



2011 Texas Tree Climbing Championship and Workshop

Come join us on May 20 and 21 to watch Abram Zies defend his title as the best tree climber in the state for 2011. There will be activities going on in the beautiful Trinity Park of Ft. Worth between noon and 5 pm on Friday the 20th and 10 am to 2 pm on Saturday the 21st.

Friday and Saturday's climbing competition is the best event of the year for a working climber to attend, as well as an exciting event to watch. The winner will represent the Texas Chapter at the international competition in Sydney, Australia in July.

The entry fee is \$50 for ISAT members or \$75 for non-members. We'll be handing out post-event CEU forms for you to send in that will be worth 5.5 CEUs.

Pre-Competition Workshop

On Thursday before the event, we'll have a workshop where you can learn how to use the climbing competition to get a waiver for your skills exam to help you get the ISA Certified Tree Worker designation. The workshop is \$75, includes lunch, and will be presented in English and Spanish. Check-in begins at 8 am and the program includes an introduction to the ISA Certified Tree Worker credential, job site safety, taking care of yourself in the heat, and an aerial rescue presentation and demonstration. The program ends at 3:30 pm.

More information and online registration available at isatexas.com.

TREE CLIMBING CHAMPIONSHIP AND WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Thursday – Pre-Competition Workshop

8:00 am	Late registration and check-in
8:30 am	Introduction to ISA Certified Tree Worker – get your waiver
9:00 am	Job site safety and taking care of yourself in the heat
11:45 am	Lunch provided
12:45 pm	Aerial rescue presentation and demonstration

Friday – Preliminary Events

8:00 am	Check in at sequester area, gear check, assign groups
10:00 am	Event walk-through
11:30 am	Lunch with vendors
12:30 am	Start of preliminary competition
6:00 pm	Announce finalists

Saturday – Masters' Challenge

9:00 am	Announce Masters' Challenge competitors and preliminary winners, recognize sponsors
10:30 am	Masters' competition begins
around noon	Lunch will be provided
2:30 pm	Finish



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER by Todd Watson

Today I just finished preparing my taxes. After a day like today, it's hard to look on the bright side of things, especially when I know what is going to happen to my hard-earned dollars (I miss those little green guys already). I sure could have done a lot of good with that pile of money I sent to a bunch of politicians that don't have the sense that God gave a hackberry. But, I digress....

In Texas the sun shines bright! Arborists are getting smarter every day. Tonight (or maybe really early in the morning), I'll be heading to San Antonio to the tree risk assessment workshop. We brought in Dr. Julian Dunster from Canada to make sure that Texas arborists are on the cutting edge of the latest scientific tree care information. Your ISAT Board has made a commitment to do their best to provide you with excellent educational opportunities throughout the year.

Of course, quality programs cost money. Like the government, ISAT has had to tighten its belt. Since we can't print money, we have actually had to make some serious budget decisions. We haven't forgotten that it's your hard-earned dollars that support this organization. We are striving to give you as much value for the buck as possible. If you've been reading the last few newsletters, then you know how hard the Board is working to provide you with great service. It's a challenge, but we're up to the challenge!

How can you help? It's easy. Support your local chapter. Pay your dues. Try to make it to as many workshops and events as possible (and bring your friends and coworkers). Support our sponsors (the companies that support our society and attend our tradeshow) by buying their products. Consider running for a position on the Board. Write an interesting article for the newsletter. Volunteer. Recruit people to be members of ISAT. Did I say send money? And don't forget, money you spend with ISA can be deducted as a business expense (which I happily did today).

We have a full slate of events planned this year. There are too many to mention here, so stop by isatexas.com and see what's available. Also, look for us at allied tradeshow this year. We have made a big push to increase our visibility to allied groups (e.g. landscape and nursery professionals, landscape architects, etc) throughout the state by bringing our new booth to their tradeshow and speaking at their conferences. This will not only help our members, but it will benefit them and countless numbers of trees throughout the state.

Now here's a bonus for those who actually made it this far through my letter. It's some juicy gossip. ISA will hold its international conference in Texas in 2016. ISA representatives will be coming to check us out at the Texas Tree Climbing Championship in Ft. Worth. I hope that they see you there.

Yours treely,
Todd Watson

Track your Bills

Interested in state-level tree-related legislation? Your ISAT board members are keeping an eye on bills that may have impacts to urban forestry in Texas. Bill tracking is relatively easy, plus you get to buff up your knowledge of how our state legislative system operates. Log on to Texas Legislature Online (www.legis.state.tx.us) to track bills that pertain to urban forestry. Some of the bills that I am tracking are:

- House Bill 1388 relates to the prohibition of certain regulations by a municipality in its extraterritorial jurisdiction involving trees and vegetation.
- House Bill 2673 relates to the calculation of tree mitigation fees charged by a municipality in connection with a permit.

