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What’s our Model for the Future?

We just came off the most successful TCI EXPO in the history of our industry with well over 4,000 attendees and exhibitors – including more than 340 students – validating our conference as the largest in the world for tree care. People came from all over the globe: China, Japan, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Canada, Australia and all over the United States. So impressive was arboriculture’s signature gathering that all four major news networks carried coverage.

This is annually one of the most intense opportunities for arborists to learn from each other and for your staff team to learn from you. One of the things that struck me is how we are all always looking for a different and better way to do something – whether it is a better arboriculture practice, a safer way to get the job done, a new service line to provide greater consumer benefit and increase profitability, or more advanced equipment that makes the job easier to perform. Conversations at EXPO cover the gamut of what is essentially one question: “How are you doing it?”

Mapped to that is a bit of a conundrum – as companies are founded, they tend to look for what has been successful in the past – or is successful now. And, yet, those people who are being looked to are themselves looking for new ways to do things. I have run across examples of models that run against the grain of how the traditional tree care company operates. One company had no bricks and mortar. The owner and all the crews had laptops, radios, cell phones or blackberries. They were early thirties or younger and had not committed to the expense of owning a place, when you can work from anywhere with technology to connect to your employees and your customers. Another company is based in one state, does not have offices all over the U.S., and yet takes jobs all across the nation – nothing like the model of owning the building and having your customer base within a 100 mile radius of that location.

What does this prove? There is “more than one way to skin a cat,” and younger unencumbered business owners are going to use their human and technological resources in ways that the “established” company might not even conceive. Business predictions from the commercial real estate market are that fewer and fewer people will go to a place of business in the future. Corporations have already moved away from everyone having an office to “office sharing areas” for employees when people do come into the central office. That is similar already to crews based all over the place that start out from home instead of going to a central office.

What Will the tree care company model of the future look like? We have centralized and decentralized models in play now. Is one better than the other? Is there another model that is going to drop the overhead costs significantly like the “techno-only” approach, which will ramp up the competition? Have we even thought about the models that we operate under and how to consider evolving them for the future?

Five years ago, we didn’t have e-mail addresses for a significant number of people in our industry, and it wasn’t because they weren’t sharing. Today, we send more and more member services digitally than we do in print form anymore. Ten years ago, few were logging onto the Internet daily. At TCI EXPO, one of the highest rated and absolutely packed workshops was all about Internet marketing. Our model of interacting with our customers and our employees is changing. Are we being purposeful about it as an industry and seeking together what will create the best way for us to serve our customer and be profitable in the future?

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Tree Care Industry Volume XVIII Number 12

DECEMBER

Features

8 Tweaking the Benefits of Organic Mulch
By Dr. Glynn Percival and Evangelos Gklavakis

24 Professional Duties in Tree Risk Assessment
By J. David Hucker

32 Clearing the Way for Energy
By David Rattigan

42 Fine Tuning Grinder Output for New Markets
By Rick Howland

50 On the Trail of the Light Brown Apple Moth
By Sarah Magee

68 Building a Climbing System
By Keith Pancake

Departments

2 Outlook
By Cynthia Mills
From bricks and mortar to virtual offices – what will be the tree care industry’s business model for the future?

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

22 Industry Almanac
Important regional and national meetings and activities.

28 Letters & E-mails
(Continued on page 6)
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DECEMBER

DEPARTMENTS

34 Branching Out
By Rebecca Fater
A new “One Day, One School” program, making trees on school properties safer, may be coming soon to a town near you.

38 Accident Briefs

52 Accreditation
John Kerns says TCIA Accreditation is for tree care firms today what the certified arborist credential was for industry employees in the 1990s.

54 Washington in Review
OSHA rules that all personal protective equipment (PPE), with a few exceptions, will be provided at no cost to employees.

58 Classified Advertising

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

76 TCI 2007 Article List
A chronological listing of all articles in TCI magazine for 2007.

79 Advertiser Listing

79 Training
Here’s your chance to host almost free EHAP training in your area.

80 From the Field
By Marie Hawkins
Should nose plugs be standard personal protective equipment? Maybe...

BUILDING A SYSTEM

68

WINTER BUYERS’ GUIDE
supplement with this issue

The photo montage on the cover of the October issue of TCI included an image of tree climbers that was taken by Nick Crawford.
Tree Gear Authority

Dr. John Ball

Author of over 120 publications on tree health care
Lecturer at more than 150 conferences and seminars throughout the world
Professor of Forestry
South Dakota State University
Forest Health Specialist
South Dakota Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry

Active in the profession for over 30 years as a tree care company manager and college educator

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Plant moisture stress is widely recognized as a leading cause of tree decline within urban landscapes. In the United Kingdom soil moisture deficits were especially damaging during the 2003, 2004 and 2006 growing seasons, where prolonged periods of no rainfall and temperatures frequently above 85 degrees resulted in substantial tree deaths, especially of newly transplanted trees. A subsequent watering ban in the south of England during 2006 meant techniques to prevent or reduce moisture stress of landscape trees have become of fundamental importance.

Mulching as a means of reducing soil moisture stress, weed control and improving soil fertility has been used in arboricultural, agricultural, fruit and farming systems for decades. Many benefits of mulches exist to include minimizing soil temperature and soil moisture fluctuations, encouraging tree root growth, suppressing weeds and enhancing soil nutrient status. In addition, mulches can prevent mower and string-trimmer damage to the tree trunk and act as a buffer in preventing excess de-icing salts from percolating into the soil around the root zone.

Landscape mulches can be composed of inorganic (e.g. crushed stone, crushed brick, gravel, polyethylene films) and organic matter (shredded branches and leaves, softwood and hardwood tree bark, wood chips, sawdust, pine straw, recycled pallets and mixes of the above). The use of organic rather than inorganic mulches in urban landscapes is more widely recommended for improved growth of establishing and established trees.

Pure mulches

Although organic mulches derived from wood chips are widely applied to trees, few studies have investigated the effectiveness of organic mulches derived solely from one tree species (defined in this instance as a pure mulch) on transplant survival and soil-borne disease suppression. For example, are mulches derived purely from English oak (*Quercus robur*), better than ones derived solely from common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), horse chestnut...
(Aesculus hippocastanum) or birch (Betula pendula)? Likewise would an English oak perform better when a pure mulch derived from English oak is used compared to a mulch from another tree species? Or is there one species of tree from which a pure mulch is ideal for all tree species? To answer these questions and provide further information regarding the use of mulches, a number of mulching trials were instigated at the R.A. Bartlett Tree Laboratory based at the University of Reading in the United Kingdom.

Container experiments
Initial experiments used bare-rooted stock of beech (Fagus sylvatica, Photo 2), a species regarded as notoriously transplant sensitive, and hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna, Photo 1), a species regarded as highly transplant tolerant. Each bare rooted tree was planted into two-gallon pots containing a general tree compost mix. Six pure mulches were then prepared from beech (Fagus sylvatica), hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), silver birch (Betula pendula), cherry (Prunus avium), evergreen oak (Quercus ilex) and English oak (Q. robur). All mulches were made when trees were fully dormant in early February when, with the exception of evergreen oak, no leaves were present on the tree. Mulches were applied to a depth of 4 inches. Ten beech and 10 hawthorn per pure mulch were used. It was important to record the date when pure mulches were made as chemical and physical variations will exist within mulches made during spring and summer when foliage and flowers will be present. This in turn would affect mulch chemical composition, rate of decomposition and particle size. Effects on tree survival and growth were recorded at the end of the growing season (late September).

Results showed that pure mulches had a substantial effect on tree survival rate and growth at the end of the growing season. In the case of beech, survival rates of control (non-mulched trees) was only 10 percent. Application of a pure mulch increased survival rates to 20 percent to 70 percent. The pure mulch providing the highest survival rate was that derived from hawthorn (Figure 1). Not only were survival rates improved, but there was a marked difference in the appearance of the surviving control beech tree (Photo 3) compared to a hawthorn-mulched beech tree (Photo 4). A similar response was shown when hawthorns were treated with a range of pure mulches. As hawthorn is a transplant tolerant tree, a 100 percent survival was recorded in all cases. However, at the end of the growing year, hawthorn trees treated with pure hawthorn mulches had 20 percent to 30 percent higher dry weights than non-mulched control trees. Overall, results constantly indicated that pure mulches derived from hawthorn and cherry increased survival rates and resulted in larger, healthier trees compared to pure mulches derived from silver birch, beech, evergreen oak and English oak.

Field trials
Based on the results of the container experiments, a number of field trials were instigated using larger 3.3- to 4.95-foot trees of conference pear and apple, cultivar Gala (Photo 5). At the time of planting all trees were root pruned by removal of about 55 percent (conference pear) and 45 percent (apple) total root volume to produce a
root:shoot ratio of 0.33 – a ratio associated with transplant stress in trees. Trees were planted in late January and mulched to a depth of 4 inches using one of the six pure mulches mentioned above. Ten trees per pure mulch were used and all mulches were applied at the time of planting. During the growing season, no irrigation was used and no fertilizers applied. The effects of pure mulches on growth (i.e. crown volume) and fruit yield were recorded at the end of the growing season. Pure mulches derived from hawthorn and cherry were again the best type of pure mulch, increasing crown volume growth by 100 percent to 150 percent (Figure 2) and fruit yields by 400 percent to 600 percent. Even the poorest pure mulch, a mulch derived from beech, still increased crown volume growth by 20 percent and fruit yields by 50 percent. The importance of this result: any mulch is better than no mulch.

**Why the differences between mulches?**

This then begs the question, why did pear and apple trees grow more slowly when a beech mulch was used compared to an hawthorn mulch? Published literature points to an important influence of the breakdown chemicals released by each mulch type. A pure mulch derived from cypress, for example, has been shown to slow down the growth of a range of woody plants (hydrangea, spirea, viburnum) compared to conventional garden center pine bark mulches. As cypress trees are noted for their resistance to decay fungi that is associated with the presence of phenolic compounds in the wood, it was suggested these phenolics would be leached into the soil and inhibit root growth. Likewise pure mulches derived from *Eucalyptus grandis* have been found to contain phytotoxic residues (organic oils and acids) that were toxic to germinating seedlings of a range of plants. One of the most famous allelopathic trees is black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) with reported effects of allelopathic chemicals produced by the roots of this tree inhibiting growth or even killing surrounding trees. The chemical responsible for the toxicity in black walnut is known as Juglone. When plants are exposed to juglone, they exhibit wilting, foliar chlorosis, and eventually death. The Tree-Of-Heaven, or *Ailanthus altissima*, is a recent addition to the list of allelopathic trees. Ailanthone, an allelochemical extracted from the root bark of Ailanthus, is known for its herbicidal activity on other plants.

Other wood breakdown products, however, have been shown to be effective at stimulating rather than inhibiting root growth. Both hawthorn and cherry wood are high in sugars such as sucrose and sorbitol, respectively. Applications of sugars to transplanted trees have been shown to be effective at enhancing root vigor and in turn alleviating transplant stress and promoting survival rates of newly planted English oak, birch and beech. Similarly, extracts of box elder have been shown to stimulate the growth of a range of grasses, while recent studies demonstrated that fresh and composted mulch derived solely from *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* was found to have a positive effect in transplant performance of *Platanus racemosa*. Furthermore, fresh pine
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bark mulch has been shown to positively affect establishment of English oak (*Quercus robur*). Possibly beech wood is higher in chemicals associated with inhibiting root growth compared to hawthorn wood, which is higher in chemicals with root-promoting properties?

**Can mulches be used to suppress or control soil-borne disease?**

*Phytophthora cinnamomi* is a destructive and widespread soil-borne pathogen that has been associated with the decline of several forestry (oak, chestnut, eucalyptus), ornamental (rhododendron, azalea, camellia) and fruit (avocado, cranberry, blueberry) plants. Primary symptoms caused by this pathogen in trees include fine root lesions that can extend into larger roots, collar and trunks causing bleeding cankers (Photo 6). Control of *P. cinnamomi* is primarily through the use of agrochemicals. Disadvantages of chemical control include the build up of fungicide tolerance, failure of chemicals to control *P. cinnamomi* once a tree is infected, and increased government restrictions regarding chemical use and application. For these reasons, research at the R.A. Bartlett Tree Research Laboratory has been evaluating pure mulches for their potential in suppressing or controlling *P. cinnamomi*. Preliminary data has been promising. Trials using container grown trees have shown that plants grown under pure mulches of hawthorn had higher concentrations of enzymes (catalase, superoxide dismutase) in the root and leaves related to host defense mechanisms, which in turn resulted in a 40 percent to 60 percent...
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reduction in disease severity (Figure 3). The discovery that mulches are useful in suppressing specific soil-borne diseases was made about 40 years ago. According to researchers at the University of California, *Phytophthora*, for example, is “eaten,” dissolved and starved at the soil/mulch interface. Further research undertaken at the University of California has shown that mulches with copious quantities of under-composted wood are also effective in suppressing *Phytophthora* root rot. The addition of lime (calcium carbonate) to the mulch promoted the suppressive conditions necessary for *Phytophthora* suppression. Interestingly it was not the increase in soil pH that suppressed *Phytophthora* but the fact that biocontrol bacteria were stimulated by the increased pH levels. Research has also shown that economically important agricultural soil-borne diseases such as rhizoctonia, fusarium and pythium can be useful suppressively by mulch application.

**Guidelines for applying mulches**

1. Mulch should be applied from the drip line to the trunk. If this is not practical, minimum mulch circles should be 1.1 feet for small trees, 3.3 feet for medium trees and 9.9 feet for large trees.

2. When applying mulch it is best to kill or remove existing ground cover or at least mow the grass very short and remove clippings. Mulch should be applied directly to the soil surface. Do not use landscape fabric to separate the mulch from the soil.

3. A mulch layer should be 2 to 4 inches thick, depending on the tree species and type of mulch applied.

4. To avoid root disruption for most species, mulch should not be removed. Additional mulch should be added to maintain 2 to 4 inches on an annual basis.

5. Mulch should not be placed against the trunk. Mulch will retain too much moisture against the trunk that may result in disease.

**Conclusion**

Initial results of our trials and that of others show that pure mulches can provide many beneficial effects. A useful degree of control of *P. cinnamomi* in containerized stock is achievable without the use of chemicals, while research elsewhere strongly suggests pure mulches offer potential to suppress diseases at the landscape level.

