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Giving thanks and “work” being in the same phrase does seem a little odd, doesn’t it? But how much of our lives do we go through not realizing all of the things for which we should be grateful?

Everyone working in arboriculture has so much to be thankful for:

- the gift of being one of nature’s healers
- the chance to work outside much of the time and to be tied to a desk much less than most
- the opportunity to affect great change in beautiful landscapes
- the satisfaction of seeing a customer delighted with the evolution of his or her property
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- the opportunity to make a living at something that is an internal passion
- the chance to control one’s own destiny, if arboriculture has led you to be a business owner, and
- the rare life lived where your family’s life and your work life can be truly integrated doing what you choose.

And yet, it takes work. We get so busy in the doing of life that we forget that the life we are living is one of incredible privilege. How many people actually get to put food on their tables doing what they love? I say it takes work to give thanks, because it is so easy to stop noticing that the very lives we are living each day are gifts to us when we get to go to work where we want to; doing what fills our souls as our profession. We have to remind ourselves regularly when the daily problems arise that we are still extremely fortunate to be able to do what we do.

This last year has given everyone in the field an opportunity to have a longer list of challenges, deeper concerns, and many have made some tough choices along the way. Those have not been easy moments, and there is still not a certainty about whether we are at the end of some of those days yet or not. Yet, even inside these darker business days, most companies are finding their way, and arboriculture work is still being performed daily by people who love what they are doing.

So as we continue into the winter and already start to wonder what the spring season will bring, let’s remember that we are fortunate to have something in our hearts that we are so passionate about – and that we have the opportunity to make a living doing what we love. Then, let’s remember that we are still employed doing it and that, if we bring the talent of the good people we have around us to bear on the challenges, we will find new and creative ways to continue doing what we love.

Along the way, we need to do the regular work of remembering to give thanks…
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*By Brian Colter*
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The use of mechanical ascenders in arboriculture has grown in popularity over the years. Many open-minded tree climbers looking to overcome the inherent disadvantages of ascending on a conventional 2:1 friction hitch system have given single or dual ascenders a try. The results are mixed, due to an array of reasons, but primarily because the ideal ascender design we need for tree care has simply not been created yet. This article introduces a “concept ascender” built with the unique needs of the climbing arborist in mind. The origins of this design come from Kim Jacobs, owner of Boomverzorging Jacobs (Jacobs’ Tree Care) in Belgium (and aka Quercus on treeworld.com). This single-handled dual ascender is NOT currently available for arborists or anyone, and the pictures are of prototype models.
If the ascender properly fulfills the needs of the arborist, it should bring with it a host of advantages over conventional methods. A well-built, well-designed ascender should offer an array of abilities from which the arborist can pick to accommodate his or her style and method of climbing. But at the core, the ascender needs to provide an ease of use greater than what the climber currently uses. In other words, a great device should accommodate the climbers chosen method and personal style, rather than the climber having to accommodate the device.

Identifying the needs

Since arborists climb differently, an ideal ascender should be able to accommodate those different styles, methods and techniques seamlessly. The following list gives the basic, fundamental needs that an ideal ascender should provide.

1) Ability to accommodate easily all three rope techniques – 2:1 doubled rope technique (DdRT), 1:1 single rope technique (SRT), and 1:1 twin line ascent (DbRT).
2) Compactness of design and intuitive, one-handed ease of use.
3) Elimination of “slack tending.”
4) The ascender should carry within it redundant safety features to eliminate the need for external backup.
5) Instant and one-handed downward adjustability.

Let’s start with those basic needs from last to first, beginning with No. 5, “Instant and one-handed downward adjustability.” Incredibly important point: do not confuse “downward adjustability” with “descent, abseil or rappel.” From the basic standpoint of an ascender, its primary function should be one of overcoming the forces of gravity and friction and allow you to ascend, i.e. go up, a rope. From the standpoint of tree care and climbing, however, it needs to offer the ability to effortlessly allow the downward adjustment on rope, as well as upward. For our profession, work positioning is everything and to achieve this, an ascender cannot be assumed to be an “up-only” device. Adjusting the ascender down the rope is an absolute must, and the design and safety features need to allow this without putting the climber at risk.

With redundant safety features, the ascender should allow secure and confident adjustments down, even when fully weighted (SRT being an exception to this). With ascender shells and cams placed in a side-by-side configuration, both cam handles can be operated simultaneously with one hand using the thumb on one cam handle and the index finger on the other. This ability is suggested ONLY with the safety feature that keeps the cams from opening fully (see next section).

Moving on, No. 4, the topic of redundant safety features, states that, “Redundant safety features eliminate the need for external backup.” This has been termed “the holy grail of ascenders.” An external backup is a secondary device, or a friction hitch, placed above and attached to the ascender or the climber to engage in the case of an ascender malfunction. To be realistic, intact and normally functioning ascenders rarely have a catastrophic failure. Ascender accidents are usually the result of a climber doing things that result in the opening of the cam and the rope escaping the ascender shell. Examples of this might be when ascending through branches that catch an ascender handle and open it fully, a glove catching a cam handle and opening it fully or turning the ascender sideways while pushing over and past a limb, catching a cam handle and opening it fully, or hard-core lateral moves or climbing above the tie-in point where the ascender hangs beneath you.

“Opening fully” is defined as when a cam handle is moved to the full open position, releasing the cam from contact with the rope and locking the cam fully open. In a worst-case scenario, the rope can escape the ascender shell, out of reach of the climber, and a fall results. Solution? a) Eliminate the possibility of the rope ever being able to escape the ascender shell and b) eliminate the possibility of the ascender handle ever being able to open to the point...
where the cam handle reaches the full-open, lock-open position. If these two requirements are met, the only remaining possibility of an ascender cam locking open would be for a branch to jam in between the cam and the ascender shell acting as a wedge and holding it open. Clearly, this can be avoided by passing through these crux areas with care and attention to where the branches are in relation to the ascender. Remember, a primary advantage of the ascender is that it allows you to move up the rope incrementally, in tiny moves if necessary, with no “friction penalty” for stopping in between progression moves.

Externally backing up an ascender requires extra time and effort, as well as an additional attachment point to the ascender or to the climber, plus the backup device or hitch itself. This “safety” carries with it the disadvantage of not allowing downward adjustment unless a second hand is used to manage the backup while the primary hand is being used to manage the ascender. If the backup is placed above the ascender, at full extension the backup is out of reach of the climber. This “safety” can render the system awkward, complicated and user-unfriendly, especially in the case of a limb walk or downward adjustment. Thus, the system becomes less safe because of the backup. With innate redundant safety features, these are located on the ascender itself, and the in-use advantage is that full safety is achieved and use of the ascender, positioning up or down, becomes a simple, one-handed operation where the safety features themselves do not interfere, but aide.

No. 3 – “Elimination of slack-tending.” Tending slack is the time and energy sucking process of having to pull rope through your friction controller while advancing it, whether it is a mechanical device or a friction hitch. In traditional 2:1 friction hitch ascent, slack tending is doubled while advancement is halved. If a friction hitch cannot or is not released, friction works against you, making the inefficiency of slack tending that much more difficult. With 1:1 ascent with an ascender (SRT or twin line), the ascender is advanced, and that’s it. The spring-loaded pressure of the cam on the rope creates minimum friction, minimum resistance and the ascender is easily advanced up the rope. No rope has to be pulled through. This makes advancing the ascender truly a near-effortless, one-handed operation in 1:1 mode. In 2:1 (DdRT), the task can still be one-handed, though advancing the ascender up one leg creates slack in the other; 2:1 does carry this disadvantage but remains an option for climbers so inclined.

No. 2 – Compactness of design and intuitive, one-handed ease of use. This is where current dual-handled dual ascenders, such
as the Kong Twin or Kong Trender, falter and the Petzl Ascentree fails miserably. These dual ascenders are not compact due to the second handle, which, from a practical standpoint, is completely unnecessary. The second handle makes the overall profile bigger and adds weight. Using the second handle requires the climber that the unit be turned sideways so that the handles are to your right and left. This means you have to cock your wrists and curve your knuckles inward to grip both of those handles properly. This is not “one-handed ease of use.” Using two hands suggests doing a pull-up; for efficiency’s sake, pulling up with your arms and wrists turned inward will tire you out much faster than performing a good footlock. The Petzl Ascentree, with its unique and innovative cam-facing-cam (front-to-back) design, creates more problems than it solves. One-handed downward adjustment on both sides cannot be accomplished because one hand cannot reach and maneuver both cams at the same time as is possible with a side-to-side design. The Kong Trender comes closer than any due to its top plate that assures the rope stays captive within the shell, and presumably blocks brush from entering the cam shell. Also, a mini carabiner inserted through a hole in the ascender handle is used to keep the cam handles from reaching the lock-open position. In the absence of a second handle, this

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This new Bry-Dan has adjustable leg straps, improved padding, more tool loops and is the only tree climbing harness rated for Fall Arrest as well as Work Positioning. That’s all great, but the most significant feature of this harness is the fact that it is still a Bry-Dan, only better! On behalf of the toughest critics in the world — our customers: Thank you Weaver Leather for continuing to make tree work more efficient, comfortable and most importantly — safer.

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new, single-handled dual ascender could be an exceptional new piece of gear for safe work positioning.

One single handle, in a natural, forward position, with your second hand on rope, below the ascender feels intuitive and plays to the tree climber who has a natural tendency to grip rope. Tree climbers who like the feel of a larger, 13 mm rope will enjoy lighter 11 mm twin lines coming through, as your grip on a twin rope is now 22 mm. The ascenders, however, still accept 13 mm ropes. Many climbers currently use their dual ascenders in the way just described, so the back handle goes unused. The second handle takes up extra space, adds weight and gets in the way while passing over limbs.

Finally, No. 1 – “Ability to easily accommodate all three rope methods;” 2:1

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The Oh-So-Sure-to-Come Unanswered Questions – answered

The art of work positioning

Tree Machine, thank you for the clarity in describing the operation and advantages of the single-handled dual ascender in the November TCI. But you never once addressed the issue of descent. Why is this?

TM: Because this article was about work-positioning – 99 percent of the time spent in a canopy – not about the last 15 seconds of your climb. The modified, safety-redundant, single-handled dual ascender allows you to ascend in an ideal manner (1:1 twin line) and work off of that dual line, and down-adjust as necessary throughout your work in the canopy. There are now means to adjust this ascender downward as was never possible before the dual safety redundancy. These features plus the single handle now offers the full set of elements that make it an exceptional ascent/work-positioning tool.

The single-handed dual ascender

A groundbreaking article, dude. You have done your homework. Just one thing. How are we supposed to descend. How do you?

TM: Abseil, descend, rappel – all distinctly different than “ascend, and work up and down within the canopy.” What we arborists do up in trees is mostly schlep tools and gear, and go from one place to another to make cuts. Much of the time is spent at the same level, such as while making cuts; you don’t go up or down other than maybe tiny increments to get in perfect position. Otherwise, you’re moving about the canopy to the next position.

If the dual handle dual ascender can promise you absolute grab on the rope to maintain perfect level, and will ascend (of course) and allow you to adjust down in an effortless blink, then your work in a canopy, for all practical purposes, can be safety done off of these dual ascenders.

Flip-line in and tie a Blake’s hitch right before you’re about to drop out. It takes under six seconds to remove the dual ascenders off a twin line, about the same to put them back on. The ascender can be left on the rope while a friction hitch or device is in use. You just need a second anchor point on your saddle.

The system is so much simpler than you’re accustomed to. I can see why it might take awhile to digest this. Take some time. The ascenders are not currently available. This is a “concept article,” and I’m not suggesting anybody change what they’re doing at this time.

Twin-line friction control placed anywhere mid-line: The logical thing, if you are able to ascend and work-position off single-handled dual ascenders, would be to attach friction control mid-line on the twin parallel lines, and work your way down the twin rope on the parallel lines themselves.

1:1 descent on twin rope: There are many ways to do this, all from the search and rescue community, cavers, rock climbers and probably a few other disciplines. There is nothing from the tree care industry so far. You’ll have to check out a rock-climbing selection of gear and choose a friction piece that will allow mid-line attachment of both dual and single rope. Then you’ve got to figure out a secure lock-off system. This system has not been created for arboriculture and put out there. But Storrick’s board (http://storrick_cnchost_com/VerticalDevicesPage/Glance/BlacksHitch.html) shows a lot of options that have been tried.

doubled rope technique (DdRT), 1:1 single rope technique (SRT), and 1:1 twin line ascent (DbRT). The dual ascender fully embraces the efficient and effective footlock method.

For the feeling of a traditional 2:1 ascent, apply the ascender to the twin lines, then just pull rope through the one side. The other side stays anchored, as if it were tied off to your saddle. The only difference is when you pull back, there is no hitch coming down that needs to be pushed back up. The friction control stays in place, giving you one less thing to do.

The act of slack tending is inclusive in the ascender’s use (self-tending). You can even footlock one of the two lines for that old 2:1 feel, do a layback-pull or hip thrust. You can do it, but chances are you’ll want to move on to something easier and more efficient.

You’ll find footlocking much easier on a dual line. Unlike traditional 2:1 DdRT or SRT, which only give you a single line to footlock, footlocking on a twin line offers twice as much rope, and essentially twice as much available friction. This may equate to twice as easy footlocking. You will footlock up one measure and you will gain that full measure, not half as in 2:1 doubled rope technique. For the 2:1 climbers who just can’t get the footlocking thing, 1:1 footlocking on twin line will make it all come clear.

SRT on dual ascenders simply means using one side of the dual and leave the other side unused. The practical effect is exactly the same as using a single ascender.

Although a dual ascender allows you to ascend both 2:1 DdRT and SRT, 1:1 twin line ascent (DbRT) is where the duals really shine. Footlocking is much easier. There is no motion of the rope at the tie-in point and thus, no need for cambium savers. There is also no need for a swivel or non-swivel friction savers and their retrieval, friction-hitch tying, dressing and set-up.

Close-up of the cam handle pin blocking the full opening of the cam. In this configuration, the cam can be opened just far enough allow release of the rope for downward adjustment. When the cam handle is released, it automatically re-engages the rope.

The single-handled dual ascender crawling over top an oak limb on dual line KM4. A second handle becomes a nuisance if you encounter an obstacle, or if you prefer to grab rope below the ascender with the second hand, which is generally more ergonomic and comfortable.

Close-up of Kong’s Trender and its unique top plate. While engaged, this innovation prevents possible escape of the rope from the ascender shell as well as blocking entry of brush where it shouldn’t be.
ting, no expensive and consumable eye-eye tress cords, pulleys, dog leashes and additional carabiners to make that sort of ascent system work. For those who consider dual ascenders “fancy and complicated,” when you actually use them you’ll find them a rather simple, boiled-down system and very easy to use.

The most beneficial thing, though, is that you can fully weight the ascenders between strides. Rest as needed, or stop for whatever reason – you’re OK. A slight push upward, and the ascender advances. Even just a few centimeters at a time in your more “cruxxy” situations, the ascender is advanced, then grips 100 percent, each and every time. There is no “slop” in the system. With the on-board, redundant backups, you’ll find ascent to be much less of an effort in addition to the security and confidence you’re given. Tree care is hard enough. Take advantages where you can.

