



THE CONNECTICUT ARBORIST

Volume XXXVII, Number 1

Connecticut Tree Protective Association, Inc.

Summer 2026

CTPA Summer Meeting - Thursday, July 16th

The Summer Meeting is around the corner and this year it will be on Thursday, July 16th at the Farmington Polo Club. As always, we have put in a request for clear skies and a cool breeze. Registration for exhibitors and attendees is open, and the flyers have been mailed. We strongly encourage people to pre-register for this event. For exhibitors, that means registering before July 6th and for attendees it is before July 13th. The speaker lineup has something for everyone, and we hope you get to as many sessions as possible.

Educational Sessions in Spanish

We've made offering two sessions in Spanish a staple of our Summer

Meeting, and we're excited to continue that this year. Each session will be offered once during the day. At 10:30 AM in the Cottage Room, Pepe Ramirez of Davey Tree will present "*Feeling the Forces of Rigging and Climbing*." In this 1 hour and 15-minute session, Pepe will introduce his "Feeling Forces" approach, helping arborists better understand how rigging forces move through a tree. By using the body to represent the tree - torso as the trunk and arms as limbs - participants can physically sense load paths and stress. It's a simple, hands-on way to reinforce what we learn in formal rigging instruction. Then at 1:00 PM, also in the Cot-

tage Room, Rueben Mendoza will present "*Physical and Mental Preparation for Arboriculture Work*." Rueben will focus on the importance of building strength and staying conditioned, along with the value of thoughtful planning. A strong, prepared body supports safer climbing, rigging, and saw handling, while good planning helps reduce unnecessary risk. Together, these are key to safe, efficient, and sustainable tree work.

Educational Sessions in English

The first talk of the day, in the clubhouse at 9:00 AM (repeated at 1:00 PM), will start with Karl J. Niklas, Ph.D., FLS, The Liberty Hyde Bailey Professor of Plant Biology emeritus in the School of Integrative Plant Science, Cornell University giving a talk on "*Tree Biomechanics: How Trees Adapt to Gravity and Wind*". This lecture explains how trees manage gravity and wind forces, showing how stresses move through branches, trunks, and roots and how trees adapt by changing their size, shape, and geometry. He emphasizes intuitive principles over math and highlights that tree safety factors arise mainly from structural adjustments, supported by differences in tissue properties.



Summer Meeting 2025

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We Advance the Care of Connecticut's Trees

Arboriculture 101

The Winter 2026 session of Arboriculture 101 began with a full class of 45 new students. Interest in the program remains strong, and several students even took the written exam before the session concluded. This session also brought meaningful transitions within our teaching team. After many years of dedicated service, Doug Williams has stepped down from teaching Arboriculture 101 to enjoy a well-earned retirement. We are pleased to share that Chris Teter has agreed to take Doug's place beginning this fall. Likewise, Christina "Tina" Berger, recently retired from DEEP, has stepped back from her teaching role, and Amanda Varhols, also from DEEP, will be joining the instructional team. We extend our sincere thanks and best wishes to both Tina and Doug, and we warmly welcome Amanda and Chris as they step into their new roles. A few spots remain available for upcoming sessions.

Our long-standing policy continues: any student who has paid for and completed the course is welcome to return at any time—whether to revisit a single class or to sit through the entire 13-week curriculum again. The course includes two special sessions: a hands-on night and a review night. As an added bonus, Doug Pistawka leads a three-hour tree identification walk at Edgerton Park. This walk is an invaluable opportunity for students to learn how to identify trees both with and without leaves.

Registration is now open for the Fall 2026 session.

Visit www.ctpa.org to register.

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CTPA's Web Site - www.CTPA.org



Electrical Hazards Awareness Programs - 2026
English EHAP - Fall 2026
Spanish EHAP - Fall 2026

R. M. Esther Agee O.S. B. - Arborist Citation Recipient

A great American poet wrote the poem “Trees” over a hundred years ago.

It begins: “I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree. ” and it ends: “Poems are made by Fools like me but only God can make a Tree.”

What a wonder it is our love for God’s beautiful creation, especially His trees, brings us together today. I come today in particular to receive your Arborist Citation award. I am honored, surprised and grateful for this prestigious award. However, I really think it is the Arborists from this Association who have helped me so much who should be receiving an award from me! Everyone in our state, however, has reason to be proud and grateful to Connecticut Tree Protection Association for your illustrious history and contributions to the Arborist profession. I am also so grateful for your relationship with our Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. Your efforts have saved this great organization from extinction. Where would my work be without the support of scientists like Dr Sharon Douglas and Dr Rich Cowles? And I have learned from your Web site that these 2 scientists, I so respect, have also received your Arborist Citation Award. It is indeed an honor to be in their company. Now a little about me. I am a landscape designer for the Abbey of Regina Laudis, a 400-acre Monastery in Bethlehem CT. For close to 30 years, I have designed large garden spaces for our Monastery that often border our forests. My gardens designs depend on trees. I have planted and cultivated close to 100 ornamental trees in my designs for our Abbey land. I also cultivate and plant our Christmas tree field. I work hard to control invasive species from our forests and garden spaces. I also care for our Cemetery where Arborists from this Association have helped me so much care for our trees. These are my works, but I have asked God why you have honored me in this way. I know I have had vital interactions with members of this Association about trees on our land. Yet I think the real reason I am here is sometimes our interactions have gone beyond the simple care of trees to our mutual love for the gift of creation. It is here where my prayer life and