In addition, establishment rates of difficult-to-transplant trees such as beechnut can be increased from 10 percent to 70 percent by the use of appropriate pure mulches. Fruit yields of young trees be increased by 400 percent to 600 percent. Such benefits have a positive impact not only for those involved in the care and maintenance of urban trees, but also agricultural, forestry, orchard and horticultural crop production. Importantly the use of pure mulches requires no capital investment and only small adjustments to standard management aftercare procedures.

**Selected References:**


Dr. Glynn Percival is with the Bartlett Tree Research Laboratory UK, and Evangelos Gklavakis is a Masters of Science research student at the University of Reading, UK.

Some of the results published in this article were derived from a Masters of Science research thesis by Evangelos Gklavakis at the University of Reading under the supervision of Dr. Glynn Percival.

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Argus Electronic’s PiCUS Sonic Tomography

Argus Electronic’s PiCUS Sonic Tomography uses sonic waves to analyze the stability of standing trees. Using tree geometry data, the software draws a map of the tree that shows “apparent velocity” or “apparent density” in the measuring level. The sonic velocity correlates with wood density and, therefore, with the health of the wood. Standard application of the PiCUS requires assigning a sonic sensor to each measuring point around the circumference of the tree. The number of available sonic sensors is the limiting factor on large diameter trees. Now, a recently developed (wireless) electronic impact hammer generates sonic signals on virtually any point at the measuring level. The electronic hammer allows operation of the PiCUS Sonic Tomograph with only four to six sensors, though multiple sensor positions (typically 10 to 14) still are used as transmitting and receiving points. The difference from the standard model is that data is recorded step by step rather than all at one time. The other major difference is a lower price. Contact Argus Electronic via www.argus-electronic.de.

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Book marks Bobcat’s 50th anniversary in 2008


Nearly 50 years ago, Bobcat introduced a compact front-end loader that became what the company says was the world’s first skid-steer loader, later adopting the familiar “Bobcat” brand.

“We realized that there was a little more of interest to Bobcat dealers, employees and former employees, friends and neighbors, and to good Bobcat customers who are as much a part of the history as we are,” said Leroy Anderson, marketing communication manager and company historian. “So we added six more chapters full of anecdotes and advertising history that paint an even richer picture of the unique Bobcat culture.”

The book contains a complete Bobcat product index and interviews with many of the key individuals in the North Dakota company’s history. Bobcat Company has more than 4,000 employees in plants and offices around the globe.

Columbus Equipment joins Morbark family

Columbus Equipment Company, specializing in heavy equipment distribution, service and rental, is now the authorized dealer of Morbark equipment in Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky. Established in 1952, and headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, Columbus Equipment operates in 10 locations in Ohio. As an authorized dealer for nearly a dozen manufacturers, Columbus Equipment holds companies to the highest standards. Manufacturers must be able to meet or exceed stringent benchmarks not only in product quality, but also in their ability to support the machines they bring to market.

F.A. Bartlett loses Frank Bartlett Heisinger

Frank Bartlett Heisinger, 57, of Stamford, Conn., passed away unexpectedly at Hartford Hospital on November 9, 2007.

Frank spent his entire working career in the tree care industry, beginning with summer work in the field and rising to his present position of vice president of corporate partnerships and assistant secretary of the F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company. He also served on Bartlett’s Board of Directors. Frank recently joined his family and friends in proudly celebrating the 100th anniversary of the company. In addition, Frank was an active member of the International Society of Arboriculture, Connecticut Tree Protective Association, American Society of Landscape Architects, Tree Care Industry Association, and Professional Landcare Network.

Frank’s journey ended peacefully amidst a close group of family and friends.

He was a life-long resident of Stamford, leaving briefly to attend Hoosac School in Hoosick, N.Y., and Colorado State University in Pueblo, Colorado.

Frank passionately loved nature and the out of doors, in particular fishing, hunting, gardening and discovering. His first love however was people: spending his time and sharing a laugh with his family and friends. He was well known for his goodness, compassion and quick wit. Services were private.

Chicago Botanic Garden names woody plants curator

Andrew Bell, Ph.D. joined the Chicago Botanic Garden as the new curator of woody plants. In this position, Dr. Bell is responsible for managing the 200,000 item woody plant collection at the garden. The collection includes trees, shrubs, woody vines and groundcovers for landscapes in the Chicago area, and is considered one of the best-maintained and most beautifully displayed in the world.

Third generation is coming on-line at Vermeer

Two members of the Vermeer family’s third generation are now on board at the Vermeer Manufacturing Company.

Jason Andringa, son of co-CEO Mary Vermeer-Andringa, joined the company in 2005 as an environmental solutions segment manager, and Allison Van Wyngarden, daughter of co-CEO Bob Vermeer, joined in 2007 as an industrial distribution manager. Jason has a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., and a master’s in aeronautics and astronautics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a master’s of business administration from the University of Southern California. Prior to joining Vermeer, he was a staff engineer for Jet Propulsion Laboratory, a federally funded research and development facility managed by the California Institute of Technology.

Allison joins Vermeer after five years at Principal Financial Group in Des Moines, Iowa. During this time, she worked as an investment analyst for Principal Real Estate Investors for two years and as senior market analyst in the Principal Health segment. After completing her undergraduate degree at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, she attended Drake University in Des Moines and graduated with a masters in business administration with a financial emphasis.

The pair are part of a succession plan the family began working on 20 years ago.
167” WHEELBASE
99 STERLING CF7000: 5.9L Cummins, 215 hp, 6 spd, 32,700 lb GVW, 167” wheelbase, 148” cab to axle, 234” total frame length. $14,900.

TRAFFIC ATTENUATOR
99 FREIGHTLINER FL60: CAT 3126, 190hp, Allison 4 spd auto, A/C, 25,000 lb GVW, w/ ENERG ASORE. SYSTEMS TRAFFIC ATTENUATOR, stationary arrow board, 16 ft wood flatbed w/ 42” stake sides. $26,000.

14½ TON TEREX
90 GMC TOPKICK: CAT 3116, 165 hp, 6 spd, 33 GVW, w/ 14½ ton TEREX 2663 CRANE, 73 ft hook ht, A2B, 2 spd winch, roofers pkg. 16 ft wood flatbed. $29,500.

12½ TON NATIONAL
81 INT S1854: DT466E, 210 hp, 5 spd + 2 spd rear, 34 GVW, w/ 12½ ton NATIONAL 656 CRANE, 66 ft hook ht, single spd winch, 18 ft steel flatbed w/ 42” stake sides. $24,500.

21 TON NATIONAL
97 VOLVO WG64: CAT 3306, 300 hp, engine brake, 8 spd, 190hp, Allison 21 ton NATIONAL 800C CRANE, 133 ft hook ht, A2B, cap alert/shutdown, 2 spd winch, 22½ ft steel flatbed. $89,500.

11½ TON MANITEX
89 FORD LN8000: 7.8L diesel, 210hp, 10 spd, 33 GVW, with 11½ ton MANITEX 1161 CRANE, 110 ft hook ht, A2B, 2 spd winch, 16 ft wood flatbed. $34,500.

10 TON NATIONAL
95 FORD FT900: Cummins, 350 hp, 6 spd trans, A/C, 48 GVW, 10 ton NATIONAL 800C CRANE, 133 ft hook ht, A2B, 12 ft steel flat / utility body. $29,500.

2 TON HIAB
95 CHEVY 3500: 6.5L Turbo-diesel, auto w/lock, 15 GVW, with 2 ton HIAB 225 CRANE, 1.610 lb at 11 ft max reach, winch, 10 ft steel flatbed w/ 28” wood sides. $13,500.

5 TON COPMA
96 INT 4700: T44CE, 210 hp, 6 spd + 10 hp, A/C, 33 GVW, with 5 ton COPMA CI1302 CRANE, 2,552 lb at 27’ max reach, 18 ft steel flatbed / dump. $32,900.

ALL WHEEL DRIVE
97 INT 4800 4X4: DT466E, 250 hp, Allison 4 spd auto, 2 spd transfer, AWD, 33 GVW, with 10 TON LIFT-ALL LM50-2MS CRANE, joystick crts., hyd winch & jib on upper boom, 10½ ft fiberglass utility body. $39,500.

13½ TON ALTEC
91 GMC TOPKICK: CAT 3116, 215 hp, Allison 5 spd auto, 33 GVW, 13½ ton ALTEC DB45TC DIGGER, 45 ft hook ht, auger, pole claws, 10 ft utility body, 120V inverter. $24,500.

21 TON NATIONAL
94 MACK RD688S: 350 hp, 6 spd + 10 hp, Allison 6 spd auto, 25,950 lb GVW, 3½ ton HIAB 660 CRANE, 6600 Lb 45’ max reach, 18 ft wood flatbed / dump. $37,900.

7 TON NATIONAL
97 GMC C8500: CAT 3116, 170 hp, Allison 4 spd auto, 25,950 lb GVW, 7 ton NATIONAL 880 CRANE, winch limited to 2,050 lb at 32’ max reach, 11½ ft steel flat / utility body. $52,900.

65 ft LIFT-ALL

52 ft ALTEC
93 FORD F9000: Cummins diesel, Allison 4 spd auto, 33 GVW, with 52 ft ALTEC AM600H BUCKET, hyd winch & jib on upper boom, 13 ft utility body. $24,500.

9 TON COPMA
92 MACK DM605: 300 hp, 7 spd, A/C, 60,940 lb GVW, with 9 ton COPMA CI1930/6P crane, 1,788 lb at 52’ max reach, 21 ft steel flatbed. $49,500.

37 ft ALTEC

55 ft ALTEC

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Events & Seminars

December 5 & 6, 2007
WHENRecycling Expo South
Spence Field, Moultrie GA
Contact: Matt Stanley 1-800-218-5586; www.WHENRecyclingExpo.com

December 10, 2007
Hazardous Tree Identification
Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education
Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick NJ
Contact: (732) 932-9271; ocpe@njaes.rutgers.edu

December 13-14, 2007
Large Tree Climbing and Rigging
Rutgers office of Continuing Professional Education
Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick NJ
Contact: (732) 932-9271; ocpe@njaes.rutgers.edu

December 18-19, 2007
Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop
Orlando, FL
Contact: TCIA 1-800.733-2622; www.tcia.org

January 7-9, 2008
Great Lakes Trade Expo (GLTE)
DeVos Place, Grand Rapids, MI
Contact: www.glte.org; 1-800-223-8761; mail@midam.org

January 7-11, 2008
Advanced Landscape Plant IPM PHC Short Course
University of Maryland College Park, MD
Contact: Debbie (301) 405-3913; debrar@umd.edu; www.raupplab.umd.edu/conferences/AdvLandscape

January 8-10, 2008
Landscape Ontario Congress 2008
Toronto Congress Centre, Toronto, Canada
Contact: www.locongress.com

January 8-10, 2008
Rutgers North Jersey Ornamental Horticultural Symposium (Tree, Turf & Landscape Day)
Morris County RCE office, Morristown, NJ
Contact: (973) 285-8300

January 9-11, 2008
Minnesota Green Expo
Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis MN
Contact: 1-888-886-6652; info@minnesotagreenexpo.com

January 9-11, 2008
2008 CSRA Tree, Turf and Ornamental Seminar
(Central Savannah River Area)
Julian Smith Casino, Augusta, GA 30904
Contact: Henry Frischknecht/Terry Troutman, Empire Tree & Turf (706) 854-0926

January 15, 2008
EHAP - Electrical Hazard Awareness Training
Troy, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

January 15-17, 2008
Indiana Arborist Association Annual Conference
Indianapolis, IN
Contact: (765) 494-3625; McKenzie@Purdue.edu

January 16-17, 2008
Annual NJ Nursery & Landscape Conf. & Trade Show
Somerset, NJ
Contact: www.gardennj.net; njnla1@aol.com

January 16-18, 2008
Mid-Am Horticultural Trade Show
McCormick Place, Chicago, IL
Contact: 1-800-223-8761; mail@midam.org

January 17, 2008
CTPA Annual Meeting
Farmington, CT
Contact: Chris Donnelly, cmdonnelly@aol.com

January 24, 2008
Pesticide Safety
Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education
Rutgers University, New Brunswick NJ
Contact: www.cookce.rutgers.edu

January 24-25, 2008
Utah Pest Control & Lawn Care Association Annual Trade Show & Convention
Red Lion Hotel, Salt Lake City, UT
Contact: Les Ingram (801) 773-4411; afungus@gmail.com

January 27-29, 2008
43rd Annual Shade Tree Symposium
Penn-Del Chapter ISA, Certification exams Jan 27.
Lancaster Host Resort, Lancaster, PA
Contact: E.Wertz (215) 795-0411; www.penndelsa.org

January 27-February 1, 2008
Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course
The Virginia Horticultural Foundation
The Founders Inn and Spa, Virginia Beach, VA
Contact: (757) 523-4734; www.mahsc.org

January 29, 2008
Urban Soil Fertility and the Effects of Mycorrhizal Fungi & Beneficial Bacteria
Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

January 30-31, 2008
2008 Connecticut Turf & Landscape Conference
CT Grounds Keepers & CT Irrigation Contractors
Conn. Conf. Ctr, Adriaen’s Landing, Hartford, CT
Contact: Dick Tice (203) 699-9912 or rtice@snet.net

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For the most up to date calendar information, visit www.treecareindustry.org/bright/news/industry_calendar

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

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January 31, 2008
When Is Wilt Not a Wilt: Wilt, Vascular and Bacterial Diseases of Woody Plants
Traverse City, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

February 3-5, 2008
Wisconsin Arborist Association Annual Meeting
Middleton, WI
Contact: Cory Gritzmacher, (920) 948-7530; cagritz@netwurx.com

February 6-8, 2008
New England Grows!
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, Boston, MA
Contact: Mary Simard (508) 653-3009; www.NEGrows.org

February 8-12, 2008
U.S. Composting Council Annual Conf. & Trade Show
Oakland Marriott City Center, Oakland, CA
Contact: www.compostingcouncil.org; (631) 737-4931

February 10-14, 2008
Winter Management Conference
Tree Care Industry Association
Westin Aruba Resort, Aruba
Contact: Deb Cyr 1-800-733-2622; cyr@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

February 12, 2008
Recognizing, Understanding & Managing Insect Pests of Ornamentals in the Landscape
Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