Generally speaking, you can move about and work-position from the ascenders up and down within the crown, changing over to abseil mode only for the final descent. What you use for the final descent is up to the climber, whether friction hitch-based or mechanical. The means here are many and are outside of the scope of this article.

In closing, the dual ascender offers you a very solid promise. If they’re not caked in ice or hopelessly choked in mud, or have twigs jamming the cam, they’ll absolutely, positively grab the rope and not slip or creep backward. They’ll advance easily with almost no friction or resistance. They will easily do single rope, 2:1 doubled or twin line ascent. They are quick-on, quick-off and, with redundant, internal back-ups, they are downwardly adjustable on rope. Quick-on, quick-off means under six seconds. Downward adjustability, one-handed and instant. These are an impressive set of promises for a simple piece of your kit that can revolutionize the way one climbs.

Climb safely!

Jim Clark is, and does business as, The Tree Machine, in Indianapolis, Indiana, and is a long-time TCIA member.

Kong Trender safety features both shown disengaged. Note the hole for the cam handle blocker; this is an additional safety that ensures BOTH features are used. The top-plate safety must be engaged before the cam handle safety can be engaged. One cannot work without the other.

Kong Trender safety features both shown engaged. When Kong removes the back handle, this will be a fine and ideal piece of kit. Bravo to Kong for stepping up and making these necessary safety improvements.

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Barnel’s new Ultra Reach Telescopic By-pass Lopper available from Forestry Suppliers Inc. extends from 6 feet to 8 feet, cuts up to 1½-inches capacity and features ultra lightweight extruded aluminum construction. It offers a cut-and-hold feature with a special spring mechanism that automatically adjusts for various sized cuts, and comes with a length-adjustable shoulder strap for optimum weight distribution and a limited lifetime warranty from the manufacturer on internal workings. Contact Forestry Suppliers, Inc. at 1-800-360-7788, or via www.forestry-suppliers.com.

**Terex ASV Snow Blower Attachments**

Terex ASV has new two-stage snow blowers available for its compact track loaders. Four different blowers are available, each sized for cutting width and optimum performance when matched to the appropriate loader. They easily attach to the Terex ASV quick-attach interface. The machine’s auxiliary hydraulic system provides direct drive power to the blower’s auger and fan. Connection of the blower to the machine’s hydraulic system is through quick-connect fittings with hoses that come standard. Electric controls are used for hydraulic chute rotation and deflection, eliminating metal-to-metal contact between the blower and the rotating chute base. This helps to prevent freeze-ups under adverse conditions. The discharge chute is lined with a low-friction plastic material to help prevent plugging under wet, heavy snow conditions. The snow blowers include a high-carbon steel cutting edge, and hardened-steel skid shoes are standard on each blower. Shoes are adjustable on some models. Contact Terex ASV via www.terex.com.

Send your Cutting Edge Product information to:
editor@tcia.org
Arborjet’s Palm Injector Kit

The new Arborjet Palm Injector kit makes the care and treatment of palms easy. Designed to complement either the Arborjet QUIK-jet micro-injector or the Arborjet Tree I.V. micro-infuser, it enables the tree care professional to quickly and easily inject insecticide, fungicide, bactericide or nutrients into any species of palm.

Whether a particular application calls for a shallow injection or deep infusion, the Palm Injector kit provides the applicator with the proper interface to access the vascular tissue to get the job done effectively and efficiently. Contact Arborjet at (78) 935-9070 or visit www.arborjet.com/products/palm-jet.htm.

Circle 194 on RS Card or visit www.tcia.org

Vermeer BC1200XL Brush Chipper

Vermeer’s new BC1200XL brush chipper features a dual-horizontal offset feed roller design that improves performance by aggressively grabbing and feeding material up to 12 inches (30.5 cm) into the chipper drum. The offset feature helps the upper feed roller climb over logs and branchy material while a dual-pump hydraulic system delivers a theoretical 3,600 pounds (1632.9 kg) of pull-in force for heavy work. A clutchless PTO system prevents high idle engagement of the cutter drum. The belt drive, integrated with the throttle, can be engaged only while the engine is at a low rpm. Once engaged the engine automatically throttles up to full rpm. The exclusive SmartFeed system automatically monitors engine speed and stops or reverses the unit’s feed rollers if needed. A removable choker chain offers an easier way to connect the winch line to logs while the winch interlock hook stores the winch line out of the normal material flow. It is available with either an 85-hp (63.4 kW) or 110-hp (82.0 kW) Cummins Tier 3 diesel engine. Contact Vermeer via www.vermeer.com or salesinfo@vermeer.com.

Circle 195 on RS Card or visit www.tcia.org

KONG (Voluntary) Recall of Polished Aluminum Rings

Aluminum rings not individually tested

KONG Bonaiti of Italy has confirmed the issuance of polished aluminum rings that were sourced elsewhere and distributed without individual testing. A quantity of these rings were mixed into KONG boxes without having been individually tested and laser marked. Furthermore, a user experienced failure of one of these rings that could have led to injury. If you have such a ring (below left), stand-alone or spliced into a product, it is vitally important that you dispose or submit for its replacement immediately.

Delaying or avoiding immediate disposal or replacement could prove fatal to user!

Upon receipt of recalled ring(s), the sender will be furnished free of charge an individually tested and laser etched replacement. If the ring supports a Sherrill-spliced rope product, that too will be replaced at no additional charge.

SherrillTree will compensate customers having bought direct from SherrillTree (invoice on record) with $5 credit for shipping expense. If a similar ring was purchased elsewhere, we recommend contacting the dealer where it was purchased.

We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may present and will work quickly to return replacements.

Please include return address and send RINGS ONLY (and Sherrill-spliced attachment if exists) to:
Ring Recall, 200 Seneca Road, Greensboro, NC 27406

KONG (Voluntary) Recall of Polished Aluminum Rings

The ring being recalled is polished aluminum (having no color finish) and WITHOUT laser-etched logo or rating on one side.

This polished aluminum ring with laser-etched rating and logo has been individually tested and meets ANSI standards.

Please circle 36 on Reader Service Card

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RISE president Allen James to retire

Allen James, who since 1991 has been at the forefront of promoting the responsible use of pesticides and fertilizers and the valuable role these products play each day as the president of RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment), will retire effective third quarter 2010. RISE, the national trade association representing the manufacturers, formulators and distributors of pesticide and fertilizer products, honored James during its annual meeting September 25-30, 2009, in Orlando, Florida.

“Allen is an incredibly gifted leader who has done a great amount for RISE as an organization and for the industry as a whole,” said Bill Culppeper, president and CEO of SePRO Corp. “He has exceeded all expectations with the things he has accomplished since joining RISE, and his professionalism and consistent quality of work have become the trademark of the organization moving forward,” added Culppeper, one of the founders of RISE.

When James was named RISE’s first executive director 18 years ago, it had only 12 members. Today, its more than 200 member companies account for more than 90 percent of the United States’ specialty pesticide production.

Josh Weeks, chair of the RISE Governing Board and vice president, professional products North America for the environmental science business of Bayer CropScience, announced a new award to honor James’ service to the industry. The E. Allen James Award will be given annually to honor an individual who makes outstanding contributions to the specialty pesticide and fertilizer industry.

Among other accomplishments, under James, RISE has been actively involved in defending state pre-emption laws, whereby municipalities and counties have the right to use pesticide products to protect their residents when necessary.

“Allen has been constant in his service and vision, and has made great strides in providing a strong, unified voice for the specialty pesticide industry,” said Dan Rosenbaum, incoming chair of the RISE Governing Board and director, specialty products business with FMC Corporation.

James plans to move back to his home state of North Carolina with his wife, Ann.

Jones to head Husky sales

Husqvarna named Michael Jones head of sales and service in North and Latin America. He will report to Magnus Yngen, president and CEO, and will be a member of Group Management. Jones was most recently a general manager with General Electric in the U.S. He has a B.A. in Business Administration and has held various leadership positions within GE since 1994. He assumed his new position October 1, and is based at the Group’s U.S. headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Roger Leon, who was acting head of sales and service in North and Latin America, has been appointed head of Global purchasing. In June 2009, Husqvarna announced a new organization, to be fully implemented as of January 1, 2010.

ECHO acquires Kwik Products

Kwik Products Inc., an Arizona based manufacturer and distributor of easy load trimmer heads and trimmer line, has been acquired by Echo Incorporated of Lake Zurich, Illinois.

“This transaction is a good opportunity for both parties,” says Dan Obringer, Echo president. “For Echo, this is a perfect fit from a vertical integration standpoint, as Kwik is a major source of our line and heads. KPI will benefit from Echo’s financial resources and access to lawn and garden markets. This is definitely a win-win situation.”

KPI will continue to operate out of Phoenix as an independent company led by current president Fernando Iacona. The company has served the outdoor power equipment for 12 years.

“We will continue to serve all our customers as we have in the past, providing innovative, high quality products and excellent customer service,” says Iacona.

HMI adds Owen Tree and Collins Tree to network

Owen Tree Service of Attica, Mich., and Collins Tree Service, Inc. of Hookset, N.H., both TCIA members, have joined HMI’s Authorized Member Network. HMI provides replacement cost calculations and a full suite of claims support services for trees and shrubs. It has national network of arborists and professional tree care companies to support these products and services.

Owen will support HMI’s programs in a number of Michigan markets.

“Owen will allow HMI to further support its insurance company clientele in the Mid West,” said Doug Malawsky, executive vice president and COO of HMI. “As the first company to receive TCIA Accreditation, Owen Tree Service is a pioneer in the establishment of high standards for professional tree care companies.”

“We have seen immediate value in joining HMI’s network,” said Randy Owen, founder and owner of Owen Tree Service. “As soon as we joined their Network, HMI hired us for a consulting assignment for a large insurance company. HMI also positioned us to bid on, and hopefully win, a nice sized job for the same insurer.”

Collins Tree Service, in operation for almost 40 years and also an accredited company, will support HMI’s programs in New Hampshire.

“Collins is a great addition to our membership, which includes a number of TCIA accredited companies, and HMI continues to educate the insurance industry of the value of having truly professional tree care companies perform their emergency storm work, which last year is estimated to be about $6 billion.”

“As a family owned tree care company, established in New Hampshire in 1971, we are pleased to become a part HMI’s national network of professionals to provide quality tree care services in our area.” said William Collins, company president.
## Vermeer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Number</th>
<th>Part No.</th>
<th>Knife Description &amp; Size</th>
<th>SALE Price</th>
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<td>BC1000</td>
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<td>10, 13, 17, 2050</td>
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<td>KCH10004</td>
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<td>100-250</td>
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## Asplundh

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<td>16&quot; Drum</td>
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Offer ends December 31, 2009

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Use Promo Code ZENITH and save 10% when ordering online.
Events & Seminars

November 3-4, 2009*
Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop
Coincides with TCI EXPO, Baltimore, MD
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org*

November 5-7, 2009*
TCI EXPO 2009
Tree Care Industry Association Conference & Trade Show
Baltimore, MD
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; cyr@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

November 12, 2009
EHAP Workshop
Northeast Utilities Headqtrs., Berlin, CT
Contact: CTPA (203) 484-2512

November 12, 2009
Comprehensive CORE Pesticide Training Seminar
Belville, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; landscape.org

November 18, 2009
Evaluating Trees for Hazards
Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
Contact: Jan McFarlan (215) 247-5777 x156; jlm@exchange.upenn.edu

November 24-29, 2009
Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course
The Virginia Horticultural Foundation
Founder’s Inn and Spa, Virginia Beach, VA
Contact: (757) 523-4734; info@mahsc.org; www.mahsc.org

December 2-5, 2009
ASCA Annual Conference
Hyatt Regency Monterey Resort & Spa
Monterey, CA
Contact: (301) 947-0483; www.asca-consultants.org

December 7-11, 2009
NY State Turfgrass Cornell University Short Course
Cornell University Campus
Ithaca, NY
Contact: Maxine (607) 255-5439; www.nysta.org

December 10, 2009
Comprehensive CORE Pesticide Training Seminar
Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; landscape.org

January 3-4, 2010
Empire State Green Industry Show
Rochester Riverside Convention Center
Rochester, NY
Contact: NYSTA (518) 783-1229

January 13-15, 2010*
2010 Kansas Shade Tree Conference
Ramada Inn, Topeka, KS
Contact: www.kansasarborist.com

January 14, 2010
EHAP Workshop
Bingham Center, Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA, Karla Trosen (248) 646-4992

January 24-29, 2010
Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course
The Virginia Horticultural Foundation
Founder’s Inn and Spa, Virginia Beach, VA
Contact: (757) 523-4734; info@mahsc.org; www.mahsc.org

February 3-5, 2010
New England Grows*
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, Boston, MA
Contact: (508) 653-3009; www.NewEnglandGrows.org

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

February 13, 2010
Long Island Arboricultural Assoc. Annual Tree Conf.
Farmingdale State College, Farmingdale, NY
Contact: Jean Brown (516) 454-6550; www.longislandarborists.org

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Upcoming TCIA webinars

Nov. 10  Laurie Mann
Using Tree Growth Regulators for Additional Client Service & Income

Nov. 18  Dane Buell, CTSP
Understanding and Complying With Federal DOT Regulations

Dec. 2  Jennifer Mohiman, CTSP
Proper Cleanup of Pesticide Spills

Dec. 8  John Iurka
Setting Up and Conducting Effective Performance

Dec. 16  Nick Bomber, CTSP
Setting-up and conducting safety committee meetings

Jan. 13  Tom Tolkacz
What You Should Know About Buying Another Tree Care Company

Jan. 21  Dave Hineline
Walk Away Tree Felling

Jan. 26  Laurie Mann
Tree Growth Regulators - Steps to Proper Applications

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February 23-24, 2010
NYSTA Southeast Regional Conference
Holiday Inn Suffern
Suffern, NY
Contact: NYSTA (518) 783-1229

February 23-26, 2010
ASCA 2010 Consulting Academy
Rohnert Park, CA
Contact: (301) 947-0483; www.asca-consultants.org
Contact: Jan McFarlan (215) 247-5777 x156; jlm@exchange.upenn.edu

March 2, 2010
Professional Turf, Plant & Tree Conference
Nassau Suffolk Landscape Gardeners Association
Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum,
Uniondale, NY
Contact: Patricia Voges (631) 665-2250; nslga2@optonline.net

March 2-3, 2010
MGIA Annual Trade Show & Convention
Rock Financial Showplace
Novi, MI
Contact: (248) 348-5600; www.landscape.org

* Indicates that TCIA staff will be in attendance
Washington in Review

By Peter Gerstenberger

OSHA Changes HAZCOM

On September 30, OSHA published the first major proposed rulemaking of the Obama administration – comprehensive changes to the Hazard Communication Standard (HCS), found in 29 CFR 1910.1200. The stated purpose of the rulemaking is to help harmonize the identification, classification, and labeling of chemicals around the world.

Tree care and landscape firms as well as other downstream users of hazardous chemicals need to pay particular attention to the proposed regulatory changes because they may force a reevaluation and reclassification of the level of danger posed by dangerous chemicals, and because they most certainly will dictate changes to container labels and other materials. Employers should pay attention to training costs associated with the proposed rule, although they are anticipated to be minor.

