, have drivers license, understand production, be good at self praise, and not afraid to drag brush. Small company, excellent equipment, long term employment available. Not a 9-5 job. We work Mon-Fri, rain or shine, until the last customer expecting us is finished. Weekends optional, but always available. Starting pay $15-$25/hr, DOE. This is an awesome opportunity to get paid while experiencing Alaska. We have unsurpassed fishing, hunting, and outdoor recreation. Please serious inquiries only. Fax resume with references to 907 345-9639, or call me at home evenings at (907) 345-4636. (Alaska standard time is 4 hrs earlier than East Coast)

For People Who Love Trees

Arboguard Tree Specialists, with offices in Atlanta, Georgia; Augusta, Georgia; Greenville, South Carolina; and Charlotte, North Carolina, seeks experienced sales arborists, crew leaders, and climbers who possess a passion for excellence. Our crews enjoy year-round work with a company that recognizes the importance of safety, training, and exemplary service. We offer excellent benefits, including health insurance, 401K, a Drug Free Workplace, and relocation assistance. A clean, valid driver’s license is required. A CDL is a plus, as is ISA certification. Dennis Tourangeau welcomes your call to discuss your future with the Southeast’s premiere tree care company. Toll Free: 1-866-887-5555 Fax (404) 294-0090 PO Box 477, Avondale Estates, GA 30002 email: dtourangeau@arboguard.com www.arboguard.com

ALASKA tree service seeks seasonal climber, (or relocate). Season runs from April to October. Prefer well rounded climber with excellent pruning skills, but will consider all applicants. MUST be drug free, clean cut, have drivers license, understand production, be good at self praise, and not afraid to drag brush. Small company, excellent equipment, long term employment available. Not a 9-5 job. We work Mon-Fri, rain or shine, until the last customer expecting us is finished. Weekends optional, but always available. Starting pay $15-$25/hr, DOE. This is an awesome opportunity to get paid while experiencing Alaska. We have unsurpassed fishing, hunting, and outdoor recreation. Please serious inquiries only. Fax resume with references to 907 345-9639, or call me at home evenings at (907) 345-4636. (Alaska standard time is 4 hrs earlier than East Coast)

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ValleyCrest Companies has an exciting career oppy available for a senior tree care industry professional in our national tree care division. Position will provide leadership & overall direction for tree care ops located across the United States and will be responsible for profitably growing existing ValleyCrest Landscape Maintenance tree care operations & for developing successful operations in new markets. This position also focuses on integrating tree care operations into a national network with common approaches to business development, recruiting, employee training & development programs, leadership development, field production processes, quality of work, client service and retention.

Requirements:
- 10 + yr arborist services management experience
- Multi-state/location mgmt exp
- Tree care or related sales & mtg exp
- 4 yr degree in Arboriculture, Forestry, Hort or Plant Science
- Exceptional organization & communication skills
- Knowledge of general budget & financial planning principles
- Travel up to 50%

This position is available in CA or Western US

We offer full benefits, a 401(k), paid time off and paid holidays.

Submit resume & salary requirements to recruit@valleycrest.com or fax to (818) 225-6835

We are drug free & an EOE by choice.

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Requirements:
- 10 + yr arborist services management experience
- Multi-state/location mgmt exp
- Tree care or related sales & mtg exp
- 4 yr degree in Arboriculture, Forestry, Hort or Plant Science
- Exceptional organization & communication skills
- Knowledge of general budget & financial planning principles
- Travel up to 50%

This position is available in CA or Western US

We offer full benefits, a 401(k), paid time off and paid holidays.

Submit resume & salary requirements to recruit@valleycrest.com or fax to (818) 225-6835

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### Vermeer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Number</th>
<th>Part No.</th>
<th>Knife Description &amp; Size</th>
<th>SALE Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC1000</td>
<td>KCH20109</td>
<td>Double Edge 9&quot; x 4-1/2&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
<td>$32.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>DC1800XL</td>
<td>KCH20112</td>
<td>Double Edge 10&quot; x 5&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
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<td>BC1220-BC1250</td>
<td>KCH20002</td>
<td>Single Edge 8&quot; x 3-1/2&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
<td>$19.25</td>
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<td>BC1400</td>
<td>KCH20110</td>
<td>Double Edge 8&quot; x 5&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
<td>$33.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC1800-BC2000</td>
<td>KCH20103</td>
<td>Double Edge 10&quot; x 5-1/2&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
<td>$38.95</td>
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### Morbark

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<th>Knife Description &amp; Size</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100, 200, 290</td>
<td>KCH10001</td>
<td>Double Edge 7-1/4&quot; x 4&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10, 13, 17, 2050</td>
<td>KCH40001</td>
<td>Double Edge 10-1/2&quot; x 5&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
<td>$33.95</td>
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### Brush Bandit