February 15, 2008
Sixth Annual Rochester Arborist’s Workshop
Rochester International Event Center, Rochester MN
Contact: Ed Hayes (507) 285-7431

February 18, 2008
Why is My Plant Wilting? Diseases of Woody Plants
Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

February 22, 2008
ASCA Consulting Academy
Sheraton Suites, San Diego, CA
Contact: (240) 404-6482; www.asca-consultants.org

February 24-29, 2008
2008 Municipal Forester Institute
T-BAR-M Conference Center, New Braunfels, TX.
Contact: www.NJArboristsISA.com

February 26-27, 2008
Trees, People & the Law Symposium
National Arbor Day Foundation
European Crystal Banquet Ctr., Arlington Heights, IL
Contact: www.arborday.org/pl or (888) 448-7447

February 27, 2008
Woody Ornamental Updates: Review ’07, Anticipate ’08
Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

March 4-5, 2008
MGIA’S 21st Annual Trade Show & Convention
Rock Financial Show Place, Novi MI
Contact: MGIA at (248) 646-4992

March 6-7, 2008
NJArborist Garden State Tree Conference
Rutgers Univ., Cook Campus Ctr, New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: (732) 574-9100; www.NJArboristsISA.com

March 16-18, 2008
Southern Chapter ISA Annual Meeting
Knoxville, TN
Contact: Dwayne Carter, 1-888-339-8733; dcarter@isasouthern.org

March 17-19, 2008
Certified Pesticide Applicator Training & Testing
Belville, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

April 8-9, 2008
Cert. Pesticide Applicator Training & Testing (In Spanish)
Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992

November 11-12, 2008
Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop
In conjunction with TCI EXPO 2008
Milwaukee, WI
Contact: 1-800.733-2622; www.tcia.org

November 13-15, 2008
TCI EXPO 2008
Tree Care Industry Association
Milwaukee, WI
Contact: Deb Cyr 1-800.733-2622; cyr@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

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Westin Aruba Resort & Spa, Aruba

Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show
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Please circle 26 on Reader Service Card
Tree care professionals, particularly those involved in sales, offer their opinions every day regarding the condition of large trees in urban areas. As our society becomes more litigious, many tree experts will err on the side of legal safety and opine that a tree with a defect be removed rather than run the risk of the tree’s failure, which they feel may then lead to their being named in a lawsuit.

I have been asked by practicing arborists, “If I tell a client that their tree is reasonably safe, and then during a storm the tree falls and injures someone, can I still be sued?” Unfortunately, the answer is yes. Anyone can sue in civil court; it’s just a matter of filing fees. In this article I will discuss some legal concepts and offer advice on how to avoid becoming named in a suit; however, it needs to be understood that while I will advocate for the best possible business practices, no professional arborist can ever be completely free from the possibility of legal action.

In order to avoid lawsuits, you need a general understanding of negligence law. Negligence can be defined as an act, or a failure to act, which falls below the standard of duty of care established for the protection of others against unreasonable risk of harm. In order to prove a negligence claim, four elements must present:

1. Duty

In our industry this means at least adhering to established professional standards of conduct. The core intent of these standards is to protect people from harm, which in this case can mean physical harm or monetary loss. Specific duties might include thorough site inspections and a full report any hazardous situations discovered.

2. Breach

This means that once the duty has been identified, an act, or failure to act, can be shown to have breached that duty. To test a Breach of Duty, ask, “would a reasonable person (or reasonable professional in our case) in a similar situation have done the same thing?” As an example; would another tree care professional (or several professionals for that matter) have missed the signs of weakness in the tree that failed.
and fell on the Smith’s house?

3. Causation

Here we need to look at actual causation and proximate causation. Actual causation considers, “is the person being sued the actual cause of the damage sustained by the person initiating the lawsuit?” Proximate causation looks at the issue of foreseeability. Here we ask “whether the damages were foreseeable or whether they were too remotely connected to the incident to consider.” If an arborist failed to discover clear evidence of weakness in a tree and this weakness caused the failure of the tree, direct causation could be demonstrated; however, if this weakness existed but was not the cause of the failure (perhaps a major storm of unforeseeable force felled the tree), then direct causation might not exist.

4. Damage

This simply means that some measurable amount of physical or economic loss occurred.

At this point I hope you have concluded that understanding and exercising our duties as arborists properly are where we should focus our energies. Arborists should have a clear understanding of their professional responsibilities. Remember, “What would other professional arborists do in a similar situation?” That’s the key, do no less than your professional contemporaries would do under similar circumstances.

An interesting concept arises with this statement, however. It’s not uncommon for tree care providers to not fully consider who their contemporaries are, or possibly they may not properly represent who their contemporaries may be. If you’re a tree cutter, great; but don’t call yourself a tree expert or call your company the ABC Tree Expert Service – this can get you into trouble. If you’re certified, but in a particular instance you are asked to evaluate an exotic shade tree that exhibits a fungus fruiting body that you do not recognize, state your limitations (in writing is best). In short, tell your clients what your abilities are, and as importantly, inform your clients of your limitations. It’s OK if you’re not a research pathologist, and you and your client will be better served if you do not hold yourself out as one of the research pathologists’ contemporaries.

Honesty can go a long way in avoiding a lawsuit for negligence. Clearly report to your client (and record) any limitations in your ability or constraints to your assignment. If you find that you need to call in specialists occasionally, great! Let them sign off on the diagnosis, and you sell the resulting work. The end result is the client is properly served and you haven’t breached any professional duty.

The most common lawsuits against arborists arise from tree risk assessment matters. This can mean not only recognizing and reporting a problem with a tree you have been charged to inspect, but also not recognizing or reporting a tree with a fault that you could have reasonably been expected to notice.

The most common lawsuits against arborists arise from tree risk assessment matters. This can mean not only recognizing and reporting a problem with a tree you have been charged to inspect, but also not recognizing or reporting a tree with a fault that you could have reasonably been expected to notice. Chemical pest control practices and transportation issues see their fair share of legal problems, but arboricultural risk assessment, or the failure to recognize or report hazardous trees, should be a primary concern of all professional arboricultural sales personnel.

To be successful in an arboricultural sales position you will need to able to satisfy the needs of your clients as often as possible, and it’s a daily occurrence that clients wish to know, “Can I keep the big tree near the house?” Sales personnel need to be able to accurately answer questions such as this on a regular basis. This means that, at the very least, you should stay current on tree risk assessment techniques, and have the tools, time and ability to properly and completely investigate each client’s problems. Oftentimes it is a simple investigative technique or a very small expenditure of time that could help you avoid a lawsuit. Simple as it may sound, take the time to walk all the way around the tree. Many times, fences, shrubbery or other obstacles make this more difficult. I promise, however, that wherever you don’t look is where the decay will be.

Get the “Big Picture.” Don’t walk by the huge ash with the included bark crotch because you were only asked to look at the little birch in the back. At the least, visually inspect the whole property when reasonable. Why should you report to your client any hazardous trees you notice? Because that’s what other professionals in your field would do. Advising a client in writing is always the best method of addressing any dangerous conditions you notice. Even if further investigation may be required to fully assess a condition, advise the client what you have observed and
what it indicates to you.

There will be occasions when a written report of all hazardous conditions or potentially hazardous conditions that fall outside of your specific assignment is impractical. It is acceptable in many cases to offer oral comments to a client, however, you should log the discussion. How? In your daily log.

This is an invaluable tool for all sales personnel. It may be a PDA or simply a spiral binder; whatever will be simple to use and will record information for a reasonable period. If during a sales call you advise Mr. Jones that several of his oaks contain significant amounts of large deadwood, and he thanks you for the information but asks you to only deal with the funny little holes on the stem of his birch tree, fine, but enter the conversation in your log. Include the time, date and essence on your discussion. If anyone is ever injured by one of those oak limbs you can point to your log and say, “On June 12, 2004, at 10:20 a.m., I advised Mr. Jones about those limbs and he thanked me for my concern but requested I not concern myself with them.”

Additionally, as a sales tool, you can then review your log during your quiet season and consequently telephone Mr. Jones regarding his oaks. Log this call also.

Another issue that attorneys will look for is prior notice. When you advised Mr. Smith that his tree appeared sound and did not appear to be at risk, did you know that three other similar trees had failed on this site in the recent past? Ask questions; find out about the history of the site if at all possible. Again, get the big picture. Look around the site for evidence of past failures. Prior knowledge of previous failures on a site can be significant part of a risk assessment and may be considered as a breach of duty if an arborist fails to consider prior failures in his or her assessment and report.

It is not the purpose of this article to teach you how to assess risk that trees may present. I assume you already have these skills. If not, or if you need to brush up, many excellent articles, texts and seminars are available through our trade organizations. The intent here is to get you thinking about the professional duties you owe to your clients and the public. If you are open and honest with your clients, perform your duties up to professional standards, record your actions, and state any limiting conditions that may affect your ability to perform these duties; it will become very difficult for someone to successfully bring a lawsuit against you.

J. David Hucker has spent 35 years in the tree care industry, is a 10-year TCIA member and a Registered Consulting Arborist with the American Society of Consulting Arborists. He owns and operates David Hucker Consulting in Berwyn, Penn., near Philadelphia, where he is regularly requested by the legal community to offer opinions and testimony regarding the professional duties of practicing arborists.
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Please circle 21 on Reader Service Card
One-handed saw injury turned stomach – kudos!

The November (2007) issue of TCI magazine arrived today and when I got to page 12, my stomach did a little twist, a shiver ran up my spine and my arm twinged. But actually, those were good things. Photos like the one accompanying the article on chain saw safety (“The Appropriate Way to Use a Top-Handled Chain Saw in the UK: One-Handed Use of a Chain Saw is Not Acceptable”) are important reminders how quickly your career or your life could get, literally, cut short in just an instant.

In the past I’ve thought that maybe your Accident Briefs and Safety Forum (complete with color pictures) should be the very first article of every issue as a reminder how carelessness, mistakes and ignorance can seriously injure or kill you. I’ve personally had a few “near misses” using power equipment that are permanent personal reminders that safety comes first. After neatly slicing the top tendons in my thumb with a hand saw, I’ll ALWAYS put on a pair of gloves before using that tool again!

Trying to save a little money, or a little time, or a little effort by taking a safety shortcut? Think again. We are in the business of removing or reducing hazards that trees can become in the urban landscape, helping to make our clients safer. If personal safety is as important as technical knowledge, then your job won’t be a hazard to your health.

David Fox, CF
Technical services manager
Natural Resource Planning Services, Inc.
Gainesville, Florida

Responding to the one-handed chain saw debate

The question shouldn’t be whether we can one-hand our chain saws, but why haven’t Stihl, Husky and Echo made special chain saws with half the weight (and maybe power) of a Stihl 020? Using a light chain saw, made for one-handing, would be much easier on our wrists and elbows – and safer too.

Mikl Brawner shows what ANSI standards and TCIA-supported best practices say is bad form.

I am 61 and have been one-handing since they started making arborist saws, maybe 27 years ago. I only climb part-time now. I believe one-handed use of my 020T has been hard on my wrist and elbow joints. That’s another reason I’d like to see a “PeeWee Pruner” chain saw with a top handle and an 8-inch, narrower blade to cut up to, say, 5-inches.

Overall, I would say one-handing a chain saw is so natural and so useful that we should just figure out how to do it safely. I wouldn’t recommend up-cutting one-handed, and catching with the free hand is risky. Climbing trees with chain saws is dangerous work. We do it with that understanding. But we should get to use improved tools. One-handing a nail gun requires arm strength and care, too.

This photo was taken of me 19 years ago when I was pruning a tree at the Colorado University Boulder campus. I still use this method, though less frequently. As you can see from the photo, one-handing is really useful going horizontally out on a limb, reaching to shorten a branch at a point where you couldn’t stand, and leaving a hand free to hang on with. The alternative is the pole saw — Yum, Yum!

Even though tree care is my secondary business now, I still read your magazine, and appreciate your good work.

As an old-timer who has spent much of my life in trees, cutting, I have this brief piece of advice: Watch every move you make and stay in the NOW.

Mikl Brawner, Harlequin’s Gardens Nursery and Garden Center Boulder, Colorado

So, if not one-handed – what is the correct way?

I thought your article did a great job at pointing out why we shouldn’t “hold and cut.” But how are we supposed to maintain productivity and not damage property? What are the new methods of pruning that allow us to have two hands on the saw at all times? Thank you for your input, and I am anxious to hear back from you.

Chris Hawkins
Arborist in training
Bangor, Maine

Tree Protection Law reply

The last paragraph of the “Tree Protection Law” article under the Washington in Review section in the November 2007 TCI magazine reads:

“Discovery of such offenses should be easy, the bill sponsor opined, with the vigilant nature of abutting neighbors.”

The article talks about a new law in Maine that was passed on September 20, 2007, and deals with tree removals along the Maine shore land.

I have a problem with vigilant neighbors. Have we forgotten what our founding fathers fought for? Do we have any freedoms left to make our own choices on our own property?
# ZENITH CUTTER CO

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## Vermeer

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Number</th>
<th>Part No.</th>
<th>Knife Description &amp; Size</th>
<th>SALE Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>BC1000</td>
<td>KCH20109</td>
<td>Double Edge ( 9'' \times 4-1/2'' \times 5/8'' )</td>
<td>$32.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC1220-BC1250</td>
<td>KCH20022</td>
<td>Single Edge ( 8'' \times 3-1/2'' \times 3/8'' )</td>
<td>$19.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC1400</td>
<td>KCH20110</td>
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<td>BC1800-BC2000</td>
<td>KCH20103</td>
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<td>BC1800XL</td>
<td>KCH20112</td>
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## Morbark

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<td>100, 200, 290</td>
<td>KCH10001</td>
<td>Double Edge ( 7-1/4'' \times 4'' \times 3/8'' )</td>
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<td>10, 13, 17, 2050</td>
<td>KCH40001</td>
<td>Double Edge ( 10-1/2'' \times 5'' \times 1/2'' )</td>
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## Brush Bandit

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<td>90XP, 280XP</td>
<td>KCH10004</td>
<td>Double Edge ( 5-3/2'' \times 4'' \times 1/2'' )</td>
<td>$23.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>100-250</td>
<td>KCH10003</td>
<td>Double Edge ( 7-1/4'' \times 4'' \times 1/2'' )</td>
<td>$21.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250, 254 after '01</td>
<td>KCH10101</td>
<td>Double Edge ( 7-1/4'' \times 4-1/2'' \times 1/2'' )</td>
<td>$28.25</td>
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<td>1890 Intimidator</td>
<td>KCH20103</td>
<td>Double Edge ( 10'' \times 5-1/2'' \times 5/8'' )</td>
<td>$41.50</td>
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## Asplundh

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<th>Part No.</th>
<th>Knife Description &amp; Size</th>
<th>SALE Price</th>
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<td>Single Edge ( 12'' \times 3'' \times 3/8'' )</td>
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<tr>
<td>16'' Drum</td>
<td>KCH30002</td>
<td>Single Edge ( 16'' \times 3'' \times 3/8'' )</td>
<td>$21.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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In my estimation, we as tree care professionals, certified arborists, registered consulting arborists, etc. should stay away from this type of law and ordinance. We need to promote tree care and maintenance based on the tree, not which governing body flexes the most muscle.