Unclassified hazards

The current HCS defines specific hazards, such as toxicity or combustibility, and regulates each hazard according to its specific traits. The proposed rule continues in that tradition with one important exception. OSHA recognizes that the regulations themselves cannot define every type of hazard, and that there will be situations in which the classifier has identified evidence of a hazard, but the evidence does not meet the currently specified criteria for hazards covered by the rule. The proposed rule extends coverage to “unclassified” hazards and requires that chemicals exhibiting those “unclassified” dangers be treated as hazardous under the rule. This significantly broadens the existing HCS.

Hazard severity classification

Under the existing HCS, chemical manufacturers and importers are required to evaluate the scientific data available regarding the chemicals they produce or import, and to determine whether they are hazardous or not within the meaning of the current HCS regulations. The proposed rule extends coverage to “unclassified” hazards and requires that chemicals exhibiting those “unclassified” dangers be treated as hazardous under the rule. This significantly broadens the existing HCS.

Proposed label/MSDS changes

HCS labels provide workers with a brief, visual hazard summary at the worksite where the chemical is used. Current regulations require that the label include the identity of the chemical, the specific physical and health hazards, including target organ effects, and the name and address of the manufacturer, importer or other responsible party. There is no required standard format or design for the labels.

OSHA is proposing that labels include four standardized elements – a signal word, a hazard statement, a pictogram and precautionary statements. Current HCS regulations do not address the signal words that typically appear at the top of a label to alert the user to a hazard and to indicate a particular level of hazard, such as “DANGER” or “CAUTION.” OSHA proposes to require signal words, but limit labels to the use of only one of two words: “DANGER,” to indicate more severe hazards, or “WARNING,” to indicate a less serious hazard.

OSHA’s proposal acknowledges that there are no harmonized labeling elements available for unclassified hazards. Accordingly, the proposal requires that hazard information must appear on the MSDS, and the responsible party must determine what is appropriate for the label. OSHA’s proposal would require the MSDS to be prepared in a standard 16-paragraph format (of which four paragraphs are optional), similar to those now in voluntary use.

Training

The proposed rule includes relatively minor revisions to the current HCS training requirement, intended to ensure that employers train employees to read and recognize the new label and MSDS requirements. Training would be required within two years after the adoption of the final rule.

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.
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They say it takes an eccentric mind to come up with practical inventions that solve a problem that everybody else has put up with for decades. Using the word eccentric in the very best way, yes, Jon Mooring’s mind is all of that. But sometimes it takes a character to see something that nobody else could see.

Mooring has invented several unusual and practical devices over the years, all related to trees, and his latest is so simple and efficient that it could change the way cable alignment is accomplished in large trees if adapted everywhere. Owner of Western Tree Systems in El Cajon, California, Mooring’s specialty is cabling and bracing. He is called in on delicate or high-profile jobs involving sagging or splitting limbs of special trees that simply must be saved – often at any cost.

But over the years, he has noticed that the age-old method of aligning cables in the delicately balanced and twisting limbs of large trees is pretty much guesswork. Usually done by line of sight, or sometimes by running a string, poor cable alignment can cause unusual torque in windy conditions and damage the tree under repetitive motion. Mooring estimates that cable alignments more than three or four degrees off can lead to severe damage.

“Bad cabling is very common,” says Mooring, who estimates that about half of the cabling he sees in San Diego County are in poor alignment, and “most” of his work comes from re-cabling trees that have been improperly cabled at some point in the past. He calls improper cabling “a huge problem,” due mainly to two factors. One is improper alignment and the other is the use of lag bolts instead of through bolts. It is particularly noticeable once the trees age and limbs become even heavier, and installing lag bolts in softwood trees in particular is a recipe for disaster. “Once you cable or brace a tree, it has to last the life of the tree.”
He noticed both of these problems when he was subcontracted to re-cable two huge Torrey pines last year in a condominium development right on the beach in San Diego. One tree was about 90 feet tall and the other about 75 feet, and one had many lag bolts threatening to pull out. Both had bad cable alignment, with one noticeable limb about 20 degrees out of alignment.

“It was a ticking time bomb,” he says of the Torrey pines, noting that an improperly cabled tree of that size is basically a hazardous tree. Because of the size of the job ahead of him, he invented his alignment device specifically for this project.

Torrey pines are highly valued native trees along the Southern California coast, and the condo owner made the commitment to save them. When the contractor brought Mooring in, the cabling expert was appalled at the condition of the trees. And he didn’t want to risk using his own line of sight to realign the cables. It was while discussing this problem and possible solutions online with a colleague, consulting arborist John Paul Sanborn in Wisconsin, that he came up with the idea for his invention.

“The invention popped into my head just before Christmas of 2008,” he recalls. It took only about a month for him to design what he calls his cable alignment tube and to have his brother Benjamin, a machinist, build it. He cabled the two Torrey pines early in 2009.

The device is perfectly simple. The idea was to produce two lengths of pipe that could be attached to opposing limbs, with a rope stretched between them to establish the straight line. Both lengths of pipe would be slotted so that a small drill could be inserted into them and used to drill holes in perfect alignment with the taut rope. Once bolts were inserted into the drill holes, cable and bolts would be attached and take the place of the rope. Mooring calls it alignment without the guesswork.

All that is needed are about 12 pounds of equipment, which is easily manageable for the tree climber. Fortunately, before Mooring did the two Torrey pines, he had a job on a large Morton Bay fig where he used his invention and ironed out the kinks. It was a good thing, because he found one obstacle. When he used a regular drill bit, he got some deflection, which could throw off the direction of the hole somewhat. So for the Torrey pine job he bought a wood bit with the sharpest point he could find, then modified the tip so that it was needle-sharp.

The bit then drilled straight in on alignment. Mooring points out that the first hole drilled was basically a pilot hole. Once he had a 12-inch deep hole he used a larger bit on a two-stroke drill to punch a larger and longer bit all the way through.

It took Mooring three weeks, working part-time and by himself, to completely re-cable the two Torrey pines. But this was a big job. He used about 300 feet of ¼-inch, 5/16-inch and 3/8-inch cable. He used 46 galvanized bolts, as well as three rods to repair a big split in a limb. And he replaced all lag bolts with through bolts. In all, he has cabled six large trees using the alignment tubes, three of them monument trees.

Go to this YouTube address to see his video of the cabling device at work: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBUho2Ez29I. Mooring is also open to talking to tree workers about this new tool.

To recap, the process is very straightforward:

▶ Wrap rope on both limbs at the spot where bolts are to be embedded, then tie the alignment tubes to the limbs by the two front flanges.
▶ Run a rope between the two tubes via the single rear flanges and tighten.
▶ Drill the two pilot holes using the tubes for alignment.
Finish the holes to size with a two-stroke drill.

Remove the alignment tubes and install hardware and cables.

Mooring notes that using a pneumatic drill was a nuisance — he had to carry up a CO2 bottle to power it — and if he were to commercialize the process he would use pipe large enough to accommodate an 18-volt cordless electric drill. He could then drill holes to size in one stage. In fact, he has offered the design to a tree equipment manufacturer in hopes that this process can be used by other cabling installers. As of now, his prototype is the only one in existence, but he encourages others to copy it.

Mooring has had several of his inventions patented. He has been a tree worker since he was 14, ultimately joining three of

This is one of two huge Torrey pines on the beach in San Diego that were re-cabled using alignment based on Mooring’s invention. The two trees required 300 feet of cable.
his brothers in Mooring Brothers Tree Service in San Diego and later working for other tree companies in the Los Angeles area. It was during this period that he came up with his first invention, the cambium saver, a leather tube that reduced rope burn on trees at tie-in points. Oddly enough, he says, it is the only one of his early inventions that wasn’t patented and the only one that has found commercial acceptance. It got him on the cover of a magazine, is manufactured by several companies and gave him a reputation as a problem solver in the industry.

“I’m a troublemaker,” Mooring insists, declining to call himself a problem solver. He says he often sees problems in the way tree care is accomplished and tries to overcome the obstacles with a new path. He is known as someone who at times clashes with the powers that be, he says, but that is normal for someone trying to change systems – such as how to align cables in trees that have been aligned by the naked eye for generations. Another invention, his patented chipper safety gate for decreasing deaths among ground workers using whole-tree chippers, has found no takers in the tree care equipment industry, for example.

Another issue that bothers him is, as mentioned earlier, the use of lag bolts in tree cabling, most particularly in softwood trees where they are likely to pull out over time. He feels that ANSI tree cabling standards should exempt lag bolts, at least from softwood trees, but he has had no luck convincing the A300 Committee.

Mooring’s other patented inventions: a tree slave, which generates electricity in the wind by using a ratchet arm that moves with the tree; the wind rocker, two artificial “trees” that rock back and forth in the wind and generate electricity; a communications visor worn by climbers with two-way radio to communicate with the ground safely; and his sky spider, a crane with a compound hose assembly that would allow a worker to reach difficult parts of trees and have access to resources such as compressed air and water.

All of this from a guy who drives to upscale jobs in a weathered 1984 Toyota truck with almost half a million miles on it through five engines. Mooring is an iconoclast, no doubt, and he is at his best when delivering a simple solution to a simple problem, such as cable alignment.

“The greatest inventions are the simplest inventions,” he says. He doesn’t mean great as in scope, but as in effectiveness. And that certainly seems to be the case with the cabling alignment tubes.
Every day, in every event, we have an opportunity to lead... With every task, conversation or decision we make, we have an opportunity to lead our relationships, our business or ourselves. The importance of leading our own lives and our relationships more effectively is often overlooked as a component of leadership. Yet a group leader is doomed to fail if his or her own life is out of balance and their relationships are low in trust.

People that will take the time to understand who we are and what makes us tick are people we tend to trust. When our cares and concerns are understood, we are more willing to give back. Listening and understanding does not mean you agree, it just means you care.

In your next conversation, even if it’s with your child, let the person you are talking to know that you truly understand their perspective before you give yours. You will not only see a dramatic difference in the way people listen, you will begin building great relationships.

Lead yourself

We demonstrate good self-leadership when we pursue our personal goals and spend time with what we value most. Our goals and values are the ways we lead our lives, not manage them.

Think of everything that keeps you from your goals and values and how hard it is to make time for them. We all know it’s difficult — and the person who can do it is the person who is worthy of being followed.

Pursuing his or her goals and values provides the leader with strong character and self-identity. If a leader lacks these things, then they will also lack the ability to effectively lead others.

Lead your relationships

The first principle of effective leadership at the relationship level is that people don’t follow those they don’t trust. Trust cannot be faked, manipulated or forced, but it can be earned. Establishing compelling trust in relationships is a fundamental skill of effective leadership and will contribute significantly to a leader’s success.

The most important skill in building trust in relationships is listening and understanding. Think about a person who truly understands you a great deal. Now think about how much you trust them.

Steve McClatchy is president of Alleer Training & Consulting. This article is a preview of the presentation he will make, “Leading You, Your Relationships and Your Business,” at Winter Management Conference in Hawaii in February.
**Added thoughts on stump grinder safety and use**

I would like to add some thoughts to your excellent article on stump grinding safety (“A Few Pointers on Stump Grinding,” July 2009 TCI). I have been stump grinding as a subcontractor to tree companies and to homeowners for 23 years in the Boston area.

First and foremost, you should never, ever leave the operating position with the cutter wheel turning – even slowly. One second of inattention could bring severe injury or death. Shutting down the motor and leaving the wheel turned is a recipe for disaster. Always reposition the machine with the cutter wheel stopped. If you must leave the stump grinder operating position, stop the wheel, lower it to the ground and shut down the motor. Take the key with you.

Four sheets of ¾-inch plywood cut to fit in the bed of your truck is invaluable. Garden forks are great to support the plywood upright. These are critical near homes and streets. One sheet put under the stump grinder on nice lawns leaves a nice neat job after raking up. A six-tine pitchfork, rake and flat shovel are great for cleanup or leaving the grindings in a nice neat pile. A good leaf blower should also be a part of each job; always leave decks, walks and lawns leaf-blower clean.

Clean leaf debris around each stump and probe the ground for rocks and metal. One of my machines dragged up 100 feet of dog run cable left under the leaves.

I no longer use a tow-behind machine. New portables do as good a job and you don’t have to drive onto lawns with your truck. In crowded areas, you have a much smaller size exposure with a portable unit.

The cutter wheel debate is always on. I used what could be called the standard for many years. I recently switched to a new design and have eliminated most of the side spray, also breaking far fewer teeth. Jobs on steep slopes and uneven terrain should be avoided always. If a job looks dangerous, it is; leave it be and realize some just can’t be done.

Having a good tool box with you allows for repairs in the field. Frequent oil and filter changes extend the life of your machine. An electric grease gun makes daily lubrication a snap. Having a spare tire with you at all times prevents a flat from ruining a productive day.

Personal safety protection is a non-debate issue. Any one operating without full protective gear should just stay home. Early on in doing this work, a competitor had a fist-size rock fly about 30 feet in the air. You guessed it – a million to one shot landed it squarely on his head, putting him out for the day.

A lot of patience, persistence and safety are the rules of the day.

**Robert Walton**

Tree Stump Service

Chelmsford, Massachusetts

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Don Staruk at staruk@tcia.org

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**Q. So, will filling out the card once a year help TCI keep you informed in countless ways that will benefit your career and your business?**

A. Yes.

**Q. Can we make it any clearer?**

A. You tell us.
Worker killed in chipper

James Vician, 37, of Plymouth, Indiana, an employee of a contract tree trimming company clearing around power lines in Warsaw, Indiana, in the Hoffman Lake area of Kosciusko County, was killed September 1, 2009, when he was pulled into a wood chipper while feeding cut tree limbs.

His co-worker was across the street at the time of the incident, according to a WANE-TV News Channel 15 report.

A tree worker in Indiana told TCI that the co-worker went across the street and when he came back, Vician was gone. The co-worker apparently looked everywhere, and eventually climbed in the back of the truck and found the remains. DNA tests were to be used to attain a positive ID.

One killed, two injured in palm incidents

A 30-year-old man died after being trapped in falling palm fronds while trimming a palm September 1, 2009, in Tucson, Arizona.

The man was struck by fronds that fell from the top of the 40-foot palm and knocked him unconscious, a local fire department spokesperson told the Arizona Daily Star. He had apparently been at the top of the tree and was knocked down about 20 feet. He remained secured to the tree, as he was wearing a harness and safety gear.

Several people called 911, and it took about 30 minutes to cut the fronds from the man and lower him using a ladder truck. He remained unconscious throughout the rescue effort. He was taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

A woman said the man and another person knocked on her door, asking to trim her tree. The woman agreed and thought that they had been outside for 20 minutes when she noticed that the fronds had fallen.

The same day, two other men had to be rescued from a palm in another section of Tucson, according to the Daily Star report.

Those men were working at a home in the top of a palm that was 60 to 70 feet tall when some of the fronds they were trimming came down on top of them, and the men slid halfway down. They managed to stop, and one of the men was able to get down on his own. The other had to be brought down with a ladder truck. Both were treated at the scene for cuts.

Man dies after fall from tree

Steven Montz, 34, died September 7, 2009, after he fell 25 feet from a tree he was trimming in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Montz had been helping a friend trim the tree, according to a report on tuscaloosanews.com. Montz died from his injuries at DCH Regional Medical Center.

Trimmer dies in tree

A Hillsboro, Oregon, man died and his body remained suspended upside-down more than 30 feet off the ground in his safety harnesses after he apparently suffered from a medical condition while trimming trees September 2, 2009, in Buxton, Oregon. Emergency workers-surmise that Michael John Trelowar, 60, died while working, then fell from the tree and was caught up in his safety ropes, according to a report in The Oregonian.