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<th>Model Number</th>
<th>Part No.</th>
<th>Knife Description &amp; Size</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90XP, 280XP</td>
<td>KCH10004</td>
<td>Double Edge 5-3/32&quot; x 4&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
<td>$21.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>100XP-250XP</td>
<td>KCH10003</td>
<td>Double Edge 7-1/4&quot; x 4&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
<td>$19.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>250XP, 254XP after '01</td>
<td>KCH10101</td>
<td>Double Edge 7-1/4&quot; x 4-1/2&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
<td>$25.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890 Intimidator</td>
<td>KCH20103</td>
<td>Double Edge 10&quot; x 5-1/2&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
<td>$38.95</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Asplundh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Number</th>
<th>Part No.</th>
<th>Knife Description &amp; Size</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12” Drum</td>
<td>KCH30001</td>
<td>Single Edge 12” x 3” x 3/8”</td>
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<td>16” Drum</td>
<td>KCH30002</td>
<td>Single Edge 16” x 3” x 3/8”</td>
<td>$21.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To receive this special pricing, you must use this code: 05395

Offer ends May 31, 2005
ValleyCrest Companies has many opportunities available in our national tree care division due to growth in our operations in the Western US. Currently, we are seeking professionals from the tree care industry who pride themselves on high quality work, outstanding customer service and leadership capabilities. Positions include:

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Welcome to Tour des Trees 2005!

Hello fellow cyclists, volunteers, sponsors, and each and every one that supports the Tour and the cause that is so important to us all. My name is Paul Wood with Black Bear Adventures Bicycle Tours and I am honored to have been chosen to coordinate the 2005 Tour des Trees. On August 1, I encourage you to leave your worries and stresses behind and join us for an unforgettable journey along the scenic roads of the Historic Natchez Trace.

The Natchez Trace, operated by the National Park System, follows an enchanted 8,000 year old route through lush forests and into the heart of America’s past. Well known for its breathtaking panoramas, the Trace was first used by Native Americans thousands of years ago and later as a major trade route during frontier days. History will come alive as riders travel along the Trace, following the pathways of the Indians, boatmen, traders, soldiers, and settlers who helped shape America.

Our journey to raise much-needed funds and public awareness will take us through the winding roads of northern Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee, offering a gradual contrast in terrain from relatively flat land to gently rolling hills and into the steeper peaks of the lower Appalachian region. We’ll have opportunities to reach out to communities in all three states, building awareness of the need for research and its impact on people, trees, and the environment.

Over the past fourteen years, riders of all ages and abilities have joined together to create the event that is called Tour des Trees. They started with a common purpose and ended with a shared experience that has changed many lives. Dozens will join together again this year, traveling almost 500 miles from Jackson Mississippi to Nashville. Will you be one of them? We certainly hope so! The challenges, which are significant, will surely be matched by the warm glow of satisfaction that accompanies the accomplishment of difficult but meaningful goals.

A Sample of the Scenic and Historic Treasures You’ll Experience Along the Natchez Trace

- Stop for a break at the Tupelo Bald Cypress Swamp, with board walkways leading across yellow-green algae-covered water so smooth it looks like a chartreuse mirror that you could walk on.
- Visit Pharr Mounds, a complex of eight ancient burial mounds built from about 1,800 to 2,000 years ago.
- Travel just one mile off the route to the Tupelo National Battlefield, site of a major Civil War battle in 1864. Just a few more miles down the road and you’re at the Elvis Presley Birthplace and Museum.
- Walk the nature trails that display plants used in daily life for food and Indian tribal medicines at the Chickasaw Village site.
- Walk along the Old Trace to the graves of 13 unknown Confederate soldiers, or explore a grove of dogwood trees in Dogwood Valley.

Special Thanks To Our Platinum and Gold Leaf Tour Sponsors!

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For more information or to sign up for the adventure, please visit the Tour des Trees web site at www.tourdestrees.org, or contact Tour coordinator Paul Wood at Paul@blackbearadventures.com.
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A300 Standards are used as guides for federal, state, municipal and private authorities including property owners, property managers, and utilities in the drafting of their maintenance specifications. They are recommended study materials for virtually all US arborist licensing and certification programs, and form the basis of most city and state tree maintenance ordinances.

Using A300 Standards, you can write work specifications that follow accepted industry practices, enabling clients to objectively compare bids, “apples to apples.”

If you’re not writing bid specifications and work orders using the ANSI A300 Standards, bid requesters and clients can’t be certain that you plan on following accepted industry practices.

Like all A300 Standards, the sixth and newest standard, Transplanting, is developed by the ASC A300 Standards Committee, a group of experts representing green industry organizations such as; TCIA, SMA, PGMS, UAA, PLANET, ISA, ASLA, ANLA, and ASCA; governmental agencies like USFS and NPS; as well as private tree care companies.

Other Standards available include Pruning, Fertilization, Cabling & Bracing, Lightning Protection, and the newly released Management of Trees and Shrubs During Development.

To order Transplanting, Call 1-800-733-2622 or visit www.treecareindustry.org

Please circle 73 on Reader Service Card
By Fred Evans

My wife, Jamie, and I live in a California Central Coast valley. There are five small towns within the community and the total population is about 25,000. Having lived and worked here for many years, I was becoming a little complacent about my business. I guess you could say that things had become routine.

But that all changed a couple of years ago when I began noticing that a lot of trees in our valley were being trimmed by other companies, and that the work was not being done by regular licensed contractors. That was when I started getting fewer calls. Normally, I scheduled most of my work four to six weeks in advance. But we were scheduling only two to three weeks of work in advance. My business was falling off fast, and I figured that I would be out of business by December, about eight months away. With that realization, I knew that I had to do something to solve this problem or there would be no Merry Christmas.