For example, I recently was requested to look at a new customer’s shoreline trees along a nearby lake. The new home has been there about 15 years, and a number of trees were planted at that time. Now, the willow tree that engulfs about half of the lot’s shoreline has grown over the top of the river birch and bur oak, which are now quite established. All three species are native, and it would be easy to recommend removing two large limbs from the willow (that have grown over the other two trees) and be done.

However, I believe the right thing to do at this time would be to remove the entire willow. It is very healthy, but is at the stage where, sooner than later, will lose a large limb and/or fall into the water near the pier. The property owner would just as soon remove the willow. This owner has also planted many other trees on the property. Of late, the county zoning personnel have been quite “vigilant” about “their” trees, and been outspoken about violations to shoreland tree removals of trees that aren’t dead or dying.

This property owner pays very high taxes. What it boils down to is some tourist, vigilant neighbor or new zoning official wanting something they don’t own. The property owner did a good thing a number of years ago by establishing some other trees, as the large willow tree would at some point need to be replaced. Trees aren’t static, and we need to be able to maintain our independent and professional recommendations based on what we find on site, not what we are told should be there.

It is a sad day when we are promoting the vigilance of neighbors when it comes to private property. If there is a tree or trees that I happen to like, and would like to see them around for some time, the best thing I can do as an individual is to buy the property; period. If the trees in question are on publicly held land, then the decision process is much different.

There are some people who live along waterways, oceans and lakes that like an unimpeded view of the water; while there are others who prefer only a partial view. It is not up to us to decide which is better. I see a lot of stub cuts. Just thought I’d point this out since ANSI standards appear quite a bit in this magazine, as well they should. One last thing: did this tree even need attention? Sorry about the rant.

Jim Mitchell
Chair elect
Missouri Community Forestry Council

Editor’s response: Mr. Mitchell is correct. As he and a couple of other readers pointed out, the tree appears to have been topped. This slipped by the editorial and production staff. The image was provided by the manufacturer, who responds below:

Somewhere in the outskirts of the small Italian village of Nogara stands a tree, totally unaware of the attention it has created. 5,000 miles away, much less the verdict that it has not been pruned to correct American tree care industry standards (which is not to say that it is pruned to Italian standards either).

To fall guilty of this verdict, the poor tree was featured as background to a 63 foot Hinowa lift, distributed by ReachMaster, Inc. It led to a stream of e-mails/calls to the editor of this magazine regarding the pruning of the tree.

And for a good reason. Let’s not forget that the readers of this magazine are highly professional tree care practitioners, and consequently, even product pictures should reflect that – something we at ReachMaster did not observe properly when asking the Italian manufacturer for a marketing picture reflecting the equipment in a tree care environment in Italy.

Thank you to the readers who noticed this and thereby demonstrated their competence. You’re the people we as manufacturers are looking for. We apologize for this oversight and, in the wake of our successful participation in the TCI EXPO show in Hartford, we will now have several opportunities to feature our products in front of correctly pruned American trees in the future.

Ebbe Christensen, President, ReachMaster, Inc. Houston, Texas

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The recent decision by Progress Energy Carolinas to remove 50,000 trees near transmission lines across North Carolina and South Carolina may be a sign of things to come for utilities, commercial tree care companies and property owners.

Progress Energy will pay $30 million to implement that program in the Carolinas over a three-year period. News of the Progress Energy plan slipped out to the national media when some residents complained about it. But a spokesman for Edison Electric Institute, the utility companies’ association, says that plenty of other utilities across the country are also taking a more aggressive approach toward keeping rights of way clear for power lines.

The bottom line, and the public relations challenge for line-clearance companies, is that the new rules will encourage widening rights of way, and removing trees rather than trimming them.

“The rules have changed, and new federal regulations require that the company take steps to prevent transmission outages caused by vegetation,” says David McNeill, spokesperson for Progress Energy. “These new rules require us to change the way we maintain trees in the transmission right of way. We are not removing all the trees. We are removing the trees that could interfere with the safe operation of the line.”

The utility serves 1.4 million customers in the Carolinas, according to McNeill, and maintains about 6,000 miles of transmission lines. The trees and shrubs that will be left in the rights of way will be those that do not exceed 12 feet at maturity, and don’t interfere with access or maintenance requirements.

“Where before we may have been trimming back that vegetation, now we are removing those trees,” McNeill says.

It’s a trend that his company has witnessed from many utility companies, says Tom Rogers, senior vice president and COO for Rochester, N.Y.-based Lewis Tree Service, Inc., a 3,000-employee company that serves the entire East Coast, including the Carolinas.

“All of the major investor-owned utilities are increasing their budget for maintenance of transmission lines,” says Rogers, noting that most of the work involves widening the rights of ways to insure greater reliability. The rights of way are being widened from a few feet to as far out as 40 feet, he adds.

“Worrying about trees on the fringe that might fall in is a focus right now,” he explains. “They’ve done a good job maintaining the floor in the past. The risk now is from outside the right of way (with tall trees falling onto power lines), so they’re going out and creating a larger right of way.”

The increase in business has created a need to hire more employees, Rogers confirms.

Jim Orr, general manager/technical services for the Asplundh Tree Expert Company, headquartered in Willow Grove,
Pa., confirmed that it’s a trend his company is seeing across the country – and in Canada. Asplundh employs approximately 20,000 line-clearance employees.

“It’s pretty much universal,” confirms Orr. “The utilities are looking at every tree along every right of way to consider the issues involved with each.”

Ed Legge, spokesman for the Edison Electric Institute (whose members serve 71 percent of all electric utility customers in the United States), says that his association hasn’t collected the information about how individual utilities are responding to the challenge, but he notes that the industry is very aware of the implications of the new federal standards, which went into effect earlier this year.

“What it means is that there’s no tolerance,” Legge says. “The short, quick and dirty is that if you’re not in compliance with keeping transmission lines clear of trees, you’re going to be fined severely. There’s no real choice, and there’s no wiggle room in whether we do it or not.”

The regulation changes came as a result of the great Northeast power outage of August 14, 2003 – which reportedly affected 50 million people and 61,800 megawatts of electric load in eight U.S. states and part of Canada. According to the final report from the two-country task force that investigated the blackout (as reported in the Edison Electric Institute publication Electric Perspectives), the total costs related to the blackout ranged between $4 billion and $10 billion. Inadequate clearing of vegetation in rights of way was identified as a cause for the blackout, as it had been for West Coast blackouts in July and August of 1996, which impacted a total of about 8 million customers.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 set federal reliability standards regulating the electrical grid, under supervision of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and an “electric reliability organization” called the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, which was created in 2006. To achieve its mission of reliability and security for the bulk power system in North America, NERC developed, audits and enforces reliability standards.

“The bill corrects the provision of the law that made electric reliability standards optional instead of mandatory,” President George Bush said in a 2005 speech, joking that, “Most of you probably consider it mandatory that the lights come on when you flip a switch. Now the utility companies will have to consider it mandatory, as well.”

While federal regulations are pushing the utilities, another factor driving the change is Americans’ consumption of electricity.

“There is a continuing lowering of tolerance for power outages as the customer, whether it’s a business or a residential consumer, becomes more and more wired and has more and more electric-powered devices that are becoming integral to daily living,” Legge says. Orr notes that when there is a severe power outage, the lack of electricity can impact people’s lives pretty severely as furnaces lose blowers, water pumps stop working, and refrigerators can no longer maintain food.

The low tolerance for outages is coupled with the fact that the increased energy load may stress the delivery system for power.

“With more customers using more electricity, that increases the load on our existing transmission lines,” McNeill says. “When lines are loaded to capacity, it can cause the lines to sag. In the past, trees and vegetation that were in the right of way might not have been close to the lines, but now some of these trees have continued to grow and if the lines were to sag due to full capacity, you can risk the possibility of power outages.”

The actual work of clearing utility lines is frequently shared by the arborists and crews working for the utility companies, and by tree care companies contracted by the utility companies to keep the rights of way cleared. Tree care workers who do clearance maintenance are specially, and extensively, trained for that task, Orr notes.

“Every one needs to be line-clearance certified by his or her employer,” he says.

While McNeill confirmed the $30 million figure for the three-year plan to remove trees, he did not say how much of a budget increase that represents from previous years. The removal of trees might lead some to expect a reduction in the need for arborists’ services in the future, but McNeill says that the utility is not certain what its specific future needs will be.

“That might be a good question three years from now,” he says.

Rogers theorized that there would be greater maintenance needs in the future, because of the wider corridors.

“It could be a long-term thing, or a one-time bubble,” Orr says. “Or maybe a little of both.”

Utility companies are sensitive to maintaining good community relations. McNeill says that while there is no question about the legal rights of the utility to trim or remove vegetation as needed, the company has met with neighbors and talked with its customers about its position.

“It has encouraged abutters to plant low-growing trees and shrubs that add beauty, privacy or buffering without impacting the power lines.

“Trees are part of the natural beauty of the Carolinas, and we’re not pleased that we have to remove trees near our transmission lines,” McNeill laments. “However, the rules have changed. Our goal is to minimize the impact, while complying with the rules.”

Dave Rattigan is a freelance writer living in Beverly, Massachusetts.
Walking his 10-year-old to elementary school every day, Tom “Ace” Gallagher of Hanover Township, N.J, felt confident his son was safe. Until, one day, he looked up.

“There were a couple of obvious dead branches hanging over the path and a couple dead trees,” says Gallagher, owner of Ace Gallagher Stump Grinding Services LLC in Whippany. “I said to my wife, ‘I don’t want to sound like a typical parent. But this is a really dangerous path.’”

Gallagher turned his concern into action. He wrote a letter to Hanover Township superintendent Scott Pepper and volunteered his company’s services. Gallagher didn’t realize it at the time, but the resulting hours of donated work was the unofficial launching of what has now grown into the volunteer program known locally as “One Day, One School.”

“My policy is, if everybody just gives a little bit of their time it will make a really big difference,” explains Gallagher, who hopes the program will catch on with more tree companies and communities in New Jersey and beyond. “It only takes one guy like me in the tree business to look up and say, ‘This path is horrendous’.”

Since that initial project, Gallagher has turned the idea into a full-fledged volunteer effort aimed at cleaning up school grounds so they are safer and cleaner, at no cost to the district. His partner in volunteerism is Rick Close, district manager of the Morris Plains, N.J., office of The Davey Tree Expert Company.

Also a father of a school-aged child, Close warmed quickly to the One Day, One School concept when Gallagher approached him with the idea earlier this year.

“Something like this rings a bell with almost anybody who is responsible for school communities,” Close says. “Most municipal grounds people probably are not tuned into the idea of looking at trees in terms of safety. They’re probably more involved with mowing the grass on the property. They may not see the necessity of maintaining the trees on the property.”

That necessity was emphasized in Florham Park, N.J., last June, where Scott Eveland, township councilman and mayor-elect, heard about the One Day, One School and approached him with the idea earlier this year.

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While the overgrowth and debris surely was an eyesore, it constituted a safety hazard.

Dead and rotting tree limbs lie among undergrowth adjacent to the Ridgedale Middle School baseball field in Florham Park, N.J. About a week before the cleanup, winds blew a roughly 12-inch diameter limb down near the bleachers.

Fallen limbs pile up along the property line.
School concept and was determined to conduct an event locally. He brought Gallagher to a baseball field by the Ridgedale Middle School and showed him the mess of overgrown trees, brush and trash bags overflowing with garbage.

Gallagher agreed to the project and they scheduled an early June Saturday for the job – seemingly just in time. About a week before the appointed cleanup, high winds sent a tree limb measuring about one foot in diameter crashing down by the bleachers where parents usually sit to cheer on their student athletes.

“We heard a crack. We looked up and watched one of the dead trees crack and fall directly into the center of the field,” recalls William Ronzitti, superintendent of Florham Park Public Schools, who witnessed the event. “If there had been children or families there – this was such an unsafe situation. It only affirmed that we had to do this.”

Later that week, Gallagher and Close showed up with their trucks, crews and equipment. Eveland, shirtsleeves rolled up, arrived with student and teacher volunteers and trucks from the town’s public works department. Ronzitti fired up a grill and cooked up hot dogs for the workers. A local hardware store donated rakes.

Close remembers that the target ballfield needed all the help it could get.

“They were old trees, mainly maples and oaks, that had probably never been cared for,” he says. “It was something that had never been addressed.”

The eight-hour day involved safety pruning of nearly 40 trees, Close says. While climbers pruned and cut, Close dragged brush away from the field and Gallagher ground the stumps of between 15 and 20 trees that were removed completely. After the crews completed a section of trees, student volunteers moved in to clean up.

“The before and after was amazing,” Eveland says. “On the municipal side, we got the (local) board of education involved and a bunch of student volunteers, which is awesome to see. They weren’t just leaning on rakes. They were out there, working hard, investing themselves in their own school, poison ivy and everything.”

The amount of work performed that day probably equaled between $10,000 and $15,000 in labor and equipment costs, he estimates.

“This was a tremendous way to clean up the school with some necessary work that did not cost the taxpayers a dime,” says Eveland.

“It would have been too expensive for us to undertake this year,” says Ronzitti. “It wasn’t in our budget. And that’s not fair to this community, especially the children, to have such beautiful new fields but no place where their families can come watch them.”

Aside from the financial boon, One Day, One School provided Florham Park students with an invaluable civics lesson as well, he adds.