Man impaled after fall dies

A 43-year-old Hudson, New Hampshire, man died September 8, 2009, in Hudson after he fell while trimming a tree from a ladder and was impaled on a crowbar. The man was using a chain saw to prune a tree in front of his home around when he fell, according to a Nashua Telegraph report. No one saw the accident, but neighbors ran to his assistance and called 911.

While the chain saw remained in the tree, the man somehow landed on the crowbar, which impaled him through the leg and continued into his body. The man was unconscious when emergency crews arrived and paramedics performed CPR on him while he was being transported to Southern New Hampshire Medical Center. Later Tuesday, police issued a statement confirming that he eventually died of his injuries.

A witness who lives nearby was one of the first people to run to the scene of the accident. She said the man, with whom she has been a friend for years, had borrowed the ladder. Later, she heard the chain saw stop and the man yell for help. She held his head and talked to him until paramedics arrived.

(Continued on page 55)
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By Rick Howland

Call them what you will. In German it might be spinnebuehne (spider boom), and in Spanish or Italian the word might be “aráña” or “ragno,” both of which mean spider. They all are generic appellations, similar to the term “bucket truck,” used to describe one kind of lift. This common, worldwide nomenclature is derived from what differentiates this kind of lift from others, its narrowness and specifically the spider-like appearance of the unit with its articulated “legs” deployed.

Spider lifts or, more technically defined, narrow-access aerial work platforms, have become so utilitarian and so commonplace that one would think they’ve been around as long as the venerable bucket truck. Hardly.

As the story goes, these lifts were first developed in Europe in the 1970s with one mission; that was to provide service and maintenance for atriums. What a concept. From there, things started to look up, as applications multiplied quickly, especially out of doors – for building maintenance and construction, sign installations and, significantly, for tree care.

As the years went on, these lifts, starting at around the 40-foot range, grew in stature and capability and became the focus of now more than a score of manufacturers worldwide that strive to improve safety and service. Some of that was driven by stringent work-safety requirements in Europe, the lifts’ original home turf, and the UK. The narrow-access aerial work platform fit the need of not only those notorious tight spaces in Europe, but also safety – to such an extent that in many places a permit is now required to climb a tree for arbor care, presuming it cannot be reached by any other method.

From the perspective of the tree care pro, these lifts had proven themselves in environments very much like those of the U.S., from similar terrain to similar tree species: oak, maple, poplar, willow, linden, fir and spruce.

Two decades later, in the 1990s, these lifts made their debut in the U.S., where...
they have continued to grow in popularity for many of the same reasons they got hot across the pond. Regulations or not, there’s a bit of a saying about these lifts that once you’ve used them, you probably won’t want to climb again.

As with so many good ideas, they continue to get better. The initial working reach has been extended to well over 150 feet. The booms can not only reach up, but out and over as well. That’s important in outdoor building and city environments to work across the face of a building, say in window cleaning or construction and maintenance. But for the tree care business, it means we can get up and then reach over quite efficiently and safely.

Plus, they’ve become truck- or trailer-mounted, self-propelled two- and four-wheel-drive and tracked units. You can find them with gasoline or diesel engines and often with both independent AC and DC electrical power capability.

Despite all the advancements already seen in these lifts – with their narrow access, speed going up and down, dual power (engines outdoors, electricity indoor or out), light ground pressure (easy on the soil and indoor flooring), optional straight/telescoping, folding or knuckled booms, plus the stability of articulating and rotating outriggers – there remains a lot of room for further advancement.

What we found in this annual check of this technology is that the directions into which these lifts will evolve include three major areas, that of electrical insulation, even higher reach (the average height popular for tree care work right now is about 75 feet), and lighter weight. One of the reasons 75-footers are popular is, first, the working height of the average tree. But also, secondarily, is the fact that prices jump significantly at about 100 feet; although, as competition races to develop greater working heights, it’s expected that prices for those units will become more competitive.

There’s also a bit of contention over whether straight, pure hydraulic controls are smoother and less costly than controls that utilize electronics to operate hydraulics, also known as electric over hydraulic. The advanced versions of the latter are supposed to allow computerization to match horsepower to the task (versus running the equipment always at high rpm) and also to target only the hydraulics needed (versus pumping fluid thru the entire system at pressure), both of which may yield better control and efficiencies. Arguments are made for both.

To give you an example of how significant the “spider” or narrow-access lift is, consider one industry-mover, Teupen, (German maker of the versatile but lightweight up-and-over as well as straight-line, telescopingboom lifts). Just this year the company established a North American sales and service headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina, targeting a projected fivefold sales growth in coming years. The new center will function as a distribution center as well as a hydraulics workshop and complete repair-service hub.

Florian Buescher, business development manager for Teupen, says that though the company is also known worldwide for truck- and trailer-mounted systems, especially in its established markets such as Europe, the track-mounted spider lift has evolved into a core competency, which will be the focus of the U.S. initiative. “We see the future as being the LEO line of Teupen lifts,” he says.

Though the company sells numerous articulated and telescoping and telescoping only booms for a variety of industries, four models are popular with, and targeted directly to, the tree care industry. They are the articulated and telescoping LEO 15GT, 18GT and 23GT with respective nominal working heights of 48, 58 and 75 feet. Also aimed at the tree care pro is the LEO 30T a pure, telescoping-only, straight boom with an effective working height of 100 feet. Also aimed at the tree care pro is the LEO 30T a pure, telescoping-only, straight boom with an effective working height of 100 feet. “And we want to bring more models to the tree care industry,” Buescher adds.

“By far, the most popular for the tree care industry is the 75-foot LEO 23GT,”
Buescher says. (Teupen makes lifts as small as the LEO12T, a small unit for malls and arcades, with no outriggers, and as tall as the straight-boom LEO 50 with a 164-foot working reach.) The telescoping straight boom LEO 30T also makes a great tree care product, especially in rough terrain because of a strong motor, according to Buescher.

Buescher says U.S. tree care industry applications have done a great deal to enhance the product line, allowing Teupen to, among other things, increase power and hydraulic flows.

With respect to evolution of the product, he says: “First, the U.S. market is relatively undeveloped with respect to the spider lift for tree care. We still talk with tree care companies who are unaware this creature exists. Immediately, opportunities for further development include greater height capabilities and ever lighter machines.”

“Tech-wise, Teupen draws on 30 years of product advancements, including computer analysis of performance parameters, which help the operator with where and how best to use the machine,” Buescher notes. “We see technology going further in this direction. Electric over hydraulics (electronic controls) can eliminate some hydraulics, which means less weight and also improved overall control and efficiency.” By way of example, he says the engine in the LEO23GT has smart technology to direct the engine to run only at the rpm output needed to function, not having to run a full throttle all the time. It matches horsepower to the lift’s needs at the time.

Insulation

As stated earlier, providing insulation to protect workers from electricity is one current focus for development with these lifts. This requires insulating the upper boom, isolating the lower boom and also insulating the basket area. Glass fiber, of course, is on the front lines of insulation technology, and it is the air gaps between and amongst the fibers that provides insulating properties along with the glass fibers. (A safety tip for these lifts and any insulated equipment you’re working with: OSHA says if your equipment isn’t clean, it’s not insulated. Oil, paint, grease, sap and other grime can conduct electricity. That’s why electric utility companies are fastidious about regular, weekly or better cleanings. It can be the debris as much as the metal in a rig that will conduct electricity.)

Mike Hrycak is president of Tracked Lifts, Inc. on New York’s Long Island. He’s a tree care pro, TCIA member and sole U.S. importer/distributor of Omme narrow-access, track- and trailer-mounted lifts and the Italmec platform basket “spider” line. He says the lines are complementary, with the Italmec featuring up to a 60-foot working height, the Omme 76 to 102 feet.

“The spider lift revolutionized backyard operational efficiency by 200 to 300 percent, creating a much safer working environment, simply enhancing productivity and improving the general attitude of employees on what can be hazardous assignments,” says Hrycak.
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Generally, he explains, insulated units are not so much a major issue with local buyers working in residential settings, but national companies – and to a growing extent municipalities, which invest large amounts of money in equipment and run a large number of crews – insist on high levels of insulation. Line clearance is a major factor. And he expects to see a push for more insulated units in day-to-day tree care.

As Hrycak sees it, “The next phase of development of spider lifts will be in the area of fully functional and fully insulated lifts capable of going into back yards into delicate situations, or to heavily steeped terrain, and safely deploying.”

Taking things a bit into his own hands, Hrycak says he’s already found several pieces of narrow-access aerial equipment that would work well with advanced insulation conversion and, in a joint venture with a glass fiber manufacturer in the U.S., is in the process of developing an insulated unit.

In his opinion, to properly insulate a spider lift so it can be safely used for line clearance or residential work near conductors, you first have to have the lower boom insulated by inserting a fiberglass gap in the lower steel boom; then, installing a fiberglass jib and basket will sufficiently insulate a spider lift similar to that of an insulated conventional bucket truck aerial lift.

“The insulating system components must resemble, to a great extent, a conventional bucket truck,” Hrycak explains. “Some have only the jib insulated, but not the machine insulated from the ground. And we need dielectrically protected hydraulic hoses. Some existing machines lend themselves to inserting insulated components, some do not. Only articulated spider lifts with non-telescoping lower booms can be converted to a practical insulated spider lift,” he adds, noting that some units with a telescoping boom present a challenge due to the lower boom’s steel cylinder.

The result should be a spider lift capable of all kinds of tree work in one unit. “Not only does it mean strong safety implications and productivity in the workplace, but also improved environmental consequences,” Hrycak says, noting that companies now using buckets should see economic advantages in the efficiency of spiders, especially those evolving to hybrid technologies, such as long-life electrical power along with a gas or diesel engine. These lightweight units can be easily transported by a light-duty, efficient pickup truck, and operate self-propelled on-site with almost day-long electrical service or diesel. “I see this as one last step, conglomerating two technologies – the spider lift and the well-developed bucket truck.”

ReachMaster traces its history to the invention of the spider/compact aerial lift in the late 1970s, according to Ebbe H. Christensen, president. Its lifts include the wheeled, straight-boom Basic; a double, 20-foot-jib Falcon (in wheeled and tracked models); and single-tracked LightLift; as well as towable and truck-mounted versions. The tallest reach, at 138 feet, is from the Falcon FS138. He says we can expect a 172-footer in 2010.

“From a general perspective, if we look outside the tree care industry to the general market, there is a call for even higher lifts to meet more challenging reach applications,” he says.

“For the tree care lift, I think that there are two areas of evolution in front of us. The first is insulation. There are a lot of

Tracked Lifts Inc. sells the Omme line of narrow-access and trailer-mounted platform lifts for tree care, such as the 18.90 above and the 18.75 at right, as well as Italmec lifts.

On The Cover: The 18.75 is also featured on the cover of this issue.
differences in ways to insulate lifts. This requires major work you have to do on the outrigger design, major engineering, if you are to be close to power lines – not just insulate the bucket. This is an area we have our eyes on. It’s a fairly new market with a lot of truck-based units to compete with,” he says.

Christensen adds, “The other direction is in worker safety. I see in the future more applications for compact lifts where we are used to climbing and using ladders. Over time, I think legislation will mandate more use of lifts. Also, from the tree care operator side, there is an efficiency of getting to jobs faster and safer through the use of light lifts.”

He cites as one utility feature, on the LL76, an outreach of 38 feet, which means the operator can cut at a safe distance from the machine.

For next year, he says, the company believes the 76- to 100-foot work range will be the increasing segment on the tree care side of the business, with the smaller 46- to 63-foot lifts in residential applications. To that end, he says, ReachMaster was planning to introduce a redesigned FF95G track-based, 95-foot lift at TCI EXPO this month.

“The redesign means we will be able to cut our price for that model by 20 percent,”

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Christensen says.

Man & Material Lift Engineering already supports an insulated spider lift, according to Dave DuPont, sales engineer. “We have two basic machines in use, one for indoor work – atrium and window-cleaning applications; and another for tree care with a tree care and insulation package for up to 46kV.” Platform heights are 73 feet.

The tree care protective package includes extra guarding to protect against falling branches; a hydraulically adjustable track, good for uneven surfaces – such as if one track has to be on the street, the other on a curb, and definitely for off-road applications; and a standard Kubota diesel engine.

In addition, the company offers a tree care insulation package that includes the above-mentioned tree care set-up. To achieve 46kV protection, the Man & Material Lift insulation package includes a 6-foot working jib in fiberglass, radio remote controls in the basket and on the ground, fiberglass bucket with an optional fiberglass basket liner, non-conductive hydraulic hoses and a pedestrian barrier to keep ground operators and pedestrians away from the machine at ground level.

The machine also features a hydraulic tool circuit capable of running common hydraulically powered tree care gear such as pole saws. Narrower than many, this one can fit through a single 34.5-inch garden gate and is made in the USA.

Whereas most spider lift construction is aluminum, “We use steel booms for sturdiness and stability,” DuPont says.

The next version from Man & Material, possibly in the next six months, will likely be a unit with a 100-foot reach and an insulation package.

Jon Hedlund, North American sales manager for NiftyLift, says his company prefers to call these units simply aerial platform lifts.

“NiftyLift is altogether different from other technologies,” he says, “because our controls are hydraulic-over-electric, not electronic. That means our machine is not controlled by relays or a circuit board.
Straight-line hydraulics are less expensive to purchase, easier to maintain and, in the long run, less costly to operate,” Hedlund explains.

Hedlund says “We’re always looking at manufacturing the longest reach with less weight involved.” Much of the latter is aimed at curbing transport costs, which goes to the bottom line. “People are going with smaller trucks that are less costly to maintain. We have the lightest machines in the industry and continue to innovate the compact, lightweight platform. By way of illustration, he says, the NiftyLift line working heights range from 40 to 70 feet, feature two- and four-wheel-drive chassis, track drives, different power options and narrow units, down to 2-feet 6 inches wide.

Versalift is a major manufacturer of a variety of lifts for the tree care industry and others, providing lifts operated by telescoping and articulated booms. The majority are truck-mounted bucket trucks; however, nominally in the “spider” class is the 36-foot insulated, articulated, telescoping lift on tracks, featuring radio remote controls. Working height is 42 feet; horizontal reach is 28-feet. These lifts, according to Amber Scott of Versalift, are popular in the tree care and power industries.

As the spider-type or narrow-access aerial work platforms continues to evolve, “the bigger the better” for lifts may not hold up. There is value in small packages, and as the ability to work higher, farther and in more situations increases, so, too, does the ability to do more and better jobs. Consider that one tree care pro we heard of in Massachusetts can charge several thousand dollars a day for tricky takedowns – all because he has the right lift for the job. So, whatever you call them, they could provide a much needed lift to a bottom line.
Business Insurance: How Much is Too Much? Or Not Enough?

By William J. Lynott

When it comes to insurance for your business, there are two things you can count on: It’s expensive and it’s confusing. The wrong choices can be costly at the least and disastrous at the worst.

Too much insurance will mount a permanent assault on your bottom line; too little could mean the end of the business. With all of the selling pressures within some parts of the insurance industry, it can be difficult to avoid the expense of being over-insured. However, being under-insured may pose an even greater risk.