The fact that most of the pruning jobs I saw had been botched badly led me to conclude that the work was being done by unlicensed contractors. The method of pruning is the “signature” of a tree care company. To me, unlicensed contractors are crooks, because they typically prey on unassuming homeowners, do substandard work and take income away from licensed, insured, knowledgeable and legitimate businesses. These unscrupulous individuals underbid jobs by 30 percent or more. They don’t pay taxes, are often uninsured for liability and don’t contribute to workers’ compensation insurance. Some of the outfits reside locally, while others come from large cities outside our valley.

In addition to seeing tree work being done by unlicensed individuals, I noticed an influx of trucks and trailers with illegal advertising. I also noticed illegal advertising in the local newspapers and phone books, and bulletin boards posted with illegal business advertisements and cards. I was amazed by the level of illegal tree work that was being done by individuals claiming to be licensed tree trimming contractors.

It was evident that I needed to do something as quickly as possible to deter these individuals from stealing jobs so easily.

I am not your super computer-literate type of guy. Nor do I have the patience to work through the system using all the normal channels. But, thankfully, my wife is good at such things. So, our first line of attack was to go online and find the Contractors State License Board Web site. From there we were able to link to the State of California Business and Professions code laws that applied to our situation. We had to wade through many pages of regulations until we found the laws applicable to the illegal activities taking place in our community. In our search of these sites we found the address and phone numbers for the office of the Southern California State License Board Investigative Fraud Team.

After numerous phone calls, we contacted the agent in charge of this unit. He advised us on how we could help with an investigation and any operations they could conduct to reduce the unlicensed contractor problem in our area. We also learned that this department works with state and local law enforcement.

We compiled a list of unlicensed people doing business as contractors by: 1) going to all the bulletin boards in town and gathering cards and advertisements; 2) gathering copies of newspaper and telephone book ads, and; 3) taking pictures of trucks with illegal advertisements.

We sent this information to the Fraud Unit and soon received a reply. They were shocked to find such a large number of people advertising illegally in such a small place. They were ready to cite these individuals, but said they needed our assistance in setting up a location to conduct a sting operation. In my conversations with the Fraud Division agent, I found out that our local law enforcement could also enforce the business and professions code laws themselves. We were concerned that a sting operation conducted by the State Fraud Unit would have little lasting impact, unless there was follow-up from the local law enforcement agencies.

I thought about our conversation for a week or so, and realized that some of my clients were on the police force. We had known each other for many years. I called one of my local police clients and told him what we were doing and asked if he would like to discuss it over coffee one morning. He was under the impression, as were most police departments, that the Business and Professions Code was a civil matter and did not involve the police. But, he did agree to have coffee with me four days later.
During that time, we studied the Business and Professions Code and found the words misdemeanor and felony. We printed out about eight pages of the code. I took it with me to the meeting. As we talked about our work, families and the weather, I casually slipped the eight pages of code from my briefcase and slid it across the table. I asked him to look it over when he had a chance, and let me know what he thought. He was curious and immediately read it. When he finished, he told me he was pretty sure I was correct about local law enforcement authority to enforce compliance with the Business and Professions Code. He said he would run it by his boss to be sure, and we parted company for the day.

In addition to requesting the assistance of local law enforcement, my wife and I contacted the district attorney's office. We wanted to know what would happen to the individuals if and when they were cited in a sting operation. We were pleased to find that the district attorney was on top of prosecuting illegal contractors. Finally, the day came when the Southern California Investigative Fraud unit came to town and conducted a sting operation at a site we had arranged for them. Sixteen people were caught, which took less than a day to conduct. It was a great day for us. We knew it would send a message to illegal contractors. At the same time we knew it was only a beginning. We knew they would be back if there wasn’t any follow-up. So, we had many conversations with local law enforcement and the district attorney’s office. The chief of police outlined the steps that his department would take when summoned to a site where an unlicensed contractor was working. Next, he established a system to allow any legitimate contractor or individual to report a Business and Professions Code violation in progress.

After a call, a police officer is sent to the site to investigate and/or issue a citation for the violation. If the perpetrator has never been caught before, he or she will be cited and released. Then that individual will receive a summons to appear in court where he or she may be given a fine and probation. Upon the second citation, probation could be revoked on site and the individual could be arrested. In the state of California the second conviction carries a minimum of 90 days in jail and a $4,500 fine, or, a maximum of 1 year in jail and a $15,000 fine.

These numbers make us very happy. As we drive around our work area, we now are making phone calls to local law enforcement and more and more of these people are ending up in court. Not only are the illegal tree trimmers ending up in court, the word is out to all the others that they will
be cited if they try to contract work without a license. What a great deterrent.

In addition to this, we found an individual at the state Fraud Office who issues citations from the office when an illegal advertisement is sent in. We pay attention to ads and send in those that do not meet the advertising laws of the State License Contract Board. We used to find 50 to 100 illegal ads, now we find only a few; one more deterrent.

To solve the illegal contractors problem completely, we started a major campaign to educate the public. They needed to learn the difference between people who know very little about, or are unconcerned about, professional arboricultural standards and the arborists that do. They needed to understand what the importance of proper tree care is for maintaining healthy trees. Most people are unaware of proper pruning techniques, how to water and fertilize their trees, when to plant, what to plant, where to plant, when to trim, and how to deal with pest infestations. We have distributed 10,000 fliers with color photos of three different tree species depicting both good and bad pruning. It was also printed in the local paper.