“One of the incidental benefits for us is it brought everybody here together as a team,” says Ronzitti, who became the district’s superintendent approximately a year and a half ago. “One of the things I’ve tried to do is build a community team. This one effort on that Saturday went a long way. We were in this together. We did it together. It was just a perfect day.”

The sight of eighth graders picking up empty soda bottles from the school grounds was a memorable one for Gallagher. “Now, they’re probably not going to throw a soda bottle there,” he says. “And if one of their peers does, they’ll say, ‘Hey, pick that up.’”

Gallagher is planning another One Day, One School event in Hanover Township for early winter and another event in Florham Park next spring, but he hopes it is only the beginning. He plans to compile a written program and make it available for other interested communities, and tree care companies, as a resource.

“It’s a program to make a school better looking and much safer. Safety is the name of the game,” he says. “We’re able-bodied, we’re very fortunate. How hard is it for us
to give one or two days a year?”

Despite the willing spirit, the budget, inevitably, remains the bottom line. Close hopes that, in the future, local businesses may be willing to sponsor tree companies like Davey and Ace financially. These “partners” would ensure that the crews would be paid for their time while he and Gallagher continued offering cost-free tree services to the schools that badly need it.

“If I went into a community and said, ‘Hey, we’ll safety-prune your trees and it will cost you this much money,’ the project would probably be shelved for years,” Close says. “I can’t volunteer my tree crews on a regular basis. What we’re looking at is sponsorships for the next time from stores or businesses to cover the cost of my crew. My time would be volunteered.”

Eveland, who will assume mayoral duties in January, will continue looking for ways to grow One Day, One School locally.

“It was such a tremendous success that I think it’s only going to get bigger,” he predicts. “We took an area of one of these schools and totally cleaned it up. It was the springboard for us to continue doing this, not only here in Florham Park, but in other school districts as well.”

Gallagher hopes the energy his idea has generated will continue to spark volunteerism as word travels.

“Imagine if this is nationwide? There would be companies all over the country donating a Saturday,” he says. “It will be awesome and it won’t cost anything.”

Rebecca Fater is a freelance writer living in North Andover, Massachusetts.

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Tree trimmer caught in palm tree fronds dies

A tree trimmer found dead in palm tree in San Diego on the morning of November 16, 2007, had apparently climbed the tree the day before to trim the dead fronds and was likely crushed and suffocated after the fronds came loose and collapsed on top of him.

He was found under the fronds in the tree the next morning and declared dead at the scene. Emergency crews needed about three hours to remove the man’s body from the tree.

The identity of the victim, a Fallbrook, Calif., resident in his 30s, was not immediately released pending notification of his family.

The tree trimmer had reportedly “shimmied up the tree using a rope” and climbed underneath the palm fronds, which fell on top of him, according to The San Diego Union-Tribune.

Tree worker crushed in bucket by falling limbs

Brad Preston Wolfe, 24, of Federalsburg, Maryland, was killed October 25, 2007, when he was struck by large branches that came loose from a crane while trimming a tree outside a Severna Park, Md.

Mr. Wolfe, part of a tree and lawn service company crew, was standing in a lift basket connected to a crane about 10:30 a.m. while he and the small crew cut and removed tree branches from a large tree. The crew removed a large branch about 70 feet up and secured it with two cables that were hooked to the crane ball, according to a report in the Capital Gazette in Annapolis, Md.

But the branch apparently came lose faster than expected and the two security cables snapped, causing the large limb to fall. The biggest branch missed Mr. Wolfe but several smaller branches crashed on top of him. He was wearing a safety helmet, glasses, gloves, and hearing protection, according to the report.

He collapsed in the basket and was bleeding from the head. He also was complaining of stomach and neck pains. Crews from the Arnold and Jones fire stations removed Mr. Wolfe from the basket and stabilized him before he was taken by ambulance to Harbour Hospital Center in Baltimore. He was pronounced dead on arrival due to severe head trauma and multiple broken ribs.

Ground worker electrocuted touching bucket truck

A ground worker was killed October 22, 2007, while working with a crew clearing trees around power lines in East Haddam, Connecticut.

Peter Sokolovsky, 30, of Brooklyn, Conn, was working as part of a tree service crew hired by Connecticut Light and Power Company to trim trees in the area, cutting back trees and branches so that power lines could be transferred to new poles.

Sokolovsky was standing on the ground, next to the truck, and his partner was up in the aerial bucket. The partner had just finished making the first of his cuts when electricity surged through the raised boom and coursed through the truck. Sokolovsky was electrocuted when he touched the truck, according to the published report in The Hartford Courant. He was pronounced dead at the scene. His partner, badly shaken, was taken to Middlesex Hospital’s emergency clinic in Marlborough to be evaluated.

The father of a 4-year-old boy and a 2-month-old girl, Sokolovsky had been working for the company for two weeks.

City tree-trimmer killed in fall from bucket

A veteran tree trimmer for the city of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, died October 24, 2007, after falling from a bucket truck while trimming trees in the city.

Charles A. Hobson, 56, a 16-year employee of the Tuscaloosa Department of Transportation, was pronounced dead at DCH Regional Medical Center shortly after the accident.

Hobson was not using the required safety harness at the time of the accident, according to a Dateline Alabama follow-up report.

“Safety equipment was present,” Mayor Walt Maddox told the Tuscaloosa City Council. “It wasn’t being utilized.”

Hobson had been trimming trees for 25 years, according to one published report.
Fall into wood chipper kills tree trimmer

An Orange County, California, tree trimmer feeding branches into a wood chipper in Tustin, Calif., was pulled into the machine and killed November 7, 2007. The Los Angeles Times identified the victim as Gabriel Gonzales-Ferrer, 24.

Gonzales-Ferrer was one of three workers trimming trees and removing debris from a private residence. One was in the tree and the other hauling debris. Gonzalez was standing at the back end of the chipper, throwing branches into it with his co-workers nearby. Then one of them looked over, and he was gone, according to the report.

Police called to the residential area just after 4 p.m. found the landscape worker’s body inside the wood chipper, the report said. Authorities took the wood chipper and the truck to which it was attached to a parking structure at the Orange County coroner’s office, where it was dismantled and Gonzales-Ferrer’s remains removed. An autopsy was scheduled today to confirm the cause of death and rule out anything else, such as whether alcohol or drugs were involved.

Tree service climber dies when tree falls

A Winchester, Virginia, man died November 7, 2007, after an accident while he was clearing trees at a private resort community Lansdowne, Virginia.

Tammy Ray Cave, 37, an employee of a tree service company, was working on a tree and was approximately 50 feet above the ground. The tree apparently broke near the bottom causing Cave to fall to the ground. Part of the tree came down on top of the victim.

Cave was pronounced dead a short time later at a nearby hospital.

Tractor mishap crushes worker

Ramón Gonzalez, 41, an employee for a landscaping company, was crushed by a tractor November 12, 2007, while working at golf course in East Manatee, Florida, near Bradenton.

Gonzalez and other workers had been moving palm trees on the course. After the accident, the four-wheel-drive boom tractor lay on its side on a golf cart path, near Gonzalez and some uprooted trees.

He and another co-worker where walking alongside the tractor, as the driver tried to drive across a sharp incline on the cart path. The tractor overturned and crushed Gonzalez.

Gonzalez worked as an equipment operator for more than a year with the company, according to the Bradenton Herald.
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Fun how things change over time.

About a century after the Model T was designed to run on either gasoline or alcohol, here we are with the largest corn crop since World War II and scientists trying to find ways to wring horsepower out of a renewable source. And wasn’t it only a few years ago, say, the turn of the millennium, that tree debris was a costly waste product?

Well, the times do change. Just talk to Steve Sylvester, founder and CEO of a well established, 32-year-old business, S&S Tree and Horticultural Specialists in South Saint Paul, Minn. His story best describes the change in that part of the business and the opportunities – large and small – that lie ahead for a tree care professional in just about any market.

“Eight years ago I had to pay to get rid of wood chips,” says the owner of the region’s largest family owned tree care business, which now boasts 72 employees. “We still have Dutch elm disease here and a lot of city contracts, so part of our tree production continues to be removal of diseased elm.” Just about eight years ago, he notes, S&S was paying $125,000 to $145,000 a year to dispose of branches and logs. “It wasn’t so bad, because we could pass that cost on to the customer, but it still made me sick to make out that check!”

It was about that time Sylvester got together with a local landscape wholesaler. “In those days, colored wood mulch was still in its infancy. Landscape architects were still pretty much still into rocks and clean (raw, unprocessed) wood chips. There was really no machine to convert chips into mulch, especially colored mulch, but I had begun hearing about other areas in the US – especially in the East – trying to come up with ways to use wood waste from tree removal,” says Sylvester.

As he describes it, the process took a couple of years of playing around with a recipe with the landscape wholesaler and then discovering a machine, in his case a Rotochopper, for processing and coloring mulch. “We were actually able to make a market up here in Minnesota for our products.”

Concurrent with the demand for stylized, designer mulch, there has grown a demand in the local downtown St. Paul electric district for a ground wood product that can be burned for heating and power production. The demand is so high now for processed waste that “ironically, as we got to 2007, we are seeing some wood waste yards having to pay for raw waste product to process!” Sylvester says.

The S&S process typically is to use a Vermeer tub grinder first to reduce large volumes of wood waste into rough mulch, then feed that through a Rotochopper MC-256 horizontal grinder to grind and color the rough mulch into a finished saleable colored mulch.

“We market two types of mulch – chips and shred,” says Sylvester. One technique is to let shredded materials from logs sit on clean blacktopped acreage (no soil or rocks to compromise the mix). S&S runs logs through a Vermeer tub grinder and the mulch sits on the blacktop for a year, turned occasionally “to keep it cooking,” until it turns a natural deep brown.

Materials re-run through the Rotochopper for mulch are sold under the brand names New England Mulch, fine mulch that “locks” together and won’t wash away, and Double Grind, which is 100 percent mulch with no color or dye. “They are our own recipes, and we can’t make them fast enough,” Sylvester adds.

Mulch can come in a variety of colors – gold, brown, red and black. The company also produces a specialty mix, a non-colored “playground” mulch certified by the Detroit Testing Labs for its cushionability.
for kids. Sylvester says the one-time $2,500 cost to certify mulch for playground use is well worth it, since many playgrounds require certified mulches requested by the local school district. That’s also a sell-out,” he says. “Actually, we sell out of most (mulch) product we have.”

“The good news is that we have created a huge market, and now we buy waste from smaller tree companies because we can’t keep up with our own product needs. The market has turned full circle in eight years.”

What that says to the smaller tree care guy is that the take-down debris has value, even if you can’t process it yourself!

“Who would think we would be buying tree waste when we were paying to get rid of it?” Sylvester poses. The fact is that what was once a $125,000 cost is now a million dollar revenue stream for this $7 million tree care company.

**Customizing the output**

Vermeer, one of the major equipment makers in this market, concurs when it says there are “ample opportunities” to find new markets for processed green and wood waste, but warns that before jumping into one of these markets there are a number of issues to consider.

“First and foremost, end-users require that the contractor deliver the processed green or wood waste to exact specifications,” says Duane Harthoorn with Vermeer. “These specifications can dictate the type of equipment you use in the reduction process.”

For example, Harthoorn points out, mulch should not contain long spears of wood, and playground mulch typically needs to be in the form of a nugget. The cogeneration (bio-fuel) industry has stricter guidelines. The feeding systems sometimes require a consistent length or shape of processed wood waste for optimal feeding and BTU value. This market also requires that fines (the undersized, inferior grindings that are not good as biomass fuel), be removed from the processed wood waste, which may require the use of a trommel screen.

According to Harthoorn, meeting mulch and cogeneration specifications requires some advance planning. Taking a whole tree and trying to create the desired end product in the first pass may be difficult because you are not working with a uniform product to begin with.

“Each tree species is unique and will produce a different end product,” says Harthoorn. “This inconsistency has a big effect on the final product.”

Various tree species will react differently to grinding, most often because the grain of the wood can make a widely varying product. In order to get the desired end product, one pass may require the use of a smaller screen. This can lead to re-circulation and creates fines.

The goal should be to use a larger screen on the first pass to create a consistent six-inch sized product. Then a smaller screen can be used for processing the materials a second time to attain the desired end product. “There are contractors who are adamant about attaining the end product in one pass,” says Harthoorn. “In those cases we recommend a custom screen design, such as a step screen.” A step screen is designed to stop re-circulation of the product. The screen features baffles that prevent oversized pieces from flowing through the screen. Instead they are split again by the rotor into a smaller size that can then pass though the screen. Sometimes a screen is custom-built with holes in special shapes such as an oval, square or diamond. This can make a big difference with some species of trees.

“Vermeer builds custom screens to help contractors achieve the desired end product,” says Harthoorn. “We design screens that will provide an end product that meets their specifications.” Harthoorn adds that there is no cookie cutter approach to processing wood waste. Each application and tree species is different and may require a different strategy and screen.

Speaking of different strategies, with oil costing close to $100 a barrel, wood chips for bio fuel (translation: furnaces) are gaining in popularity and price.

Jason Showers is in charge of Northeast commercial sales for Morbark, which recently launched the Typhoon 20, a new machine dedicated as a biomass chipper at $85,000 (without the loader). The Typhoon features a 20-inch capacity chipper which,
Showers says, is ideal for land clearers wanting to chip product to a manageable size before taking it to a chip dump facility. The high capacity machine “came out” at TCI EXPO last year. “This year, we introduced the loaderized version,” he says.

The Typhoon 20 chips waste into bio-fuel aggregate and, as Showers notes, “There is a BIG market in the Northeast for biomass energies. It’s a time when it’s desirable to go out and create biomass again – and we’re getting more per ton than ever.” While costs vary per region, Showers and others say the time is right to get an attractive price for a good end product – up to $35 a ton.

Morbark also makes mulch equipment with three different applications for grinding mulch. Typically, a tree care pro will dump chips at a central facility that will turn the raw chips into mulch. Morbark offers three types of colorizing units: dry powder (a Morbark-built system), foam or liquid (an auxiliary system also by Morbark). Typically, Showers says, material is run through a preliminary grinding step then to a smaller screen to make finer mulch, then through the colorizer. “We can do everything in one step now,” he notes.

Bandit offers five horizontal grinders, according to Jerry Morey, president. Beast Recyclers reduce material using a controlled cutting and splitting action as opposed to the beating action of traditional grinders.