More interested in federal-level legislation? Check out www.govtrack.us to track Congress' activities. Some issues that I have on my tracker include agriculture and food, air quality, climate change, and environmental protection.

Both websites allow you to log in and create your own unique trackers for issues of interest to you. Email updates are a great way to keep on top of issues; I have my trackers set to email me on a weekly basis. Give the websites a try. It is a neat way to see how the internet aids in transparency of government.

—Emily King



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Urban Forestry Workshop at Stephen F. Austin University

An Urban Forestry Workshop will be held Wednesday June 22 from 8 am to 4:30 pm in Room 117 of the Forestry Building on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University.

Sponsored by the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture in cooperation with Texas Agri-Life Extension, Texas A&M University, the workshop will be the first of a series of annual events that cover topics in urban forest management and tree establishment and care. This one-day workshop will include presentations on defining urban forestry and arboriculture, tree identification, tree biology, urban soils and insects and diseases of East Texas trees.

A 1.5 hour walking tour led by forestry faculty and campus arborists will allow workshop attendees to discuss urban forestry issues in an informal setting. Valuable information will be presented to homeowners, property managers, gardeners, city officials and natural resources professionals interested in the establishment, care, and management of trees in urban environments. Applications for SAF and ISA continuing education credits are being made for this workshop.

The workshop will cost \$40, which will include printed materials, a catered lunch and refreshments at breaks. Payment may be made by check written to the "Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture" on the day of the workshop or by registering online at the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture website (forestry.sfasu.edu/). If you need assistance call Tammy at 936-468-2680.

– Dr. Hans M. Williams, Associate Dean, Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture, Stephen F. Austin State University

ISA Certified Arborist Oak Wilt Training

ISAT in conjunction with the Texas Forest Service and Texas AgriLife Extension Service will provide a workshop for Certified Arborists to receive in-depth training in the identification, biology, and management of oak wilt disease. The workshop will be held in Austin at the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center on June 8-9. Dr. David Appel and TFS staff foresters will be conducting the training. Registration is available at isatexas.com.

Secunda Jornada para Trabajadores de Árboles

A Spanish language tree care workshop will be held May 24 at the City of San Antonio NE Service Center at 10303 Tool Yard, San Antonio. Learn about tree care, safety, chainsaws, climbing and pruning in an indoor class and outdoor demonstrations. Expert speakers include Robert Reeder, Mark Duff, Jose Mercado and Jim Dossett. Go to isatexas.com to download an English or Spanish brochure or to register online.

Planting, Pests and Pruning at Tree Keepers Seminar

Thirty-one people attended a February 19 tree care seminar in Midland, sponsored by TreeKeepers, a special program of Keep Midland Beautiful. The seminar, conducted by Oscar Mestas, covered proper methods for planting and maintaining trees, and included hands-on demonstrations.

TreeKeepers educational programs are open to everyone with an interest in tree care, including homeowners who want to keep their trees healthy. Future programs include a work day May 21 at the Scharbauer Sports Complex and a pruning class June 18 at the Sibley Nature Center. For more information go to keepmidlandbeautiful.org.

– info from Randy Myers, Urban Forester, City of Midland

Planning the Urban Forest Workshop June 2 in Waco

Community planners, engineers, landscape architects, public officials, and related professionals are invited to attend a workshop on Planning the Urban Forest June 2 at the Waco Convention Center. The workshop is based on the 2009 Planning Advisory Service (PAS) report, developed in collaboration with the American Planning Association (APA), the International Society of Arboriculture, American Forests, and the US Forest Service.

The workshop will show attendees how to deliver state-of-the-art methods to help their communities plan and conserve urban forest resources. The training staff will include Davey Institute of Tree Sciences Director Robert J. Laverne and David C. Rouse, AICP, principal at Wallace Roberts & Todd in Philadelphia. Local speakers will also present case studies, and group exercises will promote interesting and educational discussion on these topics.

Highlights will include:

- How to quantify urban tree benefits and green infrastructure
- Gaining buy-in from policy makers
- Review of the newest i-Tree software version
- Overview of local and regional projects from Texas
- Key principles of planning the urban forest
- Group exercises that discuss issues, opportunities and effective ways to build greener communities

Professional certification credits will be offered for ISA, AICP, and ASLA. Go to isatexas.com for more information and to register online.

Gallery of Shame

An ISA-certified arborist in Johnson City, TN, has posted a gallery of topped trees (with comments) at www.flickr.com/photos/59947284@N07/.

Pre-certification training in Midessa



(ever hear of it?)

By Oscar S. Mestas, Regional Urban Forester, Texas Forest Service

So how many of you out there have ever heard of Midessa, Texas? If you're not familiar with this West Texas town, it's because it's a combo name for the Midland/Odessa area.