The response was greater than expected.

Everyone seems to love it, particularly our clients. More importantly, our phone began to ring more frequently than it has in some time. We also began running a quarter page article monthly in the local paper to increase the general level of knowledge within the community about tree care. Furthermore, it encourages both licensed and unlicensed contractors to do a better a job or risk losing their work. And finally, we designed a Web site (www.syvtreecare.com) to help educate the public. This site has links to the ISA and the Tree Care Industry Association. Many people and clients have had positive comments about what they were able to learn by accessing the Web site.

Our company had slipped to its lowest point in 2003 with only one week of work on the books. One year later, we had returned to the normal six to eight weeks of work, and have been holding that number.

One of our secrets for an even flow of work is to deliberately spread it out over the year. For instance, we discourage work on pines in the summer due to potential bark beetle problems. We promote fruit tree pruning and often teach clients how to prune for fruit. We keep a list of clients with fruit trees and contact them each year as a reminder. Trimming evergreens in the summer and fall for safety is standard. This not only improves appearance, but also readies them for winter rain and wind.

There are many ways to educate your clients and diversify your business, so you never have to lay off employees. Clients are happier when they see familiar employees every year, rather than a revolving door of strangers. A comfortable client is more likely to stay with you for the long term when they see the care you provide for their trees as well as your employees. Some of my clients have been with me for 15 years. And that’s how long I’ve been in this area.

Fred and Jamie Evans own Santa Ynez Valley Tree Care in Santa Ynez, Calif., and are members of the Tree Care Industry Association. This article was originally published in the December 2004 issue of Western Arborist.
To get this contract, you’ll need impeccable credentials.

Retired Concert Pianist Loves Nature
She’s well off and well travelled and she’s all business when it comes to running her household. The children are grown with families of their own, and she and her husband look forward to visits from their six energetic grandchildren.

They’re retired, and while he golfs, she enjoys music, quilting, knitting, basketry and, most of all, gardening. The grounds surrounding their estate contain an orchard, extensive lawns, a pond, a scenic meadow, a groomed hedge, vegetable and flower gardens, and a woodland garden sheltered by century-old trees. She loves the calm, protected areas of the property and values the natural character and beauty of the forests and land for their elegant and comfortable accommodation. Her next project is to have selected areas of the grounds floodlit during the evening.

Cleanliness Next to Godliness
The demands of the property are significant. She used to employ a full-time groundskeeper that arranged all the contracting, but his health has forced him to retire and his son has moved away. She made a false start with a service recommended by a neighbor. The owner was pleasant and well dressed when he visited, but when his men came to work, three days after the promised time, they were slovenly. Their truck leaked oil on her drive, they left lunch wrappers behind and bits of twigs and brush on the pathways. When she called to ask them to come back, a young woman was curt with her. When she received a separate bill for the cleanup, she promptly fired them.

Does Her Homework
Later in life, she has studied interior design, fashion merchandising and, luckily, the internet at a local technical college. She uses the Internet to research services in her area that can help with the maintenance. She wants to employ a well-established company that has a good reputation. One that will treat her fairly and whose employees take pride in their work. She wants a company she can trust.

That’s why she’ll choose a company that is Accredited by the Tree Care Industry Association.

Get Accredited. Call 1-800-733-2622. or visit www.treecareindustry.org

Please circle 69 on Reader Service Card
In January 2003, I received a call from a development company that requested a tree preservation plan on a 125- to 150-year-old beech tree on a commercial development site. The company was under some pressure from the local community as a number of existing trees on the site had been removed. The outcry from the community made the preservation of this majestic beech all the more important.

Construction damage is, according to the National Arbor Day Foundation, the No. 1 killer of trees in this country. In most cases, the death of these trees is needless as well as counterproductive. Construction damage is more than just the loss of a few trees; in most cases the soil is also damaged, impairing its ability to serve as a viable reservoir of nutrients, oxygen and water. The implications of this are enormous. Everything that is planted in this site will have trouble establishing. In addition, for the rest of their existence, trees and shrubs on these sites will depend heavily on irrigation, pesticides and fertilization for their sustenance. In Rhode Island prior to 1975, construction damage was virtually unknown. As you drive through one of the older neighborhoods in your area compare the plant communities, in terms of diversity and health, to one of the newer developments. We had a real estate agent do a value comparison of similar homes constructed on ecologically undamaged sites, which in our area means homes built before 1975. The older homes sold, on the average, for $33,000 more than a similar newer home on an altered site.

My first step, after accepting the job, was to make a site visit. My first visit was not during the growing season, so there was no foliage to act as an indicator of the health of the growth systems. My only indicators were the presence of buds; the tree seemed to be budding consistently. There had been some soil disruption within the drip-line, but the tree still looked viable, so I started formulating a plan of action. Tree preservation is basically a numbers game consisting of assets and liabilities. As the old song goes, “You’ve got to accentuate the positive and eliminate, (or at least mit-
igate), the negative.”