“The difference is best described in comparing an axe to a sledge hammer – which would you choose to chop down a tree?” Morey asks. “The smoothness of the process adds life to the unit and reduces maintenance. Ground material is contained inside the grinding chamber. Debris is not thrown from the machine and fine materials created in the grinding process are...
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mostly contained in the mill, limiting the amount of dust and debris that is discharged around the machine,” he says. “Our improved teeth and cutter bodies improve the overall value of the processed material. Two different types of teeth are often used in combination to maximize performance and deliver a specific end product,” he explains. Teeth are selected based on the material being processed, the amount of contaminants in the material and the size of the desired end-product. Cutting teeth produce a blocky-type product while splitters produce a more shredded-type product. “Cutting and splitting teeth are ideal for big material while splitting and grinding teeth are known for their dependability,” Morey says.

What all this means in the new world of trash to treasure tree debris is that various sizes of internal screens allow the operator to regulate the end product, which has proven ideal for mulch, compost, fuel for wood-fire boilers, and animal bedding.

For mulch coloration, Bandit machines can be equipped with the Color Critter II attachment, an economical way to produce high-quality, rich-looking mulch that will bring top dollar. According to Morey, “The Color Critter II uses a dry, granular coloring pigment with an electronically controlled metering system that operates off the Beast’s electronic controls. This ensures the right amount of water and pigment flow.”

“We are in the process of developing a new mulch coloring system, fully integrated into the Beast’s construction. We expect to release the new system to the public in early 2008.”

The Bandit lineup includes the new Model 1680 ‘Sharptooth’ Beast Recycler, for small land-clearing operations and tree services looking to dispose of brush and tree limbs on site. The Model 2680 compact, heavy-duty grinder is easy to
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transport and excellent for harvesting logging slash and mill waste. The Model 3680 Beast Recycler is for high production operations with great portability, and will produce as much as 450 cubic yards per hour, depending on the material being processed. The Model 4680 Beast Recycler is especially effective for processing large diameter trees, logs and stumps and will process as much as 800 cubic yards per hour. And the Model 5680 Beast Recycler, Bandit’s most productive grinder, can be equipped with engine options up to 1,200-hp and will process big logs and stumps with ease. Finally, a dealer in Maine just sold Bandit’s new Model 3590 whole tree chipper to one of the largest mulch producers in the Northeast after just running it twice – which speaks to the power of this machine, says Morey.

Jamie Kramlich is sales coordinator at DuraTech Industries International. He says, “Our mainline unit is a tub grinder that can take raw product – stumps, trees and green waste – and grind it into finished, shredded material. The hammer mill pounds material and a dual-screen setup determines final product size. An operator can change material sizes with screens of from 1/8-inch up to 6-inch by 9-inch chunks.

“Land clearers put in the big screen to reduce material so it can be reground later,” Kramlich says. “These machines are on tracks so they can get to hard-to-reach spaces.

A consideration for anyone considering a capital expenditure like this is that “these machines range from $160,000 to a half million dollars. Throughput depends on the machine size. A smaller unit can put out five to 10 cubic yards an hour,” says Kramlich. “That’s a broad spectrum due to screen size and the type of green waste you chop up. If you keep your loader busy and keep the grinder full, you’ll obviously get more out of your grinder.”

We caught up with Vince Hundt, co-founder of Rotochopper, Inc., for his take on the industry over the past 17 years. “When I started, there was no home for urban wood waste. In the mid '90s, I participated with other companies by introducing color mulching capability to increase the appetite for consumer mulch. In the ‘90s, it was easy to make mulch from old palettes and trucking company wood waste.”

That became hard to come by, he explains, “so we turned to the tree care industry and introduced in 2002 the CP118 specifically for tree care professionals. We immediately found a willing market for a finished mulch product. Tree care guys now have a marketable material. The irony is that he’s likely selling back (value-added mulch) to the same person he charged to take down the tree! And it’s not uncommon for owners to accept (and be paid to take in) tree waste from others.”

Top-of-the-line mulch customizers run $100,000 and up. But with a busy machine doing 50 to 200 yards an hour – depending on the size of the machine – and mulch selling for $35 a yard, the investment may be worth a second look.

Colorbiotics develops and markets the color dies as well as the equipment for processing the end product, both inline or separately, according to the company’s Kent Rotert. The equipment ranges from their CM200 or Infusion color and water metering pumps that mount right on the grinder, up to Sahara X-Series of stand-alone units that process from 150- to 400-yards-per-hour of colored material.

“The Sahara is designed to meter and mix colorant and water into the mulch for an optimal colored mulch using the least amount of water,” says Rotert.

Colorbiotics’ dies, while not 100 percent organic, are “environmentally friendly,” Rotert adds. Rotert also points out that the raw material source is a key factor of end-product quality for all colored mulch products. Dark, materials tend to yield dark, rich shades while light materials tend to yield brighter shades.

The equipment and processes are available for customizing the color, size, shape, texture and even biological content (see related story on page 8) of mulch and other grinder output. New markets for green waste and renewable resources are opening almost daily. The result is that what was once an item on the expense side of the balance sheet for most tree care companies has been, or soon will be, erased and, for many if not all, replaced with a growing revenue item. Now that is a great note to end the year on, isn’t it?
Freedom of movement

FAE’s FORESTRY equipment is a clear leader in its field. It offers a perfect combination of power, technology and safety in a range designed for land reclamation and maintenance, as well as the reclamation of dirt roads, forestry trails and firebreaks.
A grand experiment in pest eradication is underway in California. If it doesn’t work, losses to plant-based industries in California alone are predicted to be in the billions, and the pest’s eventual range would likely include up to 80 percent of the United States.

The pest is the light brown apple moth (*Epiphyas postvittana*), “LBAM” for short. It was first detected last February in California. It had not previously been found anywhere in North America. This tiny moth – it measures from about ¼ inch to ½ inch in length – is native to Australia. It has already been transported to and become established in New Zealand, New Caledonia, Great Britain, Ireland and Hawaii.

LBAM’s range of hosts includes landscape trees, ornamental shrubs, fruit trees and fruit, and some vegetables, according to a report from the University of California Integrated Pest Management Program. The report says the larvae are known to feed on 250 plant species and may infest oak, willow, poplar, cottonwood, alder, pine and eucalyptus, as well as many types of fruit trees.

“In California it may encounter additional hosts it was not previously known to infest,” the report states. And, it may feed on far more species.

“In New Zealand they call it the ‘light brown everything moth,’” says Steve Lyle, director of public affairs for the California Department of Food and Agriculture. “Its host range may be 1,000 to 2,000 plants. It’s a threat not just to agriculture but to the forest canopy and the environment. It will eat virtually any plant.”

LBAM’s arrival in California was hardly a surprise. In 2003, Robert C. Venette, a research biologist with the U.S. Forest Service in St. Paul, Minn., and an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Entomology at the University of Minnesota, led a team that conducted a risk assessment study of the LBAM for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal Health Plant Inspection Service (APHIS).

“It was a concern at the time because of the economic damage this insect has caused, especially to fruit producers in Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Reports from these areas suggested up to 85 percent of fruits could be damaged,” Venette says.

Venette’s group concluded that “light brown apple moth would find plenty of food and suitable climate across the U.S.,” he says. “We also predicted that it would be somewhat difficult to detect and identify. We recognized California was most at risk based on interception records from APHIS. (Typically, when APHIS found light brown apple moth, the shipment was destined for California.) Regrettably, most of those predictions have turned out to be correct.”

APHIS and the CDFA now publish a daily “Joint Situation Report” on the LBAM. As of Nov. 1, the insect had been positively identified in 11 California counties, but was principally found in Santa Cruz (8,698 confirmed positives), San Francisco (2,139) and Monterey (746) counties.

“The major change since we completed our risk assessment is that the moth now has a foothold in the U.S.,” Venette says. “Now, communities not only have to worry about the moth coming from overseas (the focus of our original assessment), but there is also concern over the potential for movement by horticultural plants produced in California for sale across the country. I know the state of Minnesota has thought about the need for trade restrictions or other protections to ensure that moth does
not arrive here. I suspect other states are having the same discussions.”

In May, Mexico suspended importation of commodities from the 11 counties where LBAM has been identified. Canada implemented restrictions in June. Then in September, California and the federal government designated the affected counties as quarantined areas to control the movement of items that might harbor the LBAM.

**Eradication efforts**

Once LBAM was identified as present in North America, APHIS and the CDFA assembled a technical working group of scientists from the U.S., Australia and New Zealand that met in May.

“They made the recommendation to go ahead with eradication,” says Larry Hawkins, spokesman for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The recommended eradication program includes:

- Limiting and containing the LBAM population to the present distribution
- Monitoring to appraise changes in distribution and numbers
- Reduction of higher-density populations
- Suppression of low-density populations at the edges of quarantined areas

To reduce high-density populations, the panel recommended pheromone mating disruption as the primary method. “When the males don’t mate, lifespans pass without reproduction,” Lyle explains.

The pheromone, which is specific to LBAM and doesn’t affect any other insects, is being applied aerially in a microencapsulated, slow-release form.

Additionally, the insecticide Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) is being used to enhance the effectiveness of mating disruption in the more heavily infested locations and on outlying infestations. Outlying infestations are moth finds several miles away from other finds and therefore areas that will not be naturally reinfested.

Where infestations are found in nurseries, regulations recommend treatment with the fast-acting insecticide chlorpyrifos before plant materials can be shipped.

This appears to be the first time a mating disruption strategy has been tried as the primary method to eradicate a pest. Can this novel approach work to eradicate LBAM?

The answer depends on whom you ask. A key scientist in California’s fight to control the Mediterranean fruit fly says eradication is impossible. James Carey, a professor of entomology at the University of California-Davis and known for his research on the medfly, which in the 1980s threatened California’s citrus industry, told a reporter for the Monterey Herald that the program is really motivated by a desire to stave off the dire economic consequences to the state from quarantines and embargoes that would take effect were the state to concede the LBAM was not eradicable.

“This thing is so widespread there is no way they are going to eradicate it,” Carey insisted.

CDFA disagrees. “It does appear that...

**Biology of the light brown apple moth**

The light brown apple moth’s (LBAM) name is something of a misnomer as its colors can vary and may include dark brown, pale yellow, and blackish or purplish shades. Only a few experts can positively identify it. The adult moths live but a few weeks and can fly, at the most, about 2,000 feet, although most fly no further than 330 feet.

The larva go through several developmental stages and measure only about ½ inch long at maturity. The larvae make silken shelters from which they feed and, in later stages, web leaves together or leaves to fruit. At this time, no one can positively identify the larvae.

The pupal stage occurs in a shelter made from rolled up leaves. LBAM larvae are present for most of the year and stages of development may overlap.

In trees, the larvae are more commonly found in the lower half and central part of the tree, closer to the trunk. In shrubs they are found mostly on the developing leaves on branch terminals. Buds of deciduous host plants are vulnerable in the winter and early spring.

LBAM covers a large geographical area, but it is a relatively young, new infestation,” Lyle counters. “The technical working group made recommendations on what they believed will work.”

 Asked if there was a political agenda involved, Lyle says, “I would say we are following the recommendations of a group of scientists. In other [countries] where LBAM is established, it was discovered far too late for eradication to be attempted and the method being tried is brand new as it relies on a new pheromone. Here we have an opportunity,” he says.

If eradication doesn’t work, “management of the pest will move to a traditional IPM program,” according to the University of California report.

Several TCIA members contacted in connection with this story and located in the California counties with the greatest infestations said they had not had any direct experience with the LBAM – yet.

If the pheromone disruption program proves ineffective, “you’ll just have a lot of confused males in the population – sort of like humans,” joked arborist Brian Jacobson of Smith Tree Service in Carmel, Calif.

“From a bigger picture, as humans we have brought all kinds of changes to the planet, including changes in atmospheric chemistry, oceanic chemistry and the next biggest change is movement of biological materials,” Jacobson says. “We have radically accelerated the movement of species to new areas. I wonder what humans will think 100,000 years from now when they look back on this time.”

Sarah Magee is a freelance writer who resides in Providence, Kentucky.
John Kerns insists TCIA Accreditation is doing for tree care companies today what the certified arborist credential did for the tree care employee back in the 1990s. The certified arborist credential created a level of proficiency for individuals, while Accreditation has become a standard for best business practices.

"Accreditation looks at all of the different aspects of a business – knowledge, safety training, consumer dispute resolution, how contracts are written, proper insurances and all of the rest," says Kerns. "We have a tool that shows companies the way. It says to the public, 'This a company you can trust.' Accreditation recently opened the door for us to a major account. One of my national competitors lost the account, and the selling point was our Accreditation."

John Kerns, along with his brother, Robert, owns Kerns Brothers Tree Service and Landscaping in Wilmington, Delaware. Susan Kerns, John's wife of 37 years, is the office manager.

In business since 1973, they will be celebrating 35 years in business in 2008. They have 26 full-time employees. The business mix is about 60 percent residential, 30 percent commercial and 10 percent municipal or state work. Tree maintenance comprises about 75 percent of the work, with removals 15 percent and plant health care 10 percent.

Three brothers started the business; one left after three years and the other two did most of the work themselves for about 10 years. As they started to take on employees in the 1980s, they saw the benefit in 1988 of joining TCIA, then NAA.

When John knew it was time to seek Accreditation, he looked at the process as a way to conquer their two biggest challenges.

"Keeping up with the industry regulations is No. 1," he says. "They're constantly changing. Securing good employees who are looking for a long-term commitment, a career, is No. 2. In this industry, employees will jump to a less desirable company if the pay is slightly higher, even though the benefits are less. Or it may be that somebody offers to pay them under-the-table. The professional image of the tree care industry in this country still has a long way to go. Certainly Accreditation is a step in the right direction."

Susan Kerns is in charge of new employee orientation. She notes that new hires are impressed with the training and other things Kerns does, and they also like the way everything is laid out in an organized and open manner – per Accreditation guidelines.

"They don't seem to find that at other companies," she says. "I think our employees take a lot of pride in working for an accredited company," she insists.

As a result, they fit Accreditation into their marketing mix.

"We were the first company accredited in Delaware and are still the only accredited company in Delaware," says John. "It has become a marketing tool, a good way of demonstrating professionalism in the eyes of the public. It's outside proof, a safeguard for the consumer. It's not just John Kerns saying 'I have a professional company.' It is becoming a tool that will make our industry much more professional."