The following checklist covers most types of business insurance. In a perfect world, these are the coverages a tree care business owner might have in place, but due to budgeting constraints you may have to self-insure some of these risks.

Keep in mind that the coverages needed for your business need not be purchased separately. Most insurance professionals will put together a single policy package appropriate for the business type, size and budget limitations.

Liability Insurance

Liability insurance is an obvious need for arborists. It protects against liability legally imposed upon your business because of the negligence of the business or its employees. It protects you and your business if you are ever sued for negligence.

“Liability insurance is a must,” says attorney Gregory Boop, of Cleveland, Ohio. “It will pay for an attorney and the costs of defense in the event of a lawsuit. Legal fees in some areas are well over $200 per hour. Small businesses simply cannot afford to defend against even the most frivolous of claims.”

Insurance broker Susan L. Combs, of New York, N.Y., points out that claims due to employee actions or negligence can be significant, especially in this litigious age of increasing jury awards. “Some coverage may be provided through your package policy,” she says, “but you should discuss this with your broker.”

Property Insurance

If you store your equipment in a building, property insurance protects against loss or damage to the building and its contents. In order to determine proper level of coverage, you should prepare a list of all your equipment with costs and identification information.

“Do not under-insure,” cautions Boop. “Get flood insurance, if necessary. Wind insurance, storms, hurricanes, quakes – if they are (common) in your area, get the coverage. Make sure the insurance required in your lease is what you actually have.” Boop is a commercial litigation attorney. His practice focuses on the defense of professionals and businesses.

Casualty Insurance

“Some insurers will lump property and casualty insurance together and refer to the coverage as property and casualty insurance,” says Boop. “In fact, packaged policies of property and casualty are often the best purchase a business owner can make.”

Errors and Omissions

Errors and Omissions Insurance protects your company from claims if your client holds you responsible for errors, or the failure of your work to perform as promised in your contract. The main component of this insurance is that it provides for defense costs if a suit is filed against you.

“For example,” says Michael J. Rook, ArborMAX program manager, “if a tree care company goes to a job and cuts down the wrong tree or trees, takes down too many trees, does some faulty work, gives incorrect advice, applies the wrong pesticides, etc, errors and omissions insurance will provide financial protection.

The Tree Care Industry Association has partnered with the ArborMAX insurance program to help its members find affordable, industry-specific insurance, especially workers’ comp. Rook feels that Errors and Omissions insurance is especially important if your business includes consulting.

Health Insurance

“In order to be competitive today, most businesses need to offer their workers health insurance,” says Boop.

Combs agrees. “Providing a health insurance program can be very attractive for employees and business owners,” she says, “but it can be expensive. To contain costs, consider sharing the cost with employees and choosing levels of deductibles, co-pays and co-insurance that result in a lower cost to you, the employer.”

Boop suggests that you avoid the largest insurance firms, which he says are often over-priced. “Instead, consider a strict HMO such as Kaiser. You may also want to consider online quotes from firms such as eHealth (www.ehealthinsurance.com).

Business Interruption Insurance

If a catastrophe such as a fire or flood destroys your equipment, you may have to close down for a while. Business Interruption insurance is designed to protect you in such a situation.

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According to Boop, this is another area where adequate coverage is important. “Make sure that your policy is purchased through an insurance professional who understands your business,” he says. “If you do not keep accurate and legitimate books, you will not be able to prove a claim and the insurance will be of little value to you.

Workers Compensation and Disability
As an employer, you must insure your employees against on-the-job injuries. Most states have put into place some form of mandatory workers’ compensation system and those laws vary widely by state.

“Workers’ compensation is a system where the employee is not allowed, by statute, to sue their employer for on-the-job injuries,” explains Boop. “In return, the employer must participate in a system that provides nearly automatic payment to the employee in case of injury for medical bills and damages. There are many options for workers’ compensation coverage. Some states allow an employer to opt-out of the system if the employer is self insured, some run the system through private insurers while others use state agencies.”

Because of the wide variation in state laws, you will need to depend on your insurance professional to advise you properly.

Life and Disability Insurance
Life and Disability insurance protects the business against the death or disability of the owner(s) or key employees. Your need for this insurance would depend on the legal structure of your business and whether you have a partner or a key employee.

If your business is a partnership, this form of insurance is well worth consideration. Normally, each partner would carry a life insurance policy naming the other partner as beneficiary. If one partner dies, and the business has planned properly, the proceeds of the policy can be used to buy out the share of the decedent’s partnership.

“Certainly, some permanent insurance will be a perfect fit for a post death buyout,” says Ted Kurlowicz, professor of estate planning at American University in Washington, D.C. “However, it is important to consider all contingencies. Other events could be trigger points for a buyout. Remember, long-term disability is more likely than death up to about age 67.”

Kurlowicz recommends that a business owner acquire as much disability income protection as possible. “Disability coverage will often be blended between coverage for the owner to replace lost income and coverage to fund the disability as a trigger for a buy-sell agreement,” he says.

Kurlowicz feels that planning for sale or succession of a business should begin as soon as the business is started or acquired. “It is critical for estate planning purposes to acquire life insurance on the owner for at least the value of the business. A succession plan will take years to implement in many cases and will be subject to constant fine-tuning. Adequate life insurance is essential to ensure that the heirs get value from the owner’s efforts even if a continuation plan is not in place at the time of death.”

Commercial Auto and Truck Insurance
Adequate coverage for all of the vehicles used in your business is another obvious must for tree care businesses. Discuss the possibility of raising your deductibles with your broker. Working with higher deductibles will lower your insurance costs but, of course, will expose you to higher out-of-pocket expense in the case of collision repairs.

Yes, business insurance is both complicated and expensive, but most business planners agree with Boop, who says, “My primary thought on business insurance in today’s economy is that one cannot go into business if one cannot afford insurance. Do a business plan with a realistic insurance estimate. It is irresponsible to serve clients, customers or the public without insurance in place.

“In my practice, we have seen the shocked look on an owner’s face when their personal accounts are seized to pay a judgment. Insurance allows responsible people to set up good businesses.”

Combs recommends an independent broker rather than an insurance agent for your insurance needs. “Find a broker that you like and trust,” she says. “A broker, rather than an agent, works directly for you, the client. It is the broker’s job to shop the market for you and then present you with the best options of coverage at the most reasonable prices.”

William J. Lynott is a freelance writer who specializes in business management as well as personal and business finance.
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A newly discovered disease caused by a previously undescribed fungus hitchhiking on a tiny native bark beetle is infecting and killing hundreds of black walnut trees in California and seven other western states. Dozens of trees in the Davis, California, area alone are dead or dying.

The havoc wreaked by the combined pests, coined “Thousand Cankers Disease,” represents a serious threat to black walnut trees, says chemical ecologist and forest entomologist Steve Seybold of the Davis-based Pacific Southwest Research Station, USDA Forest Service, and an affiliate of the University of California-Davis Department of Entomology.

“The black walnut trees could go the way of the American chestnut or American elm,” warns entomologist Lynn Kimsey, chair of the UC Davis Department of Entomology and director of the Bohart Museum of Entomology, which houses one of the largest insect collections in North America.

“By itself the very tiny walnut twig beetle does relatively little damage,” Seybold says. But combined with the aggressive fungus, it can kill a walnut tree in one to three years. Despite the “twig” in its common name, the walnut twig beetle also bores holes in large branches and even in the trunks of walnut trees.

The beetle, *Pityophthorus juglandis*, native to Arizona, California, New Mexico and Mexico, is widely distributed in California, from San Diego to Shasta counties. Known since 1959 as just another specimen in the drawers of California insect museums, it has emerged on the radar screens of entomologists and plant scientists because it has been found in abundance on dying walnut trees statewide. The disease has also been found in Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, Utah, Washington and Oregon.

“It’s a hard time for hardwoods,” said Seybold. “This is behaving like an invasive pathogen that has run amuck.”

Scientists are concerned that the disease...
may also impact English walnut and California walnut production.

“There are hints that the fungus may have infected English walnuts in Utah,” Seybold says, “and there are several symptomatic English walnut trees at the USDA National Germplasm collection located in nearby Winters, but beyond that we do not know the extent of the threat to the industry.”

**Known since 1959 as just another specimen in the drawers of California insect museums, it has emerged on the radar screens of entomologists and plant scientists because it has been found in abundance on dying walnut trees statewide. The disease has also been found in Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, Utah, Washington and Oregon.**

The fungus, with its barrel-shaped spores, appears to be an undescribed and perhaps exotic species within the genus *Geosmithia*, says postdoctoral researcher Andrew Graves of the UC Davis Department of Plant Pathology. Graves, part of a Davis-based team working on the project since June 2008, has noted that there are seven named species of *Geosmithia*.

Colorado State University plant pathologist Ned Tisserat, who placed the fungus in the genus *Geosmithia* and named the disease “Thousand Cankers,” told an Entomology Society of America symposium: “It is really, really a scary disease; it’s as bad as butternut (walnut) canker.” Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*) is also known as white walnut.

Graves described the beetle as reddish-brown bark beetle, about 1.5 to 1.9 mm long. “It’s much smaller in size than a grain of rice,” he says. The entrance holes into the black walnut tree look like pin pricks.

“But if you peel back the bark, you’ll see the well-developed beetle galleries and blotches of fungal-stained wood and bark that look like a thousand cankers,” says Graves, who is researching the host colonization behavior of the beetle. He described some of the coalescing cankers as “enormous.” The cankers widen and girdle twigs and branches, resulting in die back of the tree crown.

Disease symptoms include dark stains on the outer bark tissue that extend into the cambium; yellowing and thinning of the...
upper crown; wilting of leaves; flagging branches; die back and eventual death, all within three years. Seybold says that the disease is so recently discovered that specialists have not had time to develop and test integrated pest management tools to address the issue. The natural system of attraction of the beetles to the trees and to each other might form the basis of a future monitoring and tree protection tool kit.

“The impact of these beetles and their fungus,” Kimsey says, “may be devastating to yet another of our native trees. When I think of the possibility of losing all of the magnificent black walnuts in Davis, it makes me very sad.”

The disease complex first gained notice in the Española Valley of New Mexico in 2001, when walnut trees declined and died. Scientists initially attributed the mortality to drought stress. However, when the drought subsided, the massive die-offs did not.

The beetle-disease complex is associated with widespread deaths of black walnuts planted as street or highway trees in Boulder, Co.; Portland, Ore.; Prosser, Wash.; and several counties in California, including Los Angeles, Sutter, Ventura and Yolo. It was first noted by scientists in California in 2008.

UC Davis walnut specialist Charles Leslie, a member of the Davis-based thousand cankers disease research team, says two species of black walnut are native to California: *Juglans californica* (a southern California shrub-like black walnut) and *Juglans hindsii* (the northern California black walnut).

Northern California black walnut is widely planted in Yolo County as an ornamental tree, lining roads and ranches, Leslie says.

“These black walnuts are different from the commercial walnuts grown in the Central Valley, which are Persian, commonly called ‘English’ walnut trees grown on black walnut root stock,” he says.

California black walnut “is prized more as a shade tree than for its nuts,” Leslie says. “To crack the nut, you need to run over it with the family Hummer or hit it with a sledgehammer,” he quips.

However, eastern black walnut is a favorite in the ice cream industry, and the wood is especially prized for furniture and guitars.
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To confirm the extent of the disease in the state, the Davis researchers are participating in a federally funded project to collect diseased branches throughout California, particularly in the native ranges of *Juglans californica* (Los Angeles and Ventura counties) and *Juglans hindsii* (Mt. Diablo and elsewhere in Contra Costa and Yolo counties). They are also rearing the beetles and studying host colonization behavior.

“The beetle appears to pump out at least two generations a year in California,” Graves says.

Colorado State University plant sciences professor Whitney Cranshaw, who is on the front lines of the research in Boulder and Denver, says people continually ask him, “How can a little twig beetle be killing healthy trees?”

“With *Geosmithia*,” he says, “the fungus is carried into the tree when the beetle tunnels into and wounds the tree. The fungus produces large cankers.”

The attacks generally occur from mid-April through mid-September. At the end of summer, the beetles move into the lower part of the trunk to hibernate.

In their continuing research, scientists hope to establish a baseline of the beetle and fungal populations to understand the full extent of the problem. Native black walnut trees in the western U.S. are important components of the vegetation along streams and riparian zones, Seybold says, so their “loss may have significant ecological implications.”

The scientists also advocate research on vector transmission, overwintering biology, an estimation of the risk and threat to the walnut-growing industry in California and to commercially valuable native black walnut trees in the eastern U.S., development of attractive baits, and an insecticide treatment.

Insecticides may prove useful, but only if used prior to the beetle arriving at the tree, Graves says.

“Insecticide sprays are of limited effectiveness due to the extended period when the beetles are active and, because the beetles are feeding beneath the bark, insecticides will not be useful in killing beetles that have already entered the tree.”

Andrew Graves
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By John Ball

Television shows such as the CSI series have made diagnostics a tougher job. Any arborist who has gone out on a “Why is my tree dying?” call knows that these shows have raised the bar on the speed and depth to our diagnostic services. The average customer is beginning to believe that consulting arborists have wonderful labs with great tools that allow them in seconds to figure out exactly what is wrong with their tree (and even who did it in the case of herbicide injury). The customer expects every tree problem to be neatly solved within 60 minutes (minus the commercials). They may think that we can solve tree problems that fast, but we cannot, nor should we even try.

We are not related professionally to physicians, but we certainly can borrow a quote from them; “Prognosis without diagnosis is malpractice.” All too often we rush to conclusions on how to treat a tree before we have even figured out the problem. This haste is often driven by customer expectations.

Probably every arborist performing diagnostics has gone on a consulting visit and run into situations where the customer wants to know the answer right now, and they also want an answer that has a solution. They do not want to hear that their tree has been declining for longer than they realize and the treatments will take time to turn the tree around, if it can be saved at all. They want to hear the instant solution, that there is a product or two that either you or they can spray that will bring the tree back quickly. Sometimes they wait till the tree has died before they call! I have gone out and looked at trees that have been standing dead for two years, the bark has sloughed off and the fine twigs fallen yet the question asked by the customer is; “Can you save my tree?” No hope here, of course!

On the others, such as the complex declines, we have to learn to take the time to figure out the problems and not latch onto solutions too quickly.

Our diagnostic approach needs to be a bit more customer-focused if we really want to properly identify tree problems. Everyone is looking for that magic chemical that they can spray on the tree or, even better, put in the soil. Too much of what we do is what I refer to as faith-based arboriculture. We do it because we believe, rather than base our actions on sound science. Unfortunately, you cannot spray, inject or soil drench your way out of many of the more complex tree problems. The majority of pests that customers notice when they are looking at their dying trees are really opportunistic, colonizing trees that are already stressed. Figuring out the underlying stress, the true problem, takes some time and involves a site visit. You really cannot figure out the decline complexes until you get onto the site. The customer cannot just mail it to you.

If you are going to identify stressors correctly before coming up with treatments, do you charge for that service? The answer usually is “no.” Too often arborists do this as a free service, but remember, if you do something for free, then that is a reflection of the value you place on your time. Even
a $10 fee, collected at the beginning of the visit, is going to eliminate the callers who have no intention of hiring you anyway. They are just looking for some “free” advice.