Photo No. 1 shows the tree as I initially found it. You will note the inadequate dripline barrier and the debris piled much too close to the viable root zone. My first recommendation was to put the remaining root system off limits to any further disturbance and or storage. I asked that a protection fence be installed with metal posts to be cemented into the ground. Photo No. 2 shows the preservation fencing in place. I also recommended that the vegetation under the tree be removed by hand, being careful not to injure the bark of either the trunk or surface roots. I was concerned that an opportunistic pathogen might try to gain entry.

In terms of an irrigation system, I recommended that the system be installed only along the perimeters and not in a radial pattern.

In any preservation scenario, monitoring is essential. During an inspection in June 2003, I noticed some small branches on the south-east side of the tree going into a decline. This tree had endured some trauma in the transition from a stabilized setting to being thrust into what amounted to a plant war zone.

In evaluating plant health, there are different stages of impairment. The first is dysfunction. At this stage, the plant systems are still intact; they are just not working properly. This is the best stage to begin treatment, as the second stage is deterioration. The longer a problem persists, the more damage is done and at this point remedial options are progressively limited.

I approached the development company to recommend periodic fertilizations containing a mycorrhizal promoter. The tree responded positively and a hurdle was cleared.

In May 2004, my site visit yielded some very interesting information. The leaves on the beech had started to emerge, but in a very irregular pattern, (see photo No. 3). The tree eventually came to full leaf, but seeing the beech in this stage showed me that some of the growth systems were impaired. Seeing this stage made me realize how delicate the balance of health was in this organism. It is all too easy to view life in terms of black and white, but nature is not so. Any living organism contains very complex and interrelated systems. In terms of plant health, we as the diagnosticians must be able to recognize and separate these systems in order to determine what is really going on with the plants under our care. Seeing the tree in this growth stage made it clear that this was a mature organism. The older an organism is the less recuperative powers are available to it.

The tree had so far made it through the previous stages of construction, but the key to its continued survival lies in mitigating future stressors. The landscape design for the drip-zone area consists of English ivy. I liked this solution because applying mulch under the base opens the door to the possibility of over-mulching. Planting grass beneath the tree would create the need for herbicides and the possibility of foot traffic.

A local garden club has since adopted the tree to keep its continued health under the watchful eye of the community.

To me, this was a very important assignment. It demonstrates the essence of stewardship. Stewardship is taking the arboreal treasures of the past and making them available to the next generation. It is up to those of us who realize the importance of this task to faithfully take on this responsibility.

For further information on saving trees during construction, the following publication may be consulted: Trees and Development: A Technical Guide to Preservation of Trees During Land Development, Nelda Matheny and James R. Clark, 1998 International Society of Arboriculture.

David Schwartz is a consulting arborist with 35 years field experience. He is the owner of Schwartz Tree Care in Cranston, R.I., a TCIA Member since 1996.

This article was originally published in Landsculptor Magazine, February 2005, a monthly publication of the Michigan Green Industry Association. Reprinted with permission.
The Voice for Trees PAC is moving ahead quickly in organizing TCIA members and raising funds to positively affect tree care businesses. Most recently, VFT-PAC held a very successful fundraiser at Winter Management Conference, where the committee raised $51,100 in contributions and pledges!

There were some familiar names on the dinner list, as some of VFT’s strongest supporters once again stepped forward on behalf of the industry. This year, new contributors added their commitments to expanding TCIA’s voice in Washington. And that voice is strongly needed in 2005 and beyond, as Congress grapples with immigration issues, pesticide regulations, hours of service rules, and changes in the American workplace that will influence how every tree care company does business.

VFT and the entire tree care industry thank those who attended the dinners, corporate sponsors who helped defray costs, and TCIA members who couldn’t attend but added their commitment to bringing the message of professional tree care to Congress.

Contributors and pledges to VFT-PAC (since Oct. 1, 2004)

Corporate Sponsors & Pledges
Almstead Tree & Shrub Care Co. - $1,000
Baldwin Tree Care, Inc. - $300
Barrett Tree Service - $100
Bartlett Arborist Supply - $250
The F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Co. - $5,000
Buckley Tree Service, Inc. - $750
The Care of Trees, Inc. - $1,000
Davey Tree Expert Co. - $5,000
C.L. Frank & Company - $500
Hartney Greymont - $1,000
Lewis Tree Care, Inc. - $5,000

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Phil Berwick, Living Tree Care, Inc. - $20
Jack Butcher, Madison Tree Care and Landscaping - $500
Tamarack Forestry Service, Inc. - $1,500
Trees, Inc. - $1,000
Wachtel Tree Science & Service, Inc. - $500
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Tamarack Forestry Service, Inc. - $1,500
Trees, Inc. - $1,000
Wachtel Tree Science & Service, Inc. - $500
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Gregory S. Daniels, The F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Co. - $1,500
Jill Downes, Downes Tree Service, Inc. - $250
Josh Fafard, Lightning Tree Service - $100
David Fleischner, Trees, Inc. - $750
Chris Frank, C.L. Frank & Company - $500
Randy Finch, Finch Tree Surgery - $250
Tony Gann, Altec Industries - $2,500
Rusty Girouard, Madison Tree Care and Landscaping - $500
Tom Golon, Wonderland Tree Care, Inc. - $500
James Harris, Wood Acres Tree Specialists - $250
Timothy J. Harris, Buckley Tree Service, Inc. - $500
David Hawkins, Urban Forestry Solutions - $100
John R. Hendrickson, The Care of Trees, Inc. - $500
Joe Hendrickson, Hendrickson Tree Care - $250
Jeanne House, McFarland Landscape Services, Inc. - $500
Ron Keith, Shawnee Mission Tree Service - $1,500
Joe & Jan Kramer, Kramer Tree Specialists, Inc. - $250
John Marchionda, Husqvarna - $250
Paul Markworth, Wachtel Tree Science & Service, Inc.
Meet Tim Harris, new chair of TCIA