January and February of 2011 were busy months for several folks. Thanks to Texas AgriLife Extension Service horticulturalist and Certified Arborist Deborah Frost, her hard working Permian Basin Master Gardeners, and the Texas Forest Service, we pulled off a successful Tree Care Series designed to help those who were interested in taking the ISA Certified

Arborist exam plus those needing CEUs and others who just wanted to learn more about trees.

The Tree Care Series started January 13 with five-hour classes held every Thursday, and ended on a testing day February 24. The series attracted 37 attendees from all walks of life: local arborists, local landscape companies and their employees, master gardeners wanting advanced training, landscape designers, several local college and university landscape personnel, City of

Odessa and Abilene Parks department folks, and local nurserymen.

Culminating the training, James Carse and I proctored a test. We ended up having 10 from the Tree Care Series signing up and three additional folks sitting in, for a total of 13 testing that day and three more who intend to go the on-line route. I hope to see all of their names on future Certified Arborist lists as I'm always glad to see professionals trying to better themselves. I also had good feedback and heard peoples' eagerness to learn more. Several attendees asked, as they left the last day, "When will the next classes be held?" and "I hope you bring in more training." Thanks to ISAT and Pat Wentworth for helping me get CEUs and the test in place.

Lastly I would like to thank the great and diverse list of speakers lined up for presentations: David Appel, Ph.D. (Texas A&M), James Carse, CA (TFS Austin), Debbie Frost, CA (ArgiLife Extension, Ector County), Oscar Mestas, CA (TFS El Paso), Mark Muegge, Ph.D. (AgriLife Extension, Fort Stockton), Micah Pace, CA (TFS Dallas), Brian Scott, CA (TFS Amarillo), James Tuttle, CA (Tree Loving Care, Lubbock), and John White, CA (Chihuahua Desert Gardens, UTEP).





A tree will be planted
for every 3-pointer
the Mavs score at
home this season

This season, the Dallas Mavericks are implementing Trees for Threes, where a tree will be planted for every three pointer made at home. The trees, up to 10 feet tall, will be planted by Mavs personnel, PwC employees, citizen foresters and volunteers from various parks organizations.

The Mavericks understand the importance of proper tree maintenance to ensure survival and have aligned with Arborlogical Services, Inc, tree care experts, and the Dallas Parks and Recreation Department to care for and maintain the trees for three years. The program is a part of the Mavericks eco-friendly initiative, Guard the Planet.

Hundreds of trees will be planted at TP Hill at White Rock Lake and Lake Cliff Park in Oak Cliff. By planting trees in its surrounding neighborhood, the Mavs are able to provide green space for generations to come while helping sustain the environment.

This marks the second season of the Mavericks' commitment to plant trees in the Dallas area. Last year, 55 trees were planted in Reverchon Park as part of Trees for Wins.

A Weed By Any Other Name

by Carl Robinson, Davey Tree

A recent call from a concerned citizen again reminded me that we all view the world through our own personal filters.

One of the components of our line clearance program is to target fast-growing invasive species found below the utility lines for removal. Mix in detailed notification so that the customers know what to expect, and offer utility-compatible replacement trees, and you are on your way to a long term, comprehensive vegetation management plan. The best laid plans, however, sometimes go awry. This homeowner, whose property we did not work on, wondered why we had removed all of the "beautiful Chinaberries" from the alley behind her house. She was particularly sad

that she would miss their flowers this spring.

Now, to me and probably to most other utility arborists, a Chinaberry is a weed of the worst kind – the more you cut them the faster they re-sprout and they propagate like rabbits. Quite possibly they are the worst pest found in our system. To this lady, however, they were lovely fragrant umbrellas that brought shade to her unsightly alleyway. I spent a few minutes talking to her about the concept of 'the right tree in the right place' and she understood, in theory at least.

From her perspective, Chinaberries in the alley *were* the right tree in the right place.

ISA Annual Conference and Trade Show

The ISA Annual Conference and Trade Show July 23-27 in Parramatta, Australia, provides a forum for the exchange of information and opportunities to network with others in the arboricultural profession. The event will feature a lineup of educational sessions led by industry leaders from around the globe, sharing their thoughts and views about the newest trends in equipment, practice, technology and research.

Highlights of the conference include:

- International Tree Climbing Championship
- Arbor Fair
- Educational Sessions
- Indoor Trade Show
- Tree Academy Workshops

The ISA Conference and Trade Show is the premier event for arborists from around the world. Consider attending as a way to build your business network, meet the industry's leaders, and learn from the best in the profession. Go to isa-arbor.com for more information.

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This large pecan tree fell one year ago year during the storms where we had flooding and straight line winds in the San Antonio area. This picture was taken at the Medina River Natural Area. Pictured is the MRNA maintenance staff that detoured the walking trail around the tree.