You probably know these folks; they are the ones who follow you with a piece of paper and a pencil and want you to tell them what they can do themselves to save the tree. Oftentimes these are enjoyable meetings, since the tree owners are very interested in what you are recommending, but these visits are not very profitable. The other mistake is charging for a diagnostic visit; say $30, but telling the customer you will deduct that fee from the price of any work that is done. Customers generally do not believe this discount approach. They figure that you are going to backload the site visit fee into the final work price. Why not be honest about it and charge them for your time?

Be sure they are at the house when you visit, also. They may have some valuable insight into the problem and it is a lot easier to ask questions in person rather than over the phone or via e-mail later. If it is worth having you come out to look at the tree, it is worth their time as well.

When you show up on the property, one of the first questions you should ask the customer is simply, “What brings me here today?” You already have some idea why you were called, but an open-ended question allows the customer to describe the problem to you. They may provide more information when asked this question rather than you walking up to them and merely confirming why you are there; “I’m here to see about some spots on your tree’s leaves, right?” You need to know their perception of the problem because it may be something completely different than what you are considering.

Start out the conversation with a very open ended question and after you ask, take a deep breath and wait until they respond. Too often we are quick to fill in the silence. Sometimes they may just need a minute or two to think of a response. Once they have talked a bit and told you what they think the problem may be – and what they hope you can accomplish – then say to them, “If I understand you correctly…” and paraphrase what they said so it is clear you understand their concerns and expectations.

Remember that no one really listens to people they do not like or who they don’t believe are telling the truth. Customers form an opinion of you within about 30 seconds of first meeting, which means you have less than half a minute to have them look at you as a friendly, competent professional. And it might not hinge on what you say. Before you have even had a chance to say hello the customer may have already made a decision about you. When you first step out of the car is when you start creating that important first impres-
You pull up to a house on a new appointment, step out of your car and look at a gorgeous tree with a branch or two of discolored leaves. The homeowner sees you are here and walks down to meet you at the tree – you have already made an error in creating a favorable first impression. You can stop and look at the tree for a second, but the minute the customer steps out the door, you should stop what you are doing and walk to meet him or her. This is just politeness and politeness counts in first impressions. Do not have a customer walk to you if you can avoid it; it’s a small thing, but it is a part of making the impression that you value the customer and his or her time. Anytime you see a client walking toward you, stop what you are doing and walk to meet him or her.

One of the other mistakes arborists make during site visits is looking at the tree while talking with the customer. The tree is not the one who is going to pay you, the customer is. You need to make good eye contact with the customer so you can see if your message is getting across. You need to read his or her reaction to what you are saying and adjust your conversation accordingly.

Also, the minute you turn your back to the customer, he or she loses interest in the conversation. Look at the customer when you are pointing out something in the tree. There is no need to look at the tree – it’s not going anywhere. Stand erect, face the customer and do not fold your arms. If you cross your arms, it tends to give the impression that you are confrontational and not really interested in what the customer has to say.

Second, name the tree as well. Unfortunately there are too many arborists who cannot identify trees beyond a simple maple, spruce or oak response. “Mrs. Jones, we can treat this sugar maple for...” sounds much more professional. Customers are impressed when you know the name of the tree.

And finally, always end your visit with the words, “Thank you.” Even if the customer decided not to hire you, he or she still gave you the most valuable thing he or she has – his or her time. Make these your final words on any visit.

One of the other mistakes arborists make during site visits is looking at the tree while talking with the customer. The tree is not the one who is going to pay you, the customer is.

John Ball, Ph.D., CTSP, is a professor of forestry at South Dakota State University where he instructs courses in arboriculture and urban forestry. He previously managed tree care companies in the Midwest and East. This article was excerpted from his presentation on the same subject at TCI EXPO 2008 in Milwaukee. He will be presenting a similar discussion at TCI EXPO 2009 in Baltimore in early November.
Man impaled after fall dies
A 43-year-old Hudson, New Hampshire, man died September 8, 2009, in Hudson after he fell while trimming a tree from a ladder and was impaled on a crowbar. The man was using a chain saw to prune a tree in front of his home around when he fell, according to a Nashua Telegraph report. No one saw the accident, but neighbors ran to his assistance and called 911.

While the chain saw remained in the tree, the man somehow landed on the crowbar, which impaled him through the leg and continued into his body. The man was unconscious when emergency crews arrived and paramedics performed CPR on him while he was being transported to Southern New Hampshire Medical Center. Later Tuesday, police issued a statement confirming that he eventually died of his injuries.

A witness who was one of the first people to run to the scene of the accident. She said the man, with whom she has been a friend for years, had borrowed the ladder. Later, she heard the chain saw stop and the man yell for help. She held his head and talked to him until paramedics arrived.

Trimmer pulled down by branch, killed
Charles N. White, 30, died after being knocked to the ground by a limb from the tree he was trimming September 10, 2009, in Augusta, Kentucky. He appeared to have been about 20 feet up in the tree and had cut the last branch free when the falling branch apparently caught in his climbing rope and brought him down with it, according to a report in The Ledger Independent. White apparently died instantaneously from what was described as severe blunt force trauma to his head.

White, who worked with a tree trimming company, was doing independent work at the time. White was working with a partner, but the other man did not witness White actually falling.

Tree worker dies in fall
The owner of a Bradenton, Florida, tree service died after falling from a tree he was trimming September 14, 2009. Aaron W. Nobbe, 37, died after falling about 30 feet from a tree onto the ground, according to the Bradenton Herald. Nobbe cut out a large chunk of the tree he was working on but was still attached to the chunk by his safety rope. The chunk pulled Nobbe straight off the tree. He died before paramedics arrived.

The tree had been hit by lightning and Nobbe had been called to trim it.

Trimmer electrocuted
Tree trimmer Nicholas Vitrano, 27, was on a 40-foot ladder trimming a palm in Boynton Beach, Florida, September 18, 2009, when his pole saw touched a power cable, shocking him and knocking him to the ground. His wife, a certified CPR technician, was at the scene and performed CPR on him herself, but could not save him, according to a cbs12.com report.

The ladder was reportedly being held by an homeowner while Vitrano climbed the ladder with a pole saw. Before Vitrano was able to hook his safety belt around the tree, the saw touched the power line, giving Vitrano a shock and sending him off the ladder. Cause of death was unknown at the time of the accident, whether it was electrocution or from the impact from the fall.

Trimming truck crash kills three, injures two
Three members of a family were killed and two others injured in a traffic crash involving three vehicles, including a tree trimming truck, in Walker County, Georgia, just south of Chattanooga, Tennessee, September 18, 2009.

The Georgia Highway Patrol said a tree care service bucket truck crossed the centerline on Highway 136, clipped a compact car, then ran at an angle into a Dodge truck. The three dead and two injured, all of the same family, were in the Dodge, according to a report on chattanoogan.com.

The occupant of the compact car had visible injuries. The driver of the bucket truck had minor injuries. Both were taken to Hamilton Medical Center in Dalton.

Charges were pending against the driver of the bucket truck.

Golf employee killed in struck-by
A 53-year-old golf course employee was killed September 23, 2009, in Macomb, Michigan, when he was struck in the back by a falling tree.

Brian “Butch” Maziarz of Sterling Heights was pronounced dead at Mount Clemens Regional Medical Center, according to The Macomb Daily. Maziarz, a maintenance mechanic at the golf course for the past 20-plus years, and a foreman were cutting down dead ash trees when one of the trees got hung up in a tree next to it and Maziarz tried to get it dislodged. The tree came right at him and struck him, killing him.

Arborist dies in hazard tree incident
Long-time tree care worker Bob Stewart was killed September 25, 2009, on South Whidbey Island, Washington, when he rode a dead 25-foot hemlock tree to the ground. Stewart had climbed up 15 feet and when he cut out the top 10 feet the whole tree uprooted. He landed on asphalt, hitting his head and breaking his neck, according to a report sent to TCI from an arborist in the area.

Truck hits tree truck
A pickup truck slammed into the back of a large tree-trimming truck on Highway 13 in Brighton, Missouri, September 28, 2009, injuring one man.

The tree-trimming truck was making a left turn off Highway 13 and the pick-up driver was trying to pass another car at the same time. The pick-up slammed into the back of the larger truck. The driver of the pick-up was seriously injured, but the injuries were not life-threatening. The driver of the tree truck was not hurt, according to a report on ozarksfirst.com.

Off-duty deputy killed trimming tree

The 57-year old deputy was found tangled in his safety harness in a tree at his home. The deputy was rushed to Beaumont Hospital but was pronounced dead, according to a WWJ 950 News Radio report.

A neighbor told police the deputy was working on the tree when a large limb snapped, causing the safety harness to slip
I really find it interesting how uncomfortable management, supervisors and employees get when a “Safety Audit” is mentioned. I can’t help but wonder why they feel this way. I am asked occasionally to perform safety audits for contractors, co-ops and municipal-owned electric utility systems. It is really interesting what I sometimes find. I can’t discuss in this article everything that is important and needs to be covered by a local audit, but I am going to point out a few topics that come up most often when safety audits are performed.

Safety audits should be viewed as beneficial and an affirmation of safe work practices being utilized by employees. The audit will indicate if employees are in compliance with minimum standards and following company-required safety work rules. Work practices or routines should not be changed in anticipation of audits. It is human nature and part of our culture to “clean up” for the audit. That is fine, but work practices should remain the same.

An outside safety auditor or specialist can offer suggestions or comparisons to industries or consensus standards rather than just federal compliance standards. Comparing your local work practices to the rest of industry is very informative at the very least. I usually find that companies truly believe that “their way” is the correct way or that all other utility companies are performing tasks the same way they are.

If your company has not had a safety and compliance specialist perform an audit on the company to review work practices, written PPE certifications, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations’ Driver Qualification files or other required training and compliance measures, you should consider it. I would suggest you get someone knowledgeable and who has credibility with employees and real life on the job experience, and that you not ask someone to come in to offer suggestions with out the experience of working in the industry.

Safety Audits, when performed correctly, will reinforce and identify training, work practices or compliance measures that are in compliance. It will also reinforce how important the audit is to mitigate risk and liability to the company. “You don’t know what you don’t know.”

There are times when local employees can’t “see” the hazard or they just don’t know the rules. It is the “you can’t see the forest for the trees” phenomenon. Walk by things every day and you may not realize something is wrong. It is easier for a third party to actually compare work practices to the minimum standards and identify risks.

Safety audits should not be handled as they were years ago. The local “safety person” would visit the job site or facility for an audit and stay on site until they find something wrong. Now, the safety person has “earned” their money. I certainly can remember those days. That type audit was not beneficial to company or employees. Unsafe acts or non compliance was not corrected at the time of discovery. They would write up a report or report to a manager later what was observed. I always wanted to ask, “Why didn’t you correct the act or compliance measure when it was discovered?” That sent a mixed message to employees, very confusing.

The scope of audit should be set up at the beginning. An opening conference with management and safety should be held to be sure all parties understand the scope and what areas are to be audited. The specific areas should be predetermined before an
Safety audits should not be handled as they were years ago. The local “safety person” would visit the job site or facility for an audit and stay on site until they find something wrong. Now, the safety person has “earned” their money. I certainly can remember those days. That type audit was not beneficial to company or employees.

The auditor is ever allowed to begin. The focus of the audit should be on the topics in the scope, but, if there are other items outside the scope noted as being out of compliance or unsafe work habits are observed, they should be corrected immediately. A list should be kept and addressed at a closing conference.

The local safety person should accompany the auditor and be there to answer any questions about compliance measures or local work practices. The best method of audits is to look for what is “right” and the items out of compliance will be identified easily. Work practices are probably the most subjective.

As I have said many times in safety keynotes for utilities, “The big end of the pole goes in the ground” and “when we flip the switch, the lights come on.” Everything in between those two points can be different. The auditor has to be extremely careful when making suggestions or recommendations. The work practices and interpretations of rules by the companies in a skilled or “special industry” are usually are what are found to be at risk. Electric utilities and telecommunications workers fall into Sub Part “R” Special Industries of 29 CFR 1910.269. Seeing a little “gray” in a black and white world is the way I refer to it. Most companies require far more than the federal standard (and should), but then some companies are found working around the energized secondary with leather gloves.

Many of these companies also are viewed to be “motor carriers” under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations because many of the vehicles used in providing the services are defined as a commercial motor vehicle (CMV), which is gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of greater than 10,001 pounds. This requires drivers to maintain a Driver’s Qualification file. If the GVWR of the CMV is greater than 26,001 pounds, the driver must pos-
sess a commercial driver’s license (CDL). A driver’s health card is required in both cases with the driver qualification file.

The company is now required to random drug test 50 percent of CDL drivers annually. The company must have drug and alcohol testing program and provide training for the drivers. All training must be documented and available for auditor’s request. Driver’s files are extremely difficult to keep up to date and in compliance. There is much more training required, such as vehicle inspections and hours of service, if the state doesn’t recognize the federal exemption, along with other documentation from former employers, Registry of Motor Vehicle reports and others. Employees coming and going, being transferred in and out of these positions create a challenge to keeping records up to date and drivers “Qualified.” It is very easy for drivers to be not qualified by a driver’s file and companies them asking them, and allowing them, to drive CMVs. This is a tremendous amount of risk to company, if something happens.

There are certain compliance topics required in both the 29 CFR 1910 and 29 CFR 1926 industries. Record keeping, PPE and training in particular come up often. These represent some of the highest risks to the employer. Record keeping has been simplified by the new 29 CFR 1904 rules and the use of the OSHA 300 log rather than the former OSHA 200 log days. The employees are at a great disadvantage if training is not provided, maintained and records are not available on request.

The common belief is that as long as “nothing ever happens,” it is OK. Not really, though; it is just a matter of time in this day and age before something happens. A catastrophic event can bankrupt a small company and certainly hurt the bottom line on larger companies. The disturbing fact is that most companies don’t even realize that there is risk that has not been mitigated. An audit will identify out-of-compliance areas and allow a chance to correct them before something does happen.

In the big scheme of things, a local audit and its findings are invaluable to a company. The small amount of expenses and time spent is a drop in the bucket compared to costs of what might happen if the company is found to have Willful Violations by OSHA, or be negligent or non compliant with rules and regulations.

If companies will take the time to perform a local audit on a regular basis, then when OSHA or the Federal DOT auditors show up at your door, the company will be ready. Also, the employees will appreciate the recognition for safe work practices, or they will benefit from the corrections that the audit will offer.

Danny L. Raines, is owner of Raines Utility Safety Solutions, LLC, and will present on “Who is Your Safety Leader” this February at TCIA’s Winter Management Conference 2010 in Hawaii.
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Training of employees at all levels is key to the survival of any business. Training is not just explaining “how to do the job.” There are several other important instructions you need to provide, such as how to work smart and safe, how to use tools and equipment, how to set up work zones, tree and pest identification, hazard identification, CPR & first aid, and much, much more. Educating your employees on the proper use, function, maintenance and PPE (personal protective equipment) needed for any particular piece of equipment can save you valuable down time and possibly avoid a serious accident. The personnel (including yourself) that you employ to work, sell and grow your business can cost you money if not appropriately trained.