Tim Harris, president of Buckley Tree Service in New Berlin, Wisconsin, was installed as chairman of the board of directors of the Tree Care Industry Association at its recent Winter Management Conference on Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. He was first elected to TCIA's board in February 2000, when TCIA was known as the National Arborist Association (NAA).

Buckley Tree Service was founded in 1963, and Harris has been the president and owner since 1994. The first accredited tree care company in Wisconsin, Buckley has been a TCIA member since 1977. Harris is also a member of the International Society of Arboriculture, Wisconsin Arborist Association and Wisconsin Landscape Contractors Association. In 2004, Harris received the Wisconsin Arborist Association Distinguished Service Award, which is presented to an individual who has made extraordinary contributions of their time and talent to the WAA.

Harris attended Northern Michigan University and University of New Mexico, where he studied secondary education. “I wanted to be a high school teacher and coach,” he noted. Instead, a summer job with Buckley turned into a career.

Harris started off as a hose dragger for Buckley’s spray man and worked his way up from there. His transition from employee to owner was smoothed by a planned program. “I ran the company for five years before the buyout,” he said. “I was the general manager and in charge of sales. The owner gave me a free hand to run the place before I was the owner.”

“When I started with Buckley in 1982, I was the third employee,” he said. “When I bought the business 12 years later we had eight or nine employees. Today we have 23. Our market is pretty spread out. We opened a second office because we were spending too much time, which means money, driving out to job sites. It is not uncommon for us to travel 40 miles to a site.”

Buckley’s current mix of business is roughly 60 percent traditional tree work and 40 percent plant health care.

His focus in his year as chairman will be on spreading the word about the value of accreditation— to the industry and consumers. TCIA has committed to the Transformation of the Industry, a five-outcome plan to enhance the professionalism, safety, and consumer awareness of the tree care industry.

“I truly believe the tree care industry and this association are at a crossroads,” Harris stated in his inaugural speech. “TCIA and its members have an opportunity to take commercial arboriculture to the next level. Our success in pushing our industry forward will depend entirely on how quickly and fully we embrace TCIA’s accreditation program,” he said. “Going through the accreditation process is the best thing I have ever done for my business. The experience helped everyone in my company focus on our strengths and weaknesses and gave us a clear direction on where we want to take the business. It may take a while for consumers to recognize its value, but we need to give the consumer a clear choice to identify professional tree care companies.”

**VFT-PAC contributors**

- $500
  - Jerry Morey, Bandit Industries, Inc. - $5,000
  - Lee C. Mueller, Reliable Landscaping & Tree Care, Inc. - $50
  - Randy J. Owen, Owen Tree Service, Inc. - $500
  - Scott D. Packard, Wright Tree Service, Inc. - $500
  - Ken Palmer, ArborMaster Training, Inc. - $250
  - Andrew T. Ross, Rtec Treecare - $500
  - Dave Scharfenberger, Wachtel Tree Science & Service, Inc. - $500
  - Erich Schneider, Schneider Tree Care - $500
  - Mark Shipp, Ogilvy Hill Insurance - $500
  - Bonni G. Siegfried, Lightning Tree Service - $1,000
  - Mark Tobin, Hartney Greymont - $1,000
  - Tom Tolkacz, Swingle Tree and Lawn Care - $500
  - Dennis Ullom, St. Croix Tree Service, Inc. - $1,000
  - Karl Warkme, Davey Tree Expert Co. - $250

For more information on the Voice for Trees PAC, how you can become involved, or details on the first-ever joint Green Industry legislative conference, call Mark Garvin at 1-800-733-2622.
Robert A. Bartlett Jr. honored with 2005 Award of Merit

Presented at 2005 Winter Management Conference by TCIA President Cynthia Mills

I’ve been given a distinct honor today by your peers. The Awards Committee Chair, Rusty Girouard, asked me if I would be willing to present the 2005 TCIA Award of Merit, because she knew how much it would mean to me. Rusty couldn’t have been more right and then I felt the responsibility to recognize someone appropriately for who I have such a deep respect and whom I like tremendously.

In this case, the list of honors is extensive. In TCIA alone there is a former President, a Chair’s Award, Committee participation and leadership, multiple Freeman Parr Awards, and plenty of Excellence in Arboriculture Awards to name a few. There is untold support for the development of individual arborists through participation in volunteer opportunities. There is long-term support for a quality trade association to represent this industry by contributing employee leaders to develop standards, increase safety, provide leadership to regulatory and legislative efforts, and to establish TCIA’s first Political Action Committee. There is annual support for the passion of arboriculture that burns in a young student’s mind that can be enhanced through TCIA Career Days. This was further sealed with early support of a Chair of Arboriculture at the University of Massachusetts, which helped insure that the oldest program of Arboriculture in the United States will continue to educate arborists through its third century.