—Susan L. Campbell, City of San Antonio Natural Areas Education Coordinator



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Member Spotlight: Keith Brown

How to Grow a Tree Service

by Jeannette Ivy

Keith Brown's company—Austin Tree Experts—grew 28% from 2009 to 2010—incredible growth for a bad economy.

How does he account for this? Two activities: 1. annual-fee tree care programs for homeowners (the biggest factor), and 2. tree management work for landscape architects and developers.

According to Keith, the average tree service says, “Tell me what you want done and I’ll do it.” Keith used to operate that way too, until a few years ago when he switched gears and changed his approach to everybody from Joe Homeowner to high-end developers. At the small-job end of the spectrum, the new approach was triggered by another man's career change. A man Keith worked with got burned out on conventional tree work and decided to go into lawn care. Keith realized that a lawn service provides a recurring revenue—a desirable state of affairs. But why couldn't tree care provide the same thing?

So, using the lawn service as a kind of model, Keith developed two levels of annual service—basic and full service—further customized to meet the needs of people with different requirements. Some people have deep pockets and others are on a tight budget; some people have one or two trees and others have 40 or more; some people manicure their yards while others are more casual. Keith figures it's his job to meet peoples' differing expectations. He now has more than 400 customers on some kind of annual tree care program.

Instead of overselling people who aren't wealthy, Keith recommends

doing the minimum of what is needed for the health and safety of their trees. He tries to provide them with good value for a price they can afford. “We do a lot of small jobs,” he says. “We have two-man crews doing small jobs all day. A three- or four-man crew has too much ‘windshield time’ and is less productive.”

At the large-scale end of the spectrum, Keith's working relationship with the development community started with a stroke of luck. Three years ago, during the slow season, Keith decided to do volunteer work for some community organizations: city parks, the county no-kill shelter and the Austin Symphony. The symphony's development director's husband was a developer who, as a thank-you for the volunteer work, gave Keith a chance on a project. That project called on Keith's technical know-how and ability to communicate with all the different professionals involved in a large-scale tree management project. Keith did a good job, and that led to more such jobs.

Getting started and moving up

“I'm one of the few lucky people who fell into a career they love at a young age,” says Keith. He always liked trees and the outdoors. His first experience in the tree business was a summer job during high school

dragging brush. “Four years later I was a Certified Arborist,” he said. “I have worked virtually every position in tree service: climber, foreman, applicator technician, salesman, manager and now business owner. Trees are a part of who I am.”

Keith likes to know the answers, which is why he started studying for the Certified Arborist exam. “I just bought a book and started reading.” After getting certified he started thinking about the next level up: Master Arborist. He saw it as a way of becoming more knowledgeable, but didn't believe it would lead to anything professionally. It turned out differently; being a Master Arborist gets him one or two calls a week from the “Find Arborist” section of the ISA website. There are only 11 or 12 master arborists in the entire state.

There's another level of certification from ASCA that Keith doesn't plan to go for, because it is all about appraisal, giving testimony in court, and other activities that have nothing to do with trees and nature. He isn't interested in that.

Spreading knowledge about trees

Keith believes that the average homeowner in Austin is more knowledgeable about trees than in many other places, and this knowledge is good for trees and the tree care industry. To spread knowledge and promote his company, he has two websites and a blog, writes articles, and does public outreach through being the forester for the city of Rollingwood, an Austin suburb. “Community forestry is a different world from what I'm used to. Educating the community and reaching out to the public is a big part of it.” He started writing articles for his own website and realized he enjoyed it. “It helped me professionally and



I learned to think out and articulate things I knew at the everyday level. Everybody is better off with more knowledge.”

Climbing is important

When Keith worked in Ft. Worth—still in high school—he was talked into going to the Texas Tree Climbing Competition. Observing the skilled climbers doing what they do, Keith says he learned more in one weekend at the TTCC than he learned in three years otherwise.

So important is climbing skill, Keith’s company uses the ISA Tree Worker Certification as its model for employee training. Each of Keith’s pruning crews has an ISA Certified Tree Worker.

Two primary activities make up the company’s training program:

- Competing in the annual TTCC—a great place to pick up the latest tips.
- Taking training from Jose Mercado, a bilingual ISA Certified Arborist / Certified Tree Worker who has been in the tree care industry for over 20 years and gives highly thought-of workshops. Keith’s company brings Jose in once or twice a year from California for private classes.

Keith has been working with the same group of six climbers for a long time: 2 guys for almost 15 years, 2 more for 7 to 8 years, 2 for 3 to 4 years. A few years ago he decided to require them to go to the competition, which has improved their overall productivity. All but two are Spanish-speaking and now they have a Spanish test and study materials.

Leisure

Keith grew up in a golfing family and still likes to play, but doesn’t have much time for it. He’s also an amateur web developer who enjoys the tools and toys of technology. “Blogging got me started, then I found myself reading technology tutorials in an effort to make my blog better,” he says. Many of the skills he learned have translated into a better ability to communicate

with professional-level contacts. This has helped lead to larger scale projects. For Keith, leisure and work always seem to run together.