The tree care industry’s tools and equipment have come a long way the last 40 years, and most of the technological advances have taken place in the last 10 years. The tools, equipment and vehicles we utilize now are far more involved than in years past – and more expensive. Most business owners purchase their equipment to make money, and to help the jobs go faster and easier, all the while keeping their workers safe and efficient. The equipment that you pay for is primarily for your workforce to use, and training them to use the equipment you provide in a safe and effective manner will help your business thrive. The training you furnish will not only prolong the life of your equipment, it is also an investment in your employees.

Clive Brown, supervisor of fleet operations for the City of Southfield, Michigan, has 46 years of mechanical experience and oversees an exceedingly skilled crew of mechanics. Discussing the importance of equipment training and preventive maintenance, Brown opines on what the most costly fixes are.

“Major brake repairs; the lift and bucket are expensive to repair on the aerial devices; transmissions and engines,” he says. “However, because of the preventive maintenance program we have, we don’t have those kind problems with engines and transmissions.”

“We don’t have oil changes, per se, on a cycle; what we do is a scheduled service on an hourly basis on off-road and large equipment (around 250-350 hours). We use 90 days or 4,000 miles on the majority of other equipment. When we bring these in, we give them a complete going over – wheels come off, brakes, brake chambers, all tires are inspected – it’s a complete safety inspection, and we change the fluids.”

The tree care industry is a dusty and dirty profession, and taking the time to remove the day’s dirt and grime will assist in maintaining your equipment in good working order. Keeping your equipment clean and well maintained is a way to keep costly repairs and replacements to a minimum. Brown agrees that the inside is just as important as the outside, when it comes to keeping equipment clean.

“Brake pedals, levers and such can become frozen or stuck from the environment – salt, sand, dirt, dust – so that all needs to be cleaned out; same thing with throttles. Dust and dirt, fibrous materials, are very abrasive and can wear on bearing parts and sliding surfaces.”

For large equipment as well as small, a key step in preventive maintenance is the daily equipment check. For trucks and heavy equipment, filling out a “Driver’s Daily Inspection Report” can help catch a small problem before it becomes a large, costly repair.

On the topic of equipment training, Brown talked about what he calls “re-awareness” related to the operation of the new backhoes the city just purchased. “On the backhoe training, although it’s a new piece of equipment, it’s a replacement piece of equipment for what we had. There is new technology and some new attachments. If you are familiar with a backhoe, you’ve got 70 percent of it down, but the balance of that would absolutely be training, to get the staff up to speed.”

Brown brought in, Jim Fox, Case product specialist for Case Construction out of Jackson, Michigan, for the backhoe training. Fox stressed the importance of reading the Owners Manuals and Manufacturer’s Operating Procedures for all the equipment. The training provided was in the form of a PowerPoint and video, in addition to hands-on demonstrations.

One of the focal elements of training in the Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) program are the “learning styles” of different people. I found the information on learning styles fascinating and incredibly useful in molding my teaching ability. CTSPs are taught that people learn in different ways, and you need to adjust the
manner in which you teach to fit the learning style of the learner. These styles include: visual (seeing), aural (hearing), verbal (speaking), kinesthetic (doing) and logical (using the brain). Most people have one dominant style, while others need to use two or more. There can also be social and solitary issues in play. You may find some people learn in groups while others do better alone (self study). Knowing the learning styles of your workers or co-workers can help you receive the maximum return on the training, or “re-awareness,” you’re providing.

Like any training, it’s important to evaluate the performance and ability of your employees to run the equipment. Documentation should be kept for each employee to confirm they have received timely training, and also to use as an instrument for gauging areas needing improvement. Document all the daily vehicle and equipment inspections and maintenance, and any malfunctions, accidents or breakdowns of equipment and vehicles. If and when a serious injury or fatality should occur, some of the first items OSHA requests are the employee training documents and maintenance records of the equipment involved. Keeping neat, accurate and timely records will assist you in making sure whoever needs the information will find what they need.

The fact is, you can’t successfully run a business without caring for all of your investments. After your employees, in most cases, your major investments are in equipment, tools and vehicles. Then there’s insurance, registration, licensees and taxes. And the expenditures to keep your equipment running: gas, oil, filters, belts, chains, teeth, blades, cable, ropes, pesticides, etc, etc, etc. The price of equipment down time, repairs or replacement due to improper use or care can get extremely expensive. The “value” in the training of your employees on the use and care of the equipment is preventing the loss of a worker or a piece of equipment due to an avoidable accident.

If a company owns only one chipper and it’s damaged due to an avoidable accident or improper use, that company is now losing money. Not only is it losing the cost of a repair that might take a few days to fix, but now they’re rescheduling jobs, maybe having to rent machinery, scrambling to find work for the employees or sending them home to offset some of the loss. The timing can hurt, too. If this happens during a storm clean-up situation, you just gave away all the work to your competitors and missed out on a business opportunity to bring in some great revenue.

Keeping your employees up to date on equipment training and having a good preventive maintenance program can help you and your investments stay on the road and in the field longer.

Paul M. Mautz, CTSP, is forester for the City of Southfield, Michigan.
Not every marketing effort requires spending money. It’s all too easy to overlook the fact that some actions that don’t look like marketing can have a substantial marketing aspect.

Marketing involves many aspects beyond product advertisements: reputation, branding, customer service, information and image, to name a few. Let’s look at them in more detail.

1. Take advantage of your advantages!
   
   With “green” and concerns about the environment at the forefront, some of your marketing is already being done for you. The key is building on that.

   The informational aspect of marketing – too often overlooked by businesses – has a strong educational component. Many interior landscaping businesses have successfully built on that for years in their marketing. The key is a light touch – a few straightforward facts, possibly along the lines of “Make a difference! Here’s what one healthy tree can do for you and the environment!” Or, a piece of information on how to water trees.

   Being a small business also has advantages. As a small business, you’re closer to your customers. You have fewer layers of bureaucracy between the customer and the decision makers.

   Having relatively few services and products also allows your marketing efforts to be more focused. The connection between marketing efforts and results may be more direct.

2. Utilize your Web site
   
   Many small businesses don’t use their Web presence well. Nor do many large businesses, as you know from encountering poor navigation and the inability to get at basic information. Having a Web site isn’t enough. It needs viewers.

   How do you draw people to your Website? By giving them a reason to visit and revisit your site. Again, the green and environment focus are to your advantage.

   A Web site is a good opportunity for a little education – “little” being the operative word. And again, a light touch is critical.

   You also can:
   - offer a coupon
   - announce a promotion
   - suggest a consultation

   The importance of having a sharp professional look, good navigation and clear information can’t be overstated. Use minimal copy and a few, short paragraphs of text, if needed. Above all, be sure the grammar is correct and that there are no typos or misspellings.

   And make it fun! Trivia fact of the week. Did you know? Today in history (but be rigorous about this being up to date). Something interesting, very brief, that changes frequently will make your site look fresh.

   Keeping your site looking fresh is a must. If you want viewers to come back, you have to give them a good reason to revisit.

3. Work with your key customers
   
   That’s obvious – but do you know who your key customers are?

   There’s no denying the benefits of regular customers, your loyal customers. Regular customers are often the rent payers, and they’re worth cultivating and deserve some marketing focus. But loyalty doesn’t always equate with profitability.

   Loyalty is more than frequent buying with high expectations of good deals. That’s a one-sided relationship. True customer loyalty both meets customer needs and yields a fair profit to the business. That’s the goal. And it’s those customers who should be a strong marketing focus.

4. Use your customers
   
   Don’t overlook the fact that good customer service is an element of marketing that has a substantial impact getting return customers.

5. Develop your branding
   
   Any material that represents your business – ads, coupons, promotional material such as fliers, and your Web site – should represent your business consistently. Your logo, “slogan” or tag line, and to some extent the type font and layout you use, should be recognizable as being from your business.

   This doesn’t mean that everything has to look the same. Good design can incorporate branding without sacrificing viewer appeal. Inconsistent branding tends to confuse
customers and waste your marketing dollars.

6. See and be seen
   Are you visible to your community? Do you know your business neighbors?
   Being engaged with the community and neighborhood can be some of the best reputational marketing you can do. But – and this is a big point – it has to be out of sincere interest, not because it’s a good thing to do. People can spot a fraud a mile away in these situations, and looking like you only care about what it can do for your business may harm, not help, your business reputation.

   Do you buy advertising in local church bulletins, association publications and programs? Do you help “sponsor” events or work with a community event?

   Encourage your employees to participate in community events, to volunteer. Some businesses allow employees to take volunteer time during a workday.

   Whatever you do, don’t do it because of the marketing aspect. Do it because you’re interested, because you care – but there’s no denying the possible benefits of the payback.

7. Network
   Networking with other people who work with a small business can have a substantial payback. You can expand your resources, and get good referrals for your professional needs.

   Join an entrepreneur’s networking group, or start one, and participate. Make good use of your local chamber of commerce or business association. You’ll do better to select one or two activities or groups and make a significant contribution of time and effort than to spread yourself too thin.

   And how is this marketing? Expanding your visibility, increasing your knowledge, seeing and being seen – the results may be indirect, but they can be fruitful.

8. Focus on converting non-users
   What makes a non-user a potential user? Is it affiliation – similar to that of some of your customers? Is it membership in a particular association? Who is your targets among non-users – and what is there about them that gives them the potential for being customers?

   Identify the element that makes someone a potential user, then market to that element.

9. Market to the affordability issue
   Many potential customers are non-users because of the affordability factor. It’s the key question for many non-users.

   Are you marketing to that? Do you have payment options? Are you focused on working with your customers’ budgets, perhaps working out segments of how they utilize your services?

10. Why you?
    If you can think of five reasons why customers utilize you instead of someone else, those are the strengths of your business from the customer’s point of view.

    Those are the key points to which you should market.

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TREE CARE INDUSTRY – NOVEMBER 2009
By Colin Milde, CTSP

Trees in North Jersey are under siege. Weather changes, buried root collars and soil compaction are the main culprits. Even though we talk about the weather, nobody does anything about it. We can do something about some of the other stressors. The focus here will be to try to get the reader to think like a tree. I will mention some specific pests and controls, but the focus is happy trees (proper growing conditions). If you don’t know how to control lace fly on azaleas, look it up.

By far the best control measure for stress is prevention. On a construction site, the hardest task is getting there before the damage occurs. In the unlikely event I get a call to advise about tree care before construction begins, there are several easy and cheap things I would do.

The first item is to identify which trees can realistically be saved and are worth saving. A lot can be said about this, but that is not the focus of this article. I would inspect the root collar and, if it is not visible, I would dig it out. If I can’t find it after digging 12 inches, I usually stop. Next, I would apply paclobutrazol, (Cambistat) to all trees the customer is willing to pay for because it is expensive, about $250-$450 per tree. I point out the trees in high value locations and usually the client will go for one or two.

I then determine the size of the area I would like to protect. It would be nice to be able to protect out to the drip line. On a medium-sized tree (10-inch dbh or greater), I would go as small as 4 feet. This would yield a protected area with a diameter of 8 feet. If the builder cannot give you 8 feet, I recommend removal, then I try to save the next one.

I find that most builders are reasonable. Trying to save a tree that is right in the way is a bad idea. The workers will kill the tree as soon as they can. I don’t try to save trees within 20 feet of a foundation. The tree is likely to fail no matter what you do. The tree is more expensive to remove after the house is in place. If it were up to me, I would let the builder cut down as many trees as he wanted to (within reason) and replace them. For every 12 inches of dbh removed, I would like 3 inches of dbh replaced. Sometimes towns require trees to be left up that everyone knows will fail. You can’t do much about that. So basically, I try to save trees that have a high likelihood of success – I look good, the builder gets to swing his shovel around, and the client does not have three or four large, dead trees to remove two years after he or she moves in.

After you figure out the largest no-disturb area you can get away with, the next two steps are easy. Spread wood chips about 10 inches deep. Do not cover up the root flare. When the project is done, remove the extra wood chips, outside the bed line, which should be at least 4 feet from the trunk. I would leave the chips 10 inches deep and cover the top with a little store-bought mulch. The 10 inches would normally be considered too deep, but in this case there are several reasons to leave the chips deep. First, it’s easier. Second, it’s a good way to mitigate soil compaction. Third, for the next three or four years, all you have to do is hit the bed with an iron rake to dress it up. No more mulch should be added for a long time. Next, make a fence of hay bales to keep equipment out of the tree protection zone.

Now comes the cool stuff.

In a more typical situation, the arborist will not be called until symptoms appear. If I’m on a new construction site and the trees are looking stressed, the first thing I do is educate the customer. I give them informative handouts. These show the client that I’m not just making the stuff up. Part of this process is explaining that at new construction sites, no matter what is done,
I use a method I developed years ago to determine water requirements. I get on my knees and stick my finger in the ground. If the ground is dry, add water. If the ground is wet, reduce water. If the ground is moist, it’s just right.

Some trees have a high likelihood of failure. Again, I recommend saving the trees that can be saved and removing the ones that can’t.

Now the client has a feel for what’s going on. Now I try to find the root collar. Then, I would apply the paclobutrazol, which improves tolerance to insects, disease, drought and heat resistance and improves root development. Then I would install a bed of wood chips as described above. The wood chips will reduce soil compaction by introducing organic material. No nitrogen, please, as it increases water requirements. If the roots are damaged, the tree will not have the plumbing to get the volume of water required up to the leaves.

All this would be followed up by trimming and pest control as required. A shade tree will need more trimming than pest control. An ornamental tree will require more pest control than trimming. An ornamental tree is not as likely to be suffering from construction damage.

For an ornamental tree, find the root flare. Then add or reduce water. I use a method I developed years ago to determine water requirements. I get on my knees and stick my finger in the ground. If the ground is dry, add water. If the ground is wet, reduce water. If the ground is moist, it’s just right. Creating proper growing conditions comes before any chemicals.

Now I address pests. On a cherry tree (*Prunus*) with borers, I trunk inject bidrin, (Inject-A-cide B). Borers are tough, sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn’t.

Or an ornamental maple (*Acer*), I’m seeing a lot of canker. This is due to increased heat and moisture. I trunk inject with debacarb and carbendazim, (Fungisol).

I do fertilize ornamentals. I use John Deere (Lescos) N-P-K and Superthrive. I don’t like to discuss what I fertilize with because they’re not expensive or fancy. People higher up than me on the educational ladder don’t like Superthrive because the label does not tell you what’s in it. I guess people who don’t like Superthrive can write their own column. This combination works.
Some of this stuff is easy, some you just have to know. Azaleas (*Rhododendron*) will grow in full sun, but they prefer a little shade. European white birch (*Betula papyrifera*) like colder winters than we have. If a white pine (*Pinus strobus*) is failing, it’s probably from a girdling root.

If you want to figure this stuff out on your own, read Dirr and Smiley and Urban. Get certified. Look stuff up and ask questions. That’s not where I get most of my information though.

I get my info from how things feel. When I pull up to site I look at the whole place. Does it feel right? Do things fit? An older home with lots of trees feels good. A new home with a big lawn feels too sunny. I like to get out of the truck – sorry guys, you have to get out of the truck. Touch the trees. Lean up against them while you look around. Stick your hand in the dirt. Take your time. If you see something you can’t figure out. Look it up or ask. Talk to the homeowner. Think like a tree.

If you have a crane, every job looks like a removal. If you have a nice spray rig, you want to fertilize everything with biostimulants. Removals and fert are best for the tree guy and may or may not be best for the tree and the client. I recommend what’s best for the tree.