When talking to clients on the phone and explaining Accreditation, Susan says that they appreciate having someone on their property they can trust. All the Kerns’ sales reps are Certified Arborists, and Michael J. Hadley, Kerns safety director, is Delaware’s only CTSP – Certified Tree Care Safety Professional.

Kerns markets through Yellow Pages and as sponsor of a garden clinic radio program on Saturday mornings. They also have a company newsletter three times a year, and a Web site. A lot of business comes from referrals.

"The Better Business Bureau is an excellent
source of advertising, too,” says John. “We were the winners of the state Better Business Bureau Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics for 2006. We were also the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce Superstars in Business Award of Excellence winner in 2006. And I think a lot of that had to do with our Accreditation.”

How do they set themselves apart from competition?

“I always like to say we don’t have any competition, but we do in reality,” admits John. “We compete with three national tree care companies in this area, only one of which is accredited.”

He says professional affiliations, education, training, a great benefits package and their safety program in particular are things that set them apart.

“I also like to think that we have an old-fashioned attitude where we treat every client as if they were a $100,000-a-year account. That attitude travels down from the salesman to the employee who is going to show up to do the work,” he says.

Kerns Brothers recently completed the re-Accreditation process fairly easily. The initial process took “about a year and a half” to complete. John put a salesman in charge who left the company after starting the process. When Susan, a former teacher and student adviser, retired from education and came to work in the office, she was able to pull it all together.

“If Susan was here when we initially applied for Accreditation, we’d have probably had it done in a couple of months,” he says. “We were doing a lot of the right things, but we didn’t have a written company handbook. We weren’t putting down on paper some of the training processes. Accreditation has made us much more efficient, and it’s made our employees much more safety conscious by seeing that there is more of a paper trail.”

“We’re a much more organized company now than before, and we operate much more efficiently,” he says. “Two or three years ago I would have said that we were a very efficient company, but Accreditation has helped us to be even more even efficient. Things run a lot more smoothly.”

Susan agrees: “We were doing a good job, and there’s always room for improvement, but now I really feel we’re doing a great job! Having TCIA help us in the process of scrutinizing everything helps new ideas come out. It energizes you to implement new things.”

The most time consuming part of getting accredited for Kerns was putting together a formal business plan. They’d always had one, but this process helped them put together a much more complete one, John says.

“We learned that we can always do better. It is easier for someone on the outside to point out strengths and weaknesses that you may not have even considered or been aware of. It’s a process in which any company can grow and, in the end, be a better company for it.”

“It has opened doors for us, and it continues to open doors,” stresses John. “I see in the future that municipalities or large corporate accounts are going to require Accreditation. It puts them a little bit further away from liability.”

John plans to continue to grow his own company, particularly his PHC division, and for Accreditation to help him do that. He is also looking for others to get on board.

“I am going to recommend Accreditation to my competitors because it is going to take the tree care industry up to another level, where people see that it’s not just somebody with a chain saw cutting a limb off, it is somebody who has knowledge and uses that knowledge to care for their trees.”
The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recently announced a final rule on employer-paid personal protective equipment (PPE). Under the rule, all PPE, with a few exceptions, will be provided at no cost to the employee.

The rule, first proposed in 1999, was published in the Federal Register November 15, 2007. OSHA anticipates that this rule will have substantial safety benefits that will result in more than 21,000 fewer occupational injuries per year. “Employees exposed to safety and health hazards may need to wear personal protective equipment to be protected from injury, illness and death caused by exposure to those hazards,” says Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Ed Foulke. “This final rule will clarify who is responsible for paying for PPE, which OSHA anticipates will lead to greater compliance.”

The provisions in OSHA standards that require PPE generally state that the employer is to provide such PPE. However, some of these provisions do not specify that the employer is to provide such PPE at no cost to the employee. In this rulemaking, OSHA is requiring employers to pay for the PPE provided, with exceptions for specific items.

The rule does not require employers to provide PPE where none has been required before. Instead, the rule merely stipulates that the employer must pay for required PPE, except in the limited cases specified in the standard.

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Tree care employers should not be lured into thinking that they can circumvent PPE use even when they feel employees work safely without it. The OSHA field compliance officer inspecting the tree crew is the one to ultimately determine whether there are hazards present that PPE could reduce or eliminate. Typically the hazards encountered in a tree pruning or removal operation are considered potentially life-threatening and accordingly the failure to protect against these hazards is by definition a “serious” violation.

The rule merely stipulates that the employer must pay for required PPE, except in the limited cases specified in the standard.

A single PPE infraction has historically led to a two-part citation: employer failure to assess the hazards, and employer failure to provide PPE. With this new rule in place, it is anticipated that a third item will be added and an additional fine levied in the typical citation. In other words, the cost of non-compliance just went up 50 percent.

There is a victory in the name of reasonableness for the tree care employer. The final PPE rule contains a few exceptions for ordinary safety-toed footwear, ordinary prescription safety eyewear, logging boots and ordinary clothing and weather-related gear. Over the years, as this rule was being shaped, the Tree Care Industry Association submitted comments and even testified at OSHA hearings. One of the tenets of our comments was that the employer should not be obligated to pay for items that, while protective in nature, were essentially employee’s personal items of clothing. Obviously, the message was heard.

The rule provides an enforcement deadline of May 15, 2008, six months from the rule’s promulgation, to allow employers time to change their existing PPE payment policies.

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.
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I get a big laugh when I think back to my original climbing system. Through trials filled with many errors, I have learned what to look for to build a system that makes me a more productive and efficient arborist.

Let me start by telling you that the information you are about to read has been tested and tested — I have the receipts to prove it. My intention is to help you wade through the vast array of products and information so that you may plot a course to building your own climbing system.

As arborists, we are experiencing evolution at a quantum-leap pace when innovative climbers can create systems that are functional works of art. Many of you are working on finely tuned systems that you are very comfortable in; however, there are those of you who are just getting started or have been climbing for some time and are in need of an update to boost your productivity. For those of you in the latter group, the choices you have to make when building your climbing system can be quite confusing.

Everyone has to start somewhere. Don’t feel that you have to climb on the same system your coworkers do, even if they have been using it for decades. The place to start is with your fellow arborists and their suppliers. Many arborists have been through their own trials and errors and are more than happy to share their experience and knowledge with you. Several online forums allow open discussions between arborists that can offer advice and information, including opinions that are independent and unbiased about gear and technique.

To get started, you need a blueprint for your system. Start a list and bounce ideas off other climbers. New gear catalogs and trade shows always give me a case of “can’t-live-without-that-piece-of-gear” complex. One way to avoid this is differentiating between what you want and what you need. When building a system, you should think about being as comfortable as possible while still being smooth and productive in the tree. Climbing styles differ, and this is usually the primary factor that dictates personal preference. Your company profile may also come into play. For example, are you focusing on large removals that require you to carry rigging gear aloft, or are you primarily climbing mature trees to administer a crown cleaning? For starters, identify your climbing style and personal preferences for gear and take a look at the type of work your company does.

Due to varying temperatures and a company’s policy on uniforms, I will only briefly touch on things to look for in clothing. As a rule of thumb, loose and baggy clothes can get snagged in the tree and make your saddle and gear harder to access, posing a safety hazard. Clothes should be rugged and snug without com-
promising flexibility. There are a tremendous amount of fibers that meet or exceed these criteria. Clothing and outerwear is an area where the sky is the limit, from comfortable blue jeans to nano tech and micro pile fabrics designed specifically for arborists—which are well worth the money. What you wear is truly a matter of personal preference and trying different clothes. Don’t forget your personal protective equipment (PPE): helmets, glasses, gloves and ear protection are a crucial part of every arborist’s outfit.

There are numerous ways to get off the ground and into the office. First you have to set a line. I prefer the throw bag. This activity can be as frustrating as driving a golf ball, and remarkably similar. The weighted bags come in weights from 8 to 24 ounces made in various shapes and from a couple of different materials. Weighted bags seem to be preferred to all other “throw balls.” There are also a number of throw-line materials that come in different diameters, from 1.75 to 3 millimeters and up. Tensile strength and line durability is a consideration. Before climbing you may need to break off dead snags.

Lightweight combinations will throw higher, but they don’t come down as easily, especially in heavy foliage. You may also want to try different line materials to feel and see how they fly and react in the tree. I suggest trying many different line/bag combinations until you find the one you are consistent with. Again, you should look to fellow arborists for opinions.

For storage and easy access, any of the folding boxes or cubes work well and take up miniscule space. I have seen everything from five-gallon buckets to collapsible laundry hampers used, but the collapsible cubes are the easiest to use as they are least clumsy and bulky. Mastering the throw bag will get you in the tree faster and help productivity. Having the right combination is the first step.

So now you can isolate a crotch from 50 feet away on the first throw – what are you waiting for? Break out that new 150-foot hank of rope and climb.

Climbing lines keep getting better, lighter and smaller. Advances in rope technology have given us ropes that have a tensile strength (average load required to break rope) of 6,000 pounds and are 11 millimeters in diameter. The big thing with rope, and all climbing gear for that matter, is the ANSI Z133.1-2006 Safety Requirements for Arboriculture – or “the Z.” The standard states that climbing lines shall be made of synthetic materials with a minimum tensile strength of 5,400 pounds or 24 kilonewtons. (1kn = 224.8 pounds).

Z133 goes on to state that the manufacturer must identify the line specifically for tree climbing, ruling out smaller rock climbing lines, but makes an exception for the smaller diameter arborist lines. The way a rope feels in your hand and how it performs in your particular climbing system are two primary factors when shopping. I have really come to enjoy the double-braid construction for strength and feel. The cover and core tend to share the load. My productivity increased tremendously when I switched from ½-inch kernmantle to a smaller double-braid.

Climbers really start to show how different they are when it comes to how they attach to the rope. If your climbing system is traditional or you are using an eye-in-eye Prusik, I recommend trying multiple cord and rope combinations. You should also experiment with various hitches to really dial in your system. Remember to go low and slow when trying new combinations and hitches. The cordage types vary as much, if not more, as ropes. The materials are very durable, heat resistant-up to 900 degrees, and have high tensile strength – some come in just under 9,000 pounds.

If you’re a splicer, you can really customize your eye-in-eye length and make a smoother system. If you can’t splice, buy spliced lines or make friends with a splicer. There are also many mechanical devices for ascending and positioning. If you plan on using one, check compatibility with your rope size. Work-positioning lanyards can be purchased complete or can be cus-
tom made from a variety of cords and hardware.

When you start looking into hardware, hold on to your wallet. You should really know what you need.

Every gear bag should have some kind of friction management device. There are many to choose from in every price range. I carry a custom-spliced device made from ½-inch Tenex and aluminum rings with alternate colored tubular webbing sewn over it for visibility. Reducing friction will increase your endurance and prolong the life of your rope, not to mention that fact that it’s better for the tree.

Another thing to remember is the jingle jangle effect – that is the noise you make in the tree when you have an excess of hardware on your saddle. Do you really need all those gadgets? When was the last time you used each one? Most good production climbers go light: a couple of slings, a micro pulley or something similar to tend slack and set redirects, an extra biner or two, and something to descend with. If you don’t want to carry a figure eight, try an HMS carabiner – the shape works well with a Munter hitch.

Another necessity is a good hand saw and scabbard. Again, many makes of saws are out there, so consider blade length and grip size when deciding on your personal preference. I prefer a leg scabbard because I’m short and don’t like things hanging that low off my saddle.

There are a lot of devices that can make your climb easier and save you energy. I highly recommend speaking to someone who has the device you’re looking at prior to purchasing. When looking at carabiners, remember to check the ANSI Z133 standard. Shapes, size and gate type vary, so find the style that works for you. I look for one-handed operation and key-locked gates, which have less tendency to snag on my eye-in-eye and saddle. Small accessory biners are great for attaching gear to your saddle. They take up less space and help streamline a climber’s silhouette in the tree. Micro pulleys and other similar pieces give your system a tremendous advantage by making your movements fluid and efficient. Swivels also reduce friction, and frustration, by keeping your line free of twists and attach directly to some saddles.

If footlocking isn’t a staple in your climbing repertoire, foot and hand ascenders are out there in many styles and price ranges that will advance you quickly and efficiently into the canopy. There are even complete mechanical ascender systems on the market. Remember, as with other mechanical positioning devices, check for rope compatibility before buying.

Innovative climbers mix and match gear to create some awesome systems. Just bear in mind extensive testing is critical to keep you safe.

Up to now I have urged caution against buying excessive gear. When it comes to your saddle, don’t cheat yourself by trying to skimp on cost. Your climbing system revolves around the saddle. Light saddles that are fully adjustable and come loaded with options are out there for a reasonable price. Try the model on before you purchase, if you can find a fellow climber who has one. Climbing competitions, trade shows and recreational climbing groups are great places to try on gear. If you have to order before trying it on, verify return policy. Make sure you get the right fit – check leg and waist sizes.

When looking for saddles consider the bridge style and attachment points along with fit and padding. For me, leg loops offer superior movement in the tree when compared to batted-style seats. Suspension bridges are available that make reaching out and moving in the tree more fluid than traditional fixed attachment points. A good saddle will pay for itself in comfort and productivity.

Use this article as a guide to get the process rolling of building your climbing system. You will find other climbers along the way who will offer more detailed advice on particular brands and pieces of gear. Those of you who do the research and experimentation will find your experience in the tree to be much more productive and enjoyable. Good luck and stay safe.

Keith Pancake is a certified arborist/utility specialist/tree worker working for Broad Oak Tree and Shrub Care in Milford, N.H.
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First Detector Training on Invasive Tree Insect Pests

TCIA’s “Risk of Invasion: First Detector Training on Invasive Insect Species” workshop at TCI EXPO 2007 was a successful venture between TCIA and the USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area.

Fifty-five attendees were given an interesting and informative three-hour session by Dr. Mike Raupp, professor of entomology and extension specialist at the University of Maryland. Raupp did a great job of gearing the session toward arborists who are helping to educate other arborists as well as consumers.

Attendees were asked to fill out a Topic Knowledge and Work Practice Evaluation (quiz) before the workshop began to assess their current knowledge of invasive insects. A follow-up evaluation will be sent out to the attendees within 30 days to assess their retention of new concepts delivered at the workshop.