ISAT

As President-elect of ISAT, Keith has a major role in planning the 2011 Texas Tree Conference. In 2012, as president, he wants to help organize more educational opportunities. He thinks ISAT needs good solid programs that are held regularly. ISAT

has grown a lot in last five years, he says, primarily because of dedicated volunteers. “Texas has a good number of motivated people who want to make the tree community better. I’m honored to be a part of it,” Keith says.

Keith Brown is a Board Certified Master Arborist, ISA Climber Specialist, member of the American Society of Consulting Arborists, President-elect of ISAT and owner of Austin Tree Experts.



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An Unbiased Approach

We all know that tree appraisal work can be complicated. That just seems to be the nature of the beast. CTLA is working hard to give us additional tools to handle various appraisal scenarios, but more tools means more options, so that may tend to complicate things a bit further.

Over the past few years, a lot of the discussion regarding tree appraisal theory has centered around aligning Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers (CTLA) methods more closely with those of other nationally-recognized appraisal entities, such as the Congressionally authorized "Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice" (USPAP), developed by the Appraisal Standards Board. Although USPAP was primarily written for real estate appraisers, many of its rules and methods apply to the tree appraisal process. One important aspect of USPAP deals with appraiser bias.

USPAP states that an appraiser is "one who is expected to perform valuation services competently and in a manner that is independent, impartial, and objective." Tree appraisal reports must be impartial and truthful. They cannot be biased to favor a client or skewed to render a pre-determined value or direction of valuation.

Obviously, then, it is not ethical to adjust your appraised values higher or lower to make your client happy. It is also not ethical to base your compensation on the outcome of an event (such as payment of an insurance claim or the successful outcome of a lawsuit), and it is not ethical to base your fees on a percentage of the appraised values of the trees or on a percentage of an insurance settlement or lawsuit award.

Gustave Flaubert wrote, "There is no truth. There is only perception." As tree appraisers, we need to really keep this in mind when dealing with clients and with the Court. In order to avoid any appearance of bias, it is important that tree appraisers be paid in advance for their work.

Sending a client an invoice for appraisal work after the report is written can lead to a perception that the appraiser was required to produce a report that was favorable to the client in order to receive payment.

Regardless of the actual impartiality of the appraiser, this perception of bias can severely damage both the appraiser's credibility and the credibility of the appraisal report.

These ethical principles don't show up just in USPAP. They are also stated in ASCA's Standards of Professional Practice and in the Code of Ethics of the American College of Forensic Examiners.

So, to sum up, as far as compensation goes, tree appraisers should:

1. Define a fee structure (usually a flat fee or hourly rate, plus expenses).
2. Avoid fees based upon percentages or contingencies.
3. Secure a retainer or advance payment prior to starting an appraisal assignment. Doing so should help you avoid the "perceived bias" trap.

Just to be clear, there are times when it is completely acceptable to work as an advocate for a client. Arborists hired as consulting experts often work as advocates for clients. They can represent the interests of a client, help a client achieve a goal or objective, or actively advocate in favor of a particular position or outcome.

Although it is permissible for advocates to provide statements of tree value during their consultations (in order to help a client understand a situation or interpret an opposing expert's report, for example), they cannot offer an appraisal of tree value, and they cannot testify as to the appraised value of trees. As advocates, they are, by definition, working in a capacity that is biased in favor of their client.

Although this article specifically pertains to tree appraisal work, these concepts also apply when arborists are hired as testifying experts regarding other matters. For all of the reasons outlined above, any opinion offered when the expert is not paid in advance can be viewed under a perceived cloud of bias.

Greg David is an ASCA Registered Consulting Arborist, ISA Board-Certified Master Arborist, and an ACFEI Certified Forensic Consultant. He currently serves on the ISAT Board of Directors and is the owner of TreeConsult, LLC.

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Texans Go to Nebraska for Some Serious Learning

"My expectations were blown out of the water"

by Emily King, City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the Municipal Forestry Institute at the Lied Lodge on the Arbor Day Foundation Farm in Nebraska. Friends and family wondered what on earth would draw people to Nebraska in February and I found myself relying on the testimony of colleagues to explain my interest. It turns out that my expectations were blown out of the water.

Summed up, MFI is an educational workshop hosted by the Society of Municipal Arborists, geared towards teaching urban foresters leadership and management skills. I realize this may sound dry, but the amount of juicy and relevant information packed into this training by the teaching cadre was staggering. A month past the event I am still decompressing.

Before attempting to summarize the high points, I must first give a huge thank you to the Texas Forest Service, for without their scholarship I would not have been able to attend. I am very proud to have been a member of the large Texas constituency at MFI. Second, a shout out to the entire teaching cadre; these great folks have assembled and incorporated very relevant and high quality information and presentations into this workshop. Lastly, the Arbor Day facilities, food, and landscape were great (yes, even in February).