The customer has a problem and I’m there to provide the solution that’s best for him or her. Don’t make profit the first thing you think of when you arrive on a site. Trust me, that will come. Sometimes people don’t want a lot of info. Sometimes they take my ideas and get someone else to do it cheaper. Sometimes the client just looks at the number on the bottom. Well, I can’t get every job. Remember, the definition of an expert is someone who has already made every possible mistake.

The main things are: be careful, have some fun, make money, do a good job and, if you can’t see the top of the first root, it’s too deep.

Colin Milde, CTSP, is owner of TCIA-member Ramapo Tree & Shrub Care, L.L.C. in Mahwah, New Jersey. He is also a Certified Master Arborist, New Jersey Certified Tree Expert and Certified Pesticide Applicator.
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Please call a Key Benefits counselor at 866-696-6118 to learn more and customize your solutions package today!

Loss Estimator tool is benefit of the month

As our member benefit of the month, TCIA is pleased to introduce a new interactive management tool – the TCIA Loss Estimator.

The TCIA Loss Estimator is an attempt to illustrate with real world numbers that only a small portion of the cost of an accident is direct and visible while a very significant portion of the cost is indirect or hidden. The model estimates some hidden costs based on tree care industry research and/or prior loss control experiences. The model creates a customized report that is driven by a few variables input by you or your insurance loss control representative.

To use the TCIA Loss Estimator, simply go to www.tcia.org, open the "CTSP" pull down menu, click the CTSP tab at the top, and look for the Loss Estimator link in the yellow-shaded box on the left-hand side of the page. You will need your TCIA member ID and password to access the Estimator.

You will need a basic understanding of Microsoft Excel in order to use the Loss Estimator. When you enter company information and data, rest assured that it stays strictly on your computer.

Questions or suggestions for improvement of the TCIA Loss Estimator should be directed to peter@tcia.org.
WMC is for business, but has fun tours, too!

Winter Management Conference is the premier business and social conference for the tree care industry. It’s a place to gather with industry colleagues and find the support and friendship of industry leaders. There is definitely a focus on business, but it’s also a place to relax and refresh your outlook, so that you can begin the important process of planning for the year ahead. So this month, we’ll take a look at the lighter side of WMC 2010 on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Optional WMC tours & activities

WMC tours are for conference participants only and may include items not found in similar tours. Unless otherwise noted, optional activities are customized to ensure there are no conflicts with any of our education sessions and return you in time for our evening events.

Pre-Conference: (February 6)
National Volcano Park and Circle Island Tour
Experience the wonder and excitement of the world’s most active volcano. Includes Thurston Lava Tube and Kilauea Iki Crater, lunch at the historic Volcano House restaurant, visits to majestic waterfalls and transportation.

Spouse Breakfast and Round-table Discussion (February 8)
The popular spouses Round-table at WMC is an informal opportunity to connect with other spouses who work full- or part-time in the family tree care business. Pre-registration required. Included at no charge for full-guest program attendees.

Sunset Catamaran Cruise on Board “The Alala” and “SeaSmoke” (February 8)
Board the catamaran at Anaeho’omalu Bay for a two-hour cocktail cruise with open bar, light appetizers and lively music. See the rugged beauty of the black sand beaches as you sail along the Hawaiian coast.

Spouse Breakfast with Hula Instruction, and Fresh Orchid Lei Making (February 9)
Enjoy a light breakfast followed by private hula instruction including some basic Hawaiian language. This fun activity will also include making your own fresh orchid lei. Conflicts with education sessions.

Mauna Kea Summit and Stargazing Tour (February 9)
Witness the dramatic diversity of the Big Island of Hawaii! Discover island geology, geography and natural history as you ascend Mauna Kea. Featuring the world’s largest telescopes! Dine at the visitors’ center. Then head to the summit area to watch a sunset like no other you have experienced! As daylight fades, you will descend to mid-mountain where it is warmer and more comfortable for star gazing using large portable telescopes. Includes dinner, hot chocolate, warm gloves, hooded parkas, interpretive guide and transportation.

Greenwell Coffee Farm and Lunch at the Coffee Shack (February 9 and 11)
Your coffee adventure begins as you drive along the coast into the Kona Coffee District. Stop for a light lunch at the Coffee Shack, then on to Greenwell Coffee Plantation. Tour the coffee fields and processing facilities. Enjoy samples of the various products. Includes 1 pound bag of 100 percent Kona Coffee, lunch and transportation.

Ocean Raft Extreme Whale Watch (February 9 and 11)
This extreme whale watch allows you to get “up close and personal” with the whales. The 30-foot inflatable aluminum hull craft can navigate where traditional craft cannot. It is equipped with a stand up bathroom, water rinse and padded seats. Dual hydra phones allow you to listen to the whales.

Horseback Ride at Kohala Mountain Ranch (February 10)
Kohala Mountain Ranch is a working cattle ranch located high above the sea, offering some of the best scenery on the island. The tour starts with lunch in the ranch’s pavilion followed by a safety presentation. Enjoy panoramic views of the mountains and the coast as you pass grazing sheep and cattle on a 1.5 hour ride.

ATV Ride at Kohala Mountain Ranch (February 10)
After lunch at Kohala Mountain Ranch, you’ll have 1.5 hours to take in the panoramic views of the mountains and the coastline on an ATV.

Download a full WMC brochure and register online at www.tcia.org.

Register for WMC online at tcia.org
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Deep Sea Fishing (February 11)
Join us for an afternoon excursion out to sea on fully equipped sport fisherman yachts. The water depth off Kona drops dramatically; at just a few miles offshore the depth is already at 6,000 feet! Includes boxed lunch, tackle, bait, soft drinks and beer. All boats keep their catch with the exception of large game fish that will be mounted.

Download a full WMC brochure and register online at www.tcia.org.
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The 91 year-old West Coast Shoe Company, a longtime TCIA associate member and a TCIA PACT partner, recently added two new electrical hazard boot styles to its lineup, including a climbing version for arborists.

To find a fitting name for the new boots, Wesco conducted a naming contest over the summer and gave away a $500 pair of boots to each of the two winners. The contest, promoted primarily through industry and association news sources and directly to customers, drew well over 1,000 entries for each boot style. The factory became flooded with letters, e-mail messages and phone calls from all over the country, with many name submissions including anecdotes and the stories behind the selection.

In early September, company officials voted to name the new non-conductive ground boot GroundOut™, while selecting VoltFoe™ for the climbing boot for arborists.

“When we saw the entry VoltFoe, it seemed to fit the loose translation of ‘an enemy of the volt,’ which this boot certainly is,” says Roberta Shoemaker, Wesco president and granddaughter of the company’s founder.

Both new boot styles meet CSA (Canadian) and ASTM International F2412-05 M1/75 C75 EH PR electrical hazard and puncture resistant standards. However, arborists must be aware that according to ANSI Z133.1-2006, paragraph 4.2.10: “Footwear, including lineman’s overshoes or those with electrical-resistant soles, shall not be considered as providing any measure of safety from electrical hazards.”

“Changes in safety regulations affect many of our customers, arborists included,” says Shoemaker. “We designed these new boots to far exceed the construction and materials used in other electrical hazard boots currently available in the marketplace. Our customers can fully expect this boot will live up to Wesco’s reputation for ‘Boots That Stand the Gaff’ and endure the test of time.”

Wesco has supplied handcrafted Highliner boots to arborists since 1938 and the company’s boots have been the official boots of the TCI EXPO for three years running. Specializing in building high-quality footwear since 1918, Wesco has long recognized special requirements for arborists with its Highliner boot. The new VoltFoe is designed to perform similarly to the Highliner, with certain modifications for non-conductivity including welt construction to eliminate nails. True to company tradition, Wesco proudly handcrafts VoltFoe boots at its Scappoose, Oregon, factory using primarily American-made materials.

EXPO attendees can take a look at and try on a pair of VoltFoe boots by stopping by booth 1441. Kris Oman, Wesco factory supervisor and great-grandson of the company founder, will be on hand along with Chris Warren, sales manager, to answer questions about Wesco and to take custom measures for attendees. The company is offering free custom fittings during the EXPO, a $95 value.
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TCIA would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to the following companies whose commitment to our work is extraordinary. Their remarkable dedication to the future of arboriculture supports our efforts in the Transformation of the Industry.

Helping to build a stronger marketplace can have significant benefits for your company. To learn more, contact Deborah Johnson, Director of Development at johnson@tcia.org or call 1.800.733.2622
ALB leads to imidacloprid battle in Mass.

The SafeLawns foundation and the Toxics Action Center were up in arms in Worcester, Massachusetts, in early September over a proposal to spray more than a million gallons of the insecticide imidacloprid over a million acres to combat an out-of-control Asian longhorn beetle infestation in the area. Worcester officials subsequently voted not to allow the spraying or soil drenching with imidacloprid, but instead opted for trunk injections to treat for the beetle. The injections, under the direction of the USDA Forest Service, began September 17.

The problem, the groups said, was that imidacloprid is linked to colony collapse disorder in bees and is toxic to aquatic life, earthworms and birds, according to a recent study completed in the UK. Imidacloprid has been banned in France and Germany as a soil drenching agent and a recent study done in England recommends it be banned there as well.

“Certainly the Asian longhorn beetle is a devastating problem and no easy answers exist. Drenching your soil with this toxin, however, is most certainly not the solution,” said Paul Tukey, founder of The SafeLawns Foundation. The SafeLawns Foundation is based in Washington, D.C., and the Toxics Action Center is based in Boston.

EAB continues to spread

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed on October 8, 2009, the identification of emerald ash borer in Fayette and Morgan Counties in West Virginia. Recently, the presence of EAB was also confirmed in Roane County. Previously, APHIS had established quarantine areas only Fayette and Morgan Counties due to the establishment and enforcement of equivalent state quarantines. West Virginia has now rescinded their EAB quarantines. For this reason, APHIS is establishing quarantine for the entire state of West Virginia to prevent the spread of EAB to other states.

APHIS also established Milwaukee County in Wisconsin as a quarantine area due to the confirmed identification of EAB. This detection resulted when city public works officials in Franklin, Wisc., noticed and reported ash trees showing symptoms of EAB infestation. Racine and Waukesha Counties are being established as quarantine areas due to their close proximity to this detection.

All interstate movement of EAB-regulated articles from West Virginia and Milwaukee, Racine and Waukesha Counties in Wisconsin must be handled in accordance with the Federal Orders. Specifically, the interstate movement of EAB-host wood and wood products from these counties is regulated, including firewood of all hardwood species, nursery stock, green lumber, waste, compost and chips of ash species.

Previously, on September 4, APHIS confirmed the identification of EAB in 20 counties in Kentucky. These detections resulted from numerous public reports of declining ash trees. In response, all interstate movement of EAB-regulated articles from Boone, Bourbon, Campbell, Carroll, Fayette, Franklin, Gallatin, Grant, Harrison, Henry, Jefferson, Jessamine, Kenton, Oldham, Owen, Pendleton, Scott, Shelby, Trimble, and Woodford Counties in Kentucky must be handled in accordance with Federal Orders regarding the pest. Due to a parallel quarantine area established by Kentucky, only these 20 counties will be added as a quarantine area and placed under phytosanitary controls.

Currently, Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Lawrence, Mercer, Mifflin and Westmoreland Counties in Pennsylvania are quarantined for EAB, together with the entire states of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.

The following are also quarantined areas: portions of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and the entirety of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula; Prince George’s and Charles Counties in Maryland; and Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudon, and Prince William Counties, along with the independent Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park in Virginia; Fayette and Morgan Counties in West Virginia; Wayne County in Missouri; Hennepin, Houston and Ramsey Counties in Minnesota; and Crawford, Fond du Lac, Ozaukee, Sheboygan, Vernon, and Washington Counties in Wisconsin.

Massachusetts arborists create annual day of service

The Massachusetts Arborists Association recently announced a new volunteer initiative called Arbor Day of Service. Chris McGinty, MAA president, said the new program will, “build on the success of our association’s traditional celebration by creating a state-wide volunteer service day on Arbor Day, Friday, April 30, 2010.”

Since 1979, MAA members have come together, annually, as a group to provide much needed tree care at non-profit sites throughout the Commonwealth. Many historically significant sites have benefited. MAA’s new Arbor Day of Service initiative will allow members, allied organizations, supplier members and other association partners to donate professional arboriculture services such as tree planting, safety pruning and hazard tree removal that will directly benefit their own communities.

“MAA’s membership includes more than 600 professional arborists,” said Dick Stoner, 2010 Arbor Day Committee co-chair. “In these days of deep municipal budget cuts, we think we can make a real difference by giving back in our own home towns.”

MAA has partnered with the Massachusetts Tree Wardens and Foresters Association to identify projects in specific communities that could benefit from professional tree care. From elementary schools and town libraries, to community centers and playgrounds, tree wardens and other community leaders will post their volunteer opportunities on MAA’s Web site, www.massarbor.org, and members will use the listing to select their projects.

Mike Lueders, incoming MAA president and president of TCIA-member Lueders Tree & Landscape, Inc. in Medfield, Mass., was among the first people to sign up. “Our company does a number of pro bono projects throughout the year,” he said. “This will be a great way to focus on one day and know that other tree care companies across Massachusetts will be doing the same thing.”
Trimmer falls to his death

Elides Urena, 45, of Bound Brook, New Jersey, fell 50 feet to his death while trimming a tree in Millburn, N.J., September 30, 2009. Urena was cutting tree limbs at a residence when he fell, according to a report on www.nj.com. Police responding to the 911 call tried to revive Urena before personnel from the Millburn Short Hills Volunteer First Aid Squad and Medics took him to Saint Barnabas Medical Center. Urena, who was working for a landscaping company at the time, was pronounced dead shortly afterward.

Send local accident reports to editor@tcia.org.
The bald-faced hornet (*Dolichovespula maculate*) is a large, black-and-white insect common in North America. The name is a misnomer, since it is technically a wasp. The wasp itself is rarely seen by people. Instead, its unique, large, football-shaped paper nest is quite conspicuous, especially after leaves start dropping from the trees in the fall. I’ve seen nests as big as 3 feet long. The nest is abandoned by winter and not reused.

They are beneficial insects in that they eat many pests, and can pollinate desirable species of plants. In my experience, the only time they sting humans is when their nest is disturbed.

Homeowners should not attempt to remove their nest; I recommend leaving it. If they have small children, instruct homeowners to teach them about this beneficial insect and to respect it by leaving it alone (i.e. not throwing baseballs at it). However, if they can’t resist, they will quickly learn on their own never to do so again. Bald-faced hornets are extremely protective of their home and will sting repeatedly if provoked.

If a nest must be removed, whether because it is within reach of a child too young to know better or if there is someone living nearby with a known allergy to stings, instruct them to call an exterminator. They will come out at night when the wasps are in the nest and dust it with an insecticide. This procedure is repeated the next night. The following day, the nest should be safe to remove.

Each year I receive phone calls pertaining to this misconceived nuisance. Again, I would like to urge humans to be tolerant of the bald-faced hornet – for our own good! It’s been well known for some time that pollinators are in distress. So if you observe a nest, don’t spray it, don’t kill it – be eco-intelligent and keep on pollinating!

**From the Field**

**Bald-faced hornet Friend, Not Foe**

*By Brian Colter*

Brian Colter is city forester in Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan.
Often imitated. Never duplicated.

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