Raupp reviewed the contents of the workshop packet, which included a set of laminated field identification cards for First Detectors to use in the field. An 8 ½-inch x 11-inch flyer gives a little more detail about the insects and how to spot them. Raupp also discussed the “First Detector Field Training Guide,” which defines who is a First Detector, what steps to take in looking for invasive insects, and how to report an infestation. The Training Guide also offers a short test for readers to evaluate their own current identification skills. The final piece was the eight-page “Trainer’s Manual” that instructed attendees how to train other First Detectors in the field.

These materials are available to download for free on the TreeCareTips.org Web site, and are helpful education tools to use with consumers. Printed in both English and Spanish, the education materials enable the most people possible to keep a vigilant eye open for these pests. The “Trainer’s Manual” was available to workshop attendees only.

Four invasive insects of the Northeastern area of the United States that are causing the most concern to officials were reviewed. They were the sirex woodwasp (Sirex noctilio), Asian longhorned beetle (Anoplophora glabripennis), hemlock woolly adelgid (Adelges tsugae), and emerald ash borer (Agrilus planipennis). Methods of detection and control were discussed at length.

Raupp’s presentation was thorough, instructive, and included a close-up exam of each insect from under microscopes.

The workshop attendees were given the history of how invasive insects were assumed to enter the United States. Most participants were surprised to learn that changes in free trade laws in the earlier part of the 20th century were what provided opportunity for invasive insect species to enter our country.

Raupp was excellent at raising everyone’s awareness, regardless of their current experience with these invasives, and questions and answers were a dominant part of the entire session.

TCIA would like to thank the USDA Forest Service, Northeastern region, for making this workshop and the accompanying materials available to concerned arborists and homeowners.
Have you registered yourself and your top staff for Winter Management Conference 2008 yet?

The 2008 conference takes place February 11-14 at the oceanfront Westin Aruba Resort.

The annual WMC is the tree care business leadership event of the year, combining education, networking and planned recreational activities in a relaxed resort atmosphere. Attend WMC once and see why, for many industry leaders, it’s the only annual conference to attend.

The 2008 conference will feature four days of morning education sessions, providing guests with the remainder of the day as free time or to participate in planned recreational activities. Here are two of the speakers, each of whom will present attendees with insights on meeting customer needs effectively on WMC Day 2:

**Customer Retention Requires Leadership & Execution**
*By Clifford Robbins, Ph.D.*

The customer relationship management (CRM) industry spends a lot of time and money figuring out how businesses can provide a superior experience for customers. However, most CRM programs lack two key ingredients: leadership and execution.

Dr. Robbins will explain how keeping more customers is a direct outcome of your organization’s ability to build and maintain quality relationships with them – and how it starts at the top. Leadership must be committed to, and possess, a strong belief in superior customer satisfaction – and this is the ingredient most lacking where customer loyalty is eroding.

**ProActive Customer-Focused Sales**
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Top producing businesses are always looking for ways to improve and differentiate themselves in today’s continually changing markets. If you are selling the same way you did 12 months ago, you’re already losing business.

Dirk Beveridge will help us discover new and better strategies for competing successfully in today’s market. He’ll share how changing your sales approach, from reactive and product-oriented to proactive and customer-focused, will improve sales performance, productivity and results and drive sales beyond what the market is prepared to give.

For more information on the foremost business/social conference for tree care industry leaders, visit www.tcia.org and click the Meetings tab to download the full conference brochure, or call 1-800-733-2622 to request a mailed copy. Hotel accommodations can also be booked online.

Don’t forget, the WMC registration Early Bird deadline is January 11, 2008. Register online or call soon to save!
Bayer Environmental Science is the newest TCIA PACT partner. Bayer signed on as a supporter of Partners Advancing Commercial Tree care for 2007 and 2008.

The Bayer Environmental Science green business group was founded in 2002 as a division of Bayer CropScience LP, a member of the worldwide Bayer Group, a $27 billion international health care and chemicals group based in Leverkusen, Germany.

The tree care industry is an important market for Bayer Environmental Science green business products, according to company sources. Other markets include lawn care, golf, nursery and greenhouse production, sod production, sports fields, institutional sites and industrial vegetation management. The company manufactures a full line of tree, turf and ornamental products, including insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and plant growth regulators. Some major products manufactured by Bayer include: Merit insecticide, Allectus insecticide, Foliar-applied Forbid miticide, and Merit Tree Injection, a new, injectable formulation of Merit insecticide. In addition, the company recently introduced CoreFect tablets, a combination of Merit and fertilizer in a tablet.

To develop and support its products, Bayer Environmental Science maintains one of the premier turf and ornamental research facilities in the country. The Clayton, N.C., facility allows for year-round testing of pesticides, utilizing greenhouses and field locations. Formulations, spray techniques and the influence of rainfall/irrigation on product performance are just some of the issues evaluated there. Numerous pest problems can be tested under a variety of conditions.

The Backed by Bayer initiative is a primary focus of the organization and a way to ensure success for its customers.

“Basically, Backed By Bayer means you purchase more than products when you do business with Bayer – you get the confidence that you’ll succeed,” says Bryan Gooch, Merit business manager for Bayer. “Our customers get the assurance that comes from value-added programs, services and an ongoing commitment to the industry.”

In addition, Bayer offers many value-added programs to help the tree care professional, including its Accolades Rewards program – members earn points toward rewards with each purchase of a Bayer product.

“As a company, Bayer is fortunate – we have the portfolio to specialize within the industry,” says Gooch. “In other words, we have the products and programs that can make a difference to tree care professionals.”

For more information on the marketing opportunities available through the Partners Advancing Commercial Treecare program, contact Deborah Johnson, director of development, at 1-800-733-2622.
The Tree Care Industry Association recognizes our 2007 Partners Advancing Commercial Tree Care. Their strategic partnership with TCIA supports our journey to Transform the Industry.

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By Rick Howland

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By David Rattigan

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By Bill Butterworth

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From the Field: Tree Theme Bikes!
By Chuck Collins

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Arboriculture, Urban Forestry and Forestry Degree Programs in U.S. Colleges & Universities

Draft of the Revised ANSI A300 Pruning Standard

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By Charles Pfingsten

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By David Rattigan

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By Rick Howland

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By Rich Magargal

Invasive Insects & the Tree Care Industry
By Anand B. Persad, Ph.D.

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By Howard Eckel

Battle of the Beech: Defending Your Decisions and Your Reputation
By David Schwartz

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By Rick Howland

Creating a Culture of Safety
By Sam Steel

Diagnosing Herbicide Injury
By David L. Roberts

Dead Trees Standing – Drought, Stress and Borers
By Michael Raupp

Hybrids May Be Ending the Pain of White Pine Blister Rust
By Pat Kerr

Cell Phone Use On the Job – Who Is Liable?
By Paul Farrell

Will Your Company Weather the Impending Workforce Crisis?
By Gregory P. Smith

Going Green: Boston Tree Preservation Becomes Even More Green

Giving Back: Massachusetts Arborist Association Day of Service

Tree Law: Virginia Ruling Provides Protection from Neighbor’s Trees
By Lew Bloch

Snow Business: Soliciting New Snow Plow Customers
By John Allin

“S” Corps Offer Limited Liability But Allow Owners Income and Deductions
By Mark E. Battersby

Member Forum: Lessons Learned from Emerald Ash Borer Treatments
By Kirk Gruenwald

Developing Their Own GPS Boosts a Company to the Max
By Don Dale

When Is a Sale a Sale? When You Get Paid
By Mary McVicker

Accreditation Profile: Poteet Tree Service

A Fall from Safety Results in Severe Injury
By Steve Sylvester

Consulting: There’s Income to be Made from Tree Appraisal and Valuation
By Tchukki Andersen

West Coast Shoe Protects Feet of Arborists, Motorcyclists, Movie Stars

From the Field: A Tree Is a Terrible Thing to Waste
By Celeste White

DECEMBER 2007

Tweaking the Benefits of Organic Mulch
By Dr. Glynn Percival and Evangelos Gklavakis

Professional Duties in Tree Risk Assessment
By J. David Hucker

Clearing the Way for Energy – Cutting vs Trimming ROWs
By David Rattigan

Fine Tuning Grinder Output for New Markets
By Rick Howland

On the Trail of the Light Brown Apple Moth
By Sarah Magee

Building a Climbing System
By Keith Pancake

Branching Out: “One Day, One School” Program Coming To a Town Near You
By Rebecca Fater

Accreditation Profile: Kerns Brothers

TCI 2007 Article Listing

From the Field: Should Nose Plugs Be Standard PPE? Maybe...
By Marie Hawkins

Have a story idea or a photo to share?
Send it to Don Staruk at staruk@tcia.org
TCIA Receives Grant to Run EHAP Workshops

The Tree Care Industry Association has been awarded a federal grant through OSHA’s Susan Harwood Training Grant Program to provide up to 12 free Electrical Hazards Awareness Program (EHAP) “open enrollment” workshops in 2008.

During the grant period, TCIA anticipates training 2000 or more individuals in safe, accident-free electrical hazard work practices. The cost of the workshop and all enrollment materials will be free to all participants, with the exception of a small fee to cover the cost of food and beverage.

EHAP is one step toward helping tree care professionals become qualified as line clearance arborists and provides a means of verifying that they have been trained according to OSHA and ANSI safety requirements. It is also an invaluable hazard awareness program for non-line clearance arborists. If you would like to host a free EHAP workshop, the Susan Harwood Training Grant provides an opportunity to get yourself and your group trained cost-effectively in electrical hazards awareness.

TCIA hopes to finalize the EHAP workshop locations by mid-December. Groups interested in potentially hosting a workshop should immediately request an EHAP Workshop Hosting Request Form by e-mailing peter@tcia.org, after reviewing the following requirements for hosting.

The facility must be FREE OF CHARGE or low cost to TCIA. Strong preference will be given to free/donated facilities.

Proposed location must accommodate a minimum of 100 students with classroom-style seating (rows of long tables with chairs all facing in the same direction).

Workshops are 8 hours long and include two 15-minute breaks and 1 hour for lunch. It is suggested they be scheduled Monday through Friday. All workshops must be held between January 1 and August 31, 2008.

Ample parking must be available.

A/V must be available, either provided by the location or rented. A/V to include a laptop (only if the instructor will not be bringing one), a DVD player and VCR, with a large screen monitor (TV) or a projector and screen.

The host partner must provide the name and contact information for a local caterer.

The host partner must be willing to provide on-site personnel (one individual per every 50 students) to check people in, distribute badges and materials, confirm food delivery and make sure the workshop runs on time. The on-site personnel will also be responsible for returning all workshop related materials (unused EHAP kits, training rosters, etc.) to TCIA within 48 hours of workshop’s conclusion.

The host partner should provide TCIA with marketing assistance – preferably e-mail lists – 10 to 12 weeks prior to the scheduled workshop. TCIA will finalize workshop locations by December 31.

Once finalized, workshops will be promoted and registration will be available exclusively through the TCIA Web site, www.tcia.org. Please tell these advertisers where you saw their ad. They appreciate your patronage.
What’s wrong? Got a stick up your nose!

By Marie B. Hawkins

We had a contract to do work for several years at the Naval Weapons Support Center at Crane, Indiana. It’s a large ammunition depot with lots of government projects for the military.

We worked all over the 100-square-mile base and knew every nook and cranny, which made it great to see deer, coyote, turkey, copperheads and rattlesnakes. It was an awesome place to work.

In our contract, we would take down dead, dangerous trees from the residual area, industrial area, high walls, bunkers, train tracks, power lines, roadways and more.

This particular day we were out on Road 8, which was near where blasting would take place for testing bombs and such. We were allowed in to do a tree between blastings. This day’s job involved a dead standing elm. We put a rope in it and felled it exactly where we wanted it.

When we did these jobs, we were supposed to drag the brush 15 feet behind the tree line and stack it no taller than 3 feet high.

I started cutting the brush out of the top of the tree and was coming along pretty well when all of a sudden it felt like someone hit me between the eyes with a fist or something. I put the brake on the saw and sat it down not knowing really what I was doing because I had this weird feeling in my head. I started feeling around my head moving up the walk, there was a lady standing there. The look on her face scared me, I was covered in blood!

As I opened my mouth blood poured out like a faucet had been turned on in the back of my throat. I was really losing a lot of blood and he basically threw me in the truck and headed for the dispensary on base. It was a good 12 minutes out from the base. It was a good 12 minutes out from where we needed to go and I had my head bent over my feet because I had just put my new sweatshirt on and didn’t want blood all over it, so the floor of the truck had a big blood puddle and my boots were covered.

We pulled up to the dispensary and I told him we weren’t allowed to park there. I’ll get out and go in and you park, I said. As I moved up the walk, there was a lady standing there. The look on her face scared me, and I thought to myself, “I must be dying!” I was covered in blood.

I got into the waiting area – so many people! I knew this was not going to be a quick in and out. I walked up to the counter and the nurse said, “Oh a little nose bleed?”

As I opened my mouth blood poured out over the counter and I couldn’t get the words out. Finally, I told her I was getting ready to faint and that I had taken out a stick that was up my nose.

She grabbed me to keep me from falling, placed me in a wheelchair and ran me to the ER part of the dispensary. They came in with scissors to cut off my new sweatshirt and I told them over my dead body. We will get it off one way or another, but cutting is no option!

The doctor wanted the stick to see if anything broke off in the cavity of my sinus. Well, I didn’t think I needed a twig and I had thrown it on the ground. They decided they couldn’t do much for me and were sending me to the hospital.

An eye, ear and nose specialist found where the stick entered with force and stopped just a half inch from my brain. They cleaned it out, packed it and gave me shots and medicine and I was informed to stay home for at least one week and rest. They didn’t want me to get meningitis, which could get into my spine.

My husband said, “You need to watch where you put your nose.” He always made comments about my nose being long before this happened and now, after this, it must be true.

When I arrived back to work the next week, our inspectors had named the road after my accident – Nose Job Road! What a tribute!

For several years after that, when the contract had trees on Road 8, they would refer to it as “Nose Job Road,” not Road 8.

Marie B. Hawkins and her husband, Rodney K. Wright, own and operate American Tree Experts, Inc. in Loogootee, Indiana, which has been in business since 1983. Their business is now for sale, so Marie can spend more time breaking horses, parachuting and partaking in some of her other hobbies.
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