After this month of reflection, the following are my first wave of gems:

- I learned there are tools to help me do my job better that have nothing to do with arboricultural knowledge.



Two of our own, Heather Dowell (l.) and Emily King, attended the Municipal Forestry Institute in Nebraska in February. MFI is an intensive week-long learning experience sponsored by the Society of Municipal Foresters. For more information visit urban-forestry.com/

- Practice may make one perfect, but understanding how to practice effectively will give you better results sooner. I learned how to practice with these new tools.
- My circumstances may be unique but my challenges are not. Expanding my network of fellow municipal foresters is an exciting and valuable thing.

I am being intentionally brief with my thoughts, but will take little provoking to expand, so just say the word (email me at Emily.king@ci.austin.tx.us) if you want to know more! ♦

"Absolutely the best training in my career"

by Heather Dowell, Urban Forestry & Land Manager, City of Arlington Parks & Recreation

Who goes to an out of town seminar for a week, spends 12 hours a day either in class or discussing the class material, and enjoys every minute of it? Me! In February I attended the 2011 Municipal Forestry Institute in Nebraska, and it was absolutely by far the best training I have received in my career.

The program was intense. The teachers, or cadre as they call themselves, are amazing. Each person holds a forestry position and has their own specialty to add to the group. What an unbelievable group of talented people willing to share their time, knowledge and experience with you so you may improve yourself and your programs. This program is about leadership and making you think beyond your perceived level. It's about taking your job to an entirely different level and raising the bar. MFI taught me to change the way I think and respond to other peoples' words and actions. Now I put a different spin on a conversation; I really listen to others and hear what they are saying, instead of just assuming or creating a story of what I think they mean.

MFI covered every topic you could think of—financial, technology, how to deal with the press, volunteer programming, tree inventories—and that could just be in one morning session! I use this training every day.

I'm happy I was fortunate enough to attend. How lucky we are to have such a great state forestry program supporting us. I would not have been able to attend if not for the Texas Forest Service! If you have an opportunity to attend this training I urge you to go. ♦



EDITOR'S NOTE by Paul Johnson

April Showers bring May... oh wait, we haven't seen much in the way of showers since September. How much water do our trees need to survive? What are you recommending for your friends, clients, and communities? We are already in stage 1 drought restrictions in San Antonio and it is still April. The drought of '08/'09 contributed to the decline and death of many trees. Mature trees can often withstand drought, but sometimes they need irrigation.

What is the best way to apply water to help a tree survive? Often we recommend soaker hoses, but soaker hoses don't qualify as drip irrigation in San Antonio, so you can only water on certain days for limited hours. Maybe we should develop an easy-to-assemble, portable drip system for trees. It shouldn't be too difficult to assemble a filter, backflow preventer, tube, and emitters, or maybe drip tape. This would qualify as a drip system and you can very efficiently apply water to the root zone of the trees. The two biggest questions are:

1. Where to apply the water? Should you run the drip system at the drip line or somewhere between the trunk and the drip line? I concentrate my efforts just inside the drip line. There will be a bit more shade in this area so the soil temperatures and evaporation rates will be lower.
2. How much water to apply? It takes about 600 gallons of water to apply 1 inch to 1000 square feet of soil. This works out to be about half a gallon per square foot. A hundred foot section of T-Tape will emit about 20 gallons per hour. Run the system for three hours and you will have provided 1 inch of water per square foot of irrigated area. Is this enough water to help a mature tree survive? How often would you run this system? How long would you run the system each time?

The species of tree, the soil type, soil quantity, solar exposure, wind, rainfall, and temperature will all affect the amount of irrigation needed.

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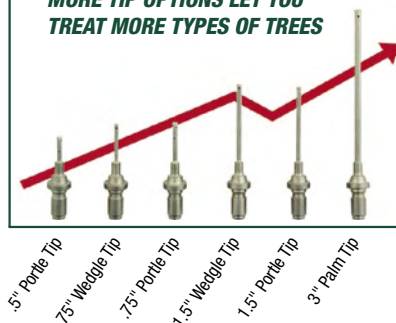
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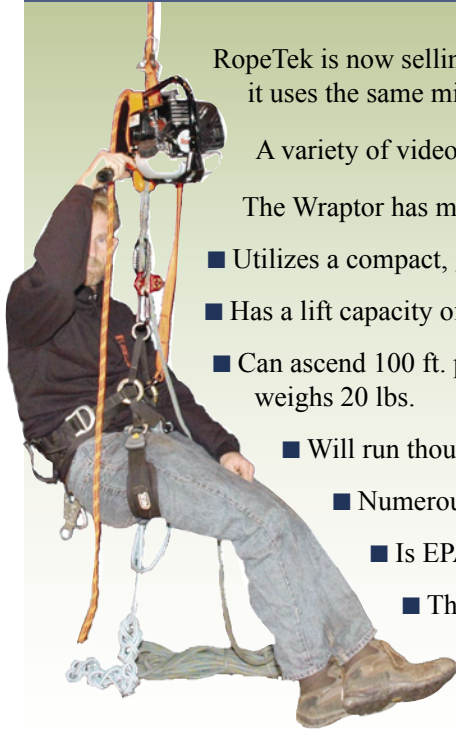
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At the Tree Risk Assessment Workshop in Fort Worth and San Antonio