And then, there are the countless interesting facets to someone’s life that none of us could guess without a little more research. You know, they tell us these days that we should “google ourselves” once in a while to see what’s up there on the Internet, so I decided to have a look to see what would come up for our honoree.

You could find references in American, English, and French. You could find tidbits in New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Massachusetts, Canada, and England. You could find ties to the University of Massachusetts Foundation, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, Friends of the National Arboretum, The Smithsonian, The Terry College of Business at UGA, and Friends of the National Zoo.

You could take your choice of publications like Tree Tips, Arbor Age, The Daily Record, and the Canada News Record. You could even find references to TV’s hit show “While You Were Out”; never mind the 2004 National Christmas Tree.

This industry is full of people who are family-oriented, stalwart, hard-working, solid and genuine. Even within a group of some of the finest people I’ve had the pleasure of being affiliated with, there is one who stands out among us, and who does his best NOT to stand out. He walks quietly among us helping with every opportunity that comes along and nurturing thousands. The breadth of caring is expansive. The willingness to share scientific advances so quickly to lift all boats is born of passion and is a gift to all of us that seems to know no bounds. The quiet movement, the searching out of where contributions can be made, and the ease in the way in which life lays upon him is a whisper to us all of what it means to “make it.” While none of us would deny that this gentle giant has made it, all of us can learn how to carry ourselves within our families, our communities, and our peers from the manner in which this great friend of ours walks through his life. Though multiple generations have passed before him, he has made the present, and the promise of the future, something of which his predecessors can only be tremendously proud. He has not made it simply for those to whom he is responsible but has reached beyond to those whom he chooses to care about.

While there have been high points and high flying moments in this honoree’s life, such as meeting the Queen of England at Buckingham Palace, there is never a moment when this friend to arboriculture cannot spare time to teach a young tree care company owner or a new president of TCIA. When I have questioned our next move, this awardee has been there with encouragement and clarity for our industry’s future. When TCIA has needed someone to launch a new initiative, personnel are always available immediately and for as long as needed to make sure that the effort is successful. There is never a “no” where there is a need.

I think the thing that makes me most delighted to present this TCIA Award of Merit today is that upon arrival, it took me no time to say to newcomers, “Come to the Winter Management Conference. Where else can you sit down with a giant of the industry like Robert A. Bartlett, Jr. and spend lunch getting to know him and getting some questions answered?” It’s the approachability, the generosity, the consistency, and the vision that have given so much to this industry.

And for that, we salute you today Robert and thank you for being a friend to the tree care industry and a friend to each of us.”

Employee reviews made easy - in Spanish!

A new Tree Care Company Business Guide for Employee Performance Reviews was developed by the TCIA Accreditation department and distributed to members in August 2004. Almost immediately, we started fielding calls for copies in Spanish.

Included with the April Reporter and FREE to members, the new Spanish version is based on tree care industry best practices developed over many years at some of the most respected tree care companies and general practices recommended by human resource professionals. It has undergone a legal review by the law firm of Robert Sumner & Associates and has been draft tested by a number of TCIA member tree care companies and general practices.
Who’s telling your story?

Your work results in more available oxygen and fewer allergens, noise reduction and lower cooling bills, thicker turf that filters pollutants and landscapes that increase property values. There are endless environmental, economic and lifestyle benefits that green spaces provide—yet consumers don’t know about them. They don’t understand the true value of your products and services.

Join us in telling the whole story of what you do. Project EverGreen is an organization dedicated to educating the public about the value of green spaces and encouraging responsible practices.

To make a contribution or find out more, call 877-758-4835 or visit www.projectevergreen.com.
Presented at 2005 Winter Management Conference by TCIA Chairman Greg Daniels

“TCIA often recognizes people from within our active member companies who give considerable time and energy to our industry. This year, in thinking about those to whom we are grateful for gifts of creativity, vision, and dedication, it became clear to me that one name leapt to the top – and it is from our tremendous partners; TCIA’s Associate Members.

I have had the pleasure of knowing this gentleman in our ranks for many years now. We have worked together in many industry meetings. What I observed was tireless enthusiasm for our industry; a desire to make the volunteer environment better; and a shared dream for what we could become by leveraging all of our resources together. Never was this determination more evident than in all the years of commitment to the National Arborist Foundation and later The TREE Fund.

In addition, this person represents so much of what has happened to TCIA over a long stretch of evolution. Throughout that evolution, the company this individual leads has been present as a strong advocate by contributing volunteers to our Board, our Associate member committee, and NAF. This company has also supported TCIA’s development of many programs and conferences over the years. This company’s leadership was present during the development and launch of TCI EXPO and TCI magazine. This awardee continues to be a staunch advocate of TCIA’s leadership and seeks to enhance our position of being THE trade show home for the industry.

The path to leadership has been evident for many years. A sales and marketing guru, he is still sought out for his expertise in this area within his company, while leading one of the largest companies in our industry.

While working hard at what he loves, this awardee still finds time to care about the broader community around him. He sings in his church’s choir, serves on its Administrative Committee, and is responsible for the formation of a church-based Foundation.

Our award recipient is a member of the Central Michigan University Advisory Council for the Entrepreneurship Program. This council works with the professors at the university to give advice on the curriculum and interacts with the students to judge business plans and participate in exit interviews.