COOL TOOLS by Patrick Wentworth

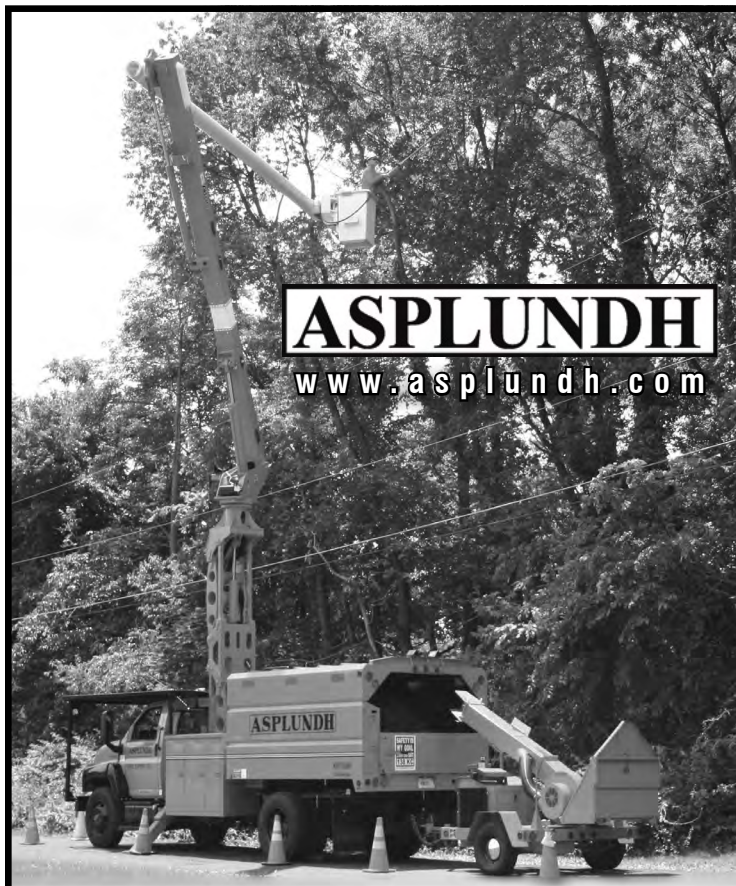


RopeTek is now selling their powered ascender, the Wraptor. Utilizing a Tanaka 2-cycle engine, it uses the same mixture most use in their chainsaws.

A variety of videos are available to check it out at ropetekwraptor.com/

The Wraptor has many attractive features including the following:

- Utilizes a compact, gasoline powered, two-stroke motor with a gear reduction system
- Has a lift capacity of 300 lbs.
- Can ascend 100 ft. per minute, with some variation attributed to weight of climber. It weighs 20 lbs.
- Will run thousands of feet on one tank of fuel.
- Numerous failsafe components. Has an integrated emergency retreat system.
- Is EPA compliant
- The ascender comes with CMI Ropewalker, 150 ft. of rope, and ropebag.



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A plan for actually using those cute little Mexican plums

by Heather Brewer
Urban Forester,
City of Georgetown

I love Mexican plums when they bloom, so there are lots of them planted in Georgetown parks. Last year I got on this kick—obsession, really—about trying to use Mexican plums and common persimmon fruit to make jelly. After two failed attempts with persimmons I surrendered, but hit the jackpot with the plums. Mexican plums are pretty horrible to eat fresh off the tree but yummy as jelly! I scoured the internet and canning books trying to find a recipe for canning tart and tiny Mexican plums but I didn't have much luck. So I pieced together about four different recipes and the following is the fruit of my labor. This is a fun weekend afternoon project and is more so with two people. This is a great way not to have piles of rotting plums in your parks this summer.

Trial and Error Mexican Plum Jelly

Mexican plums (They say 6 pounds of fruit makes 5 pints of jelly.)

Sugar (lots)

Several boxes of pectin (Use Sure-Jel Powder, not the instant liquid stuff.)

Canning jars, *new* sealing lids, and rings 2 or 3 large pots (I had so many plums I had to use two pots. If committing to an afternoon of canning it should be worth the effort. A large pot for a water bath will also be needed.)

A colander

Jar grabbing thongs

Large canning funnel – one with wide mouth at both ends

Pot holders

A good chunk of time to burn
Wine and a friend (optional)

Gather up some free range Mexican plums. For a good flavor, it's best to get a mix of about 80% purple (ripe) and 20% red (not quite ripe) plums. Don't panic if that ratio is not met, but more sugar might have to be added. Wash plums and throw out rotten and mashed ones.

In large pot(s) add enough water to cover plums and bring to a boil. Simmer for about 10-30 minutes, stirring occasionally. The plums are ready when the fruit easily pulls off the seed. Remove fruit from water, let cool and deseed. Pay close attention to getting all pits out, otherwise some smart-alecky relative or friend will call after breakfast one day.

Keep the water used to boil the fruit and set aside; this is the fruit juice that will later be thickened.

After deseeding there will be a pile of halved plums. They can be left this size or thrown in a food processor. I like the larger pieces since the whole point of this is to worship the plum. Place the fruit back into the large pot with water which you set aside earlier, then you will need to figure out how much canning pectin and sugar to add. This is where the trial and error comes in.

Take the fruit and juice mixture back out, one pint at a time, and put it in an extra bowl. The object is to count how many pints of fruit and juice there are, because this number will determine how much sugar and pectin to use. After counting pints, put the mixture back into the pot. For every 3 pints of plums and juice, add 4 cups of sugar (for starters). The pectin box will say how much pectin to add per pint of fruit and juice.

Bring the mixture to a boil and stir often so it doesn't scorch. Boil the mixture until it gets a thick jelly-like texture. More pectin might have to be added. Getting the right texture is the most important thing. You want the mixture to coat the spoon like cough syrup would. If it's runny in the pot it will be runny when canned and that doesn't look appetizing. Taste the mixture before actually canning it to see if more sugar is needed. If there is not enough sugar the jelly will taste bitter.

Wash all jars, sealing lids and rings. Heat the sealing lids in boiling water per the box directions. Pour hot mixture into jars using funnel, leaving 1/2 inch empty at the top. Put sealing lids on and screw down ring lid tightly. Then transfer jars into a boiling pot of water AKA a "water bath." For pint jars boil about 10 minutes, longer if larger jars. Remove from water bath and set on the countertop to cool. The seals might "pop" as they cool and finish sealing. The jars are sealed properly if the lid doesn't give when pushed after cooling.

Revel in your domestic accomplishment.

Save the Date

May 19 – 21, Trinity Park, Ft. Worth

TEXAS TREE CLIMBING COMPETITION (pre-competition workshop on the 19th). More information and online registration available at isatexas.com.

May 24, City of San Antonio NE Service Center, San Antonio

2ND HISPANIC TREE CARE WORKSHOP. Download an English or Spanish brochure or register online at isatexas.com.

June 2, Waco Convention Center.

PLANNING THE URBAN FOREST. An ISAT, ASLA, APA and TFS event. More information and registration materials will be available soon through ISAT and other sponsoring organizations. Register online at shopisatexas.com

June 8 – 9, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin

ISA CERTIFIED ARBORIST OAK WILT TRAINING. Dr. David Appel and TFS staff foresters will conduct the training. Registration is available at shop.isatexas.com.

June 10

ISAT BOARD NOMINATIONS DEADLINE. Nominate yourself or someone else. Elections in July. Nomination form available at isatexas.com.

July 21, San Antonio

ISA CERTIFICATION TEST. isatexas.com.

July 23 – 27, Parramatta, Australia

ISA ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW. The premier event for arborists from around the world. Go to isa-arbor.com.

August 25, Round Rock

ISA CERTIFICATION TEST. isatexas.com.

October 5–7, Waco

32ND TEXAS TREE CONFERENCE. "Building Bridges through Arboriculture." Information at isatexas.com.



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10 x 10' Booth (1 Table and Chair) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$450 Early / \$550 Late • Includes one Badge for Conference Attendance • Company Name on ISAT Website • Company Name Advertised in Program 	10 x 20' Booth (2 Tables and 2 Chairs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$650 Early / \$750 Late • Includes two Badges for Conference Attendance • Company Name on ISAT Website • Company Name Advertised in Program
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Historic wildfires in Texas

Between December and mid-April, fierce winds and 8,000 blazes burned more than 1.8 million acres and destroyed hundreds of homes in Texas. Firefighters from around the country poured into Texas to help, and fire danger kept Texas Forest Service people busy.

As long as dangerously dry conditions prevail, be sure your chainsaw muffler is in good condition and fitted with a spark arrester screen, and do not spill fuel over the saw when refueling. Obey burn bans, keep all outdoor equipment in good working order, and don't weld or cut without a spotter, a water source and a shovel.

For more information and updates go to the state wildfire site, governor.state.tx.us/wildfires. If rains arrive and the danger is lessened by the time you get this issue of *In the Shade*, we will be very happy!