In his spare time, our Awardee is a horticulturist and works in his green house where he grows a variety of roses. He is an avid outdoorsman enjoying hunting, fishing, and golf.

We know him as someone who never says “no” and never lets us down. We know him as someone who is a tough business person with a deeply committed heart to our industry. We know him as Jerry Morey, president of Bandit Industries.

Jerry, thank you for your leadership within the tree care industry and for your many, many years of service on our behalf. You are a true associate member partner, and we appreciate the gift of you to us.”

Jerry Morey honored with 2005 Chairman’s Award

(L-R) Jerry Morey receives a plaque and the thanks of the industry from TCIA Chairman Greg Daniels.

TCIA to take part in TreesFlorida in June

TCIA will take part in Trees Florida Conference & Trade Show, in Palm Harbor June 11-14, 2005.

Trees Florida is cosponsored by Florida Chapter of ISA, Florida Urban Forestry Council, Florida Division of Forestry and University of Florida Extension.

TCIA will have a booth at the show on Monday and Tuesday, June 13-14.

Bob Rouse, TCIA director of Accreditation, will host an Accreditation seminar at 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday the 14th.

The conference is being held at The Westin Innisbrook Golf Resort in Palm Harbor, near Tampa.

Conference Schedule At-A-Glance
Saturday June 11 – Tree Academy (3 all-day seminars plus an ISA Certification Review Class), and TCC Meetings
Sunday June 12 – ISA Exam, Tree Climbing Championship, Family Fun Day, Kayak Trip, Trade Show Setup, Family BBQ
Monday June 13 – Trade Show, Educational Sessions, Silent Auction, Outdoor Tree Climbing School, Awards Luncheon, Opening Reception
Tuesday June 14 – Trade Show, Educational Sessions, Silent Auction, Outdoor Tree Climbing School

Pre-registration must be postmarked by May 27. For a registration form or more information, call (941) 342-0153 or visit www.treesflorida.com.
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Nothing Like a Good Tug on Your Belt

By Myron Dorshak

Dorshak Family Tree & Landscape Inc. started in business approximately 17 years ago. My brother Jesse and I worked for several tree companies trimming and removing trees before we ventured out on our own. Starting with only a pickup and a couple of chain saws, we built our business to a little over $1 million a year. Things are going well now (except for a sore right arm sometimes). But I can remember in the early days when things were not so well and our company almost did not get off the ground.

In 1986, I was developing my skills working for a popular tree service in Milwaukee, Wisc. I was still an apprentice climber with questionable skills. My foreman said he was going somewhere for lunch and would be back soon. He was gone a little longer than a half hour and I was anxious to test my skills on a large oak tree. I wanted to show him what I could do.

Unfortunately, this tree had some unique characteristics. The central trunk of the tree was strong but dead 35 feet up. I chose to tie into this dead trunk with the idea that once I was done swinging around trimming the lateral branches, I would untie my climbing line and retie below on live wood. Disregarding the rule that you never tie into deadwood, I proceeded, but with some trepidation.

Finally the top of this wide spreading oak was cleaned up, and I was ready to cut the dead trunk. I put my safety rope around the trunk and was able to stand on two limbs to secure myself. I proceeded to cut a two foot notch. The wedge of wood flew out and I was now ready for my back cut. I unhooked my safety line from around the trunk and then started cutting toward the notch. When I felt I could push the log into my wedge, I turned my chain saw off, hooked it to a ladder snap on the left side of my belt, took a deep breath and started pushing. I felt a tug on my belt ...

My mind did not want to experience what my body was about to. I awoke laying spread-eagled on my back with my chain saw still hooked to my side and the dead trunk nearby. There wasn’t a lot of pain yet. I was in shock. The pain would come later – when the ambulance attendants moved me, and when the emergency workers cleaned me up at the hospital. For now, I lay motionless on my back looking up to a beautiful, light blue sky in comfortable 70 degree weather and feeling thankful that I was alive – while at the same time wondering how I could have done such a stupid thing.

Slowly I moved my various limbs to see if everything still worked. Twitching my muscles and moving my body parts ever so slightly, I began to get excited that everything worked until I tried to move my right arm. A tremendous pain engulfed this area and with no idea what a broken bone felt like, I knew immediately that I had broken my arm.

Driving off in the ambulance, I experienced a cornucopia of emotions and thoughts: embarrassed that I cut the piece I was tied to, disappointed and a little angry that I didn’t escape injury free, feeling a lot of pain at every movement of the stretcher, yet feeling lucky that my injuries were not worse, and feeling thankful that I was still alive!

Myron Dorshak is an owner of Dorshak Family Tree & Landscape Inc. in Butler, Wisc.
There's only one Vermeer yellow. It represents the only true leader in tree care products. Mixed in are five decades of ingenuity that spawned things like industry-changing safety features, innovations that enable mobility and access to tight areas, systems that enhance productivity. Quieter machines. Easier maintenance. All backed by a strong and supportive global dealer network. It's a shade that's deep. A heritage that's rich. Others will try, but neither can be duplicated easily. Call 1-888-VERMEER or visit www.vermeer.com.
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- Over 500 parks systems heads wrote that nothing works so well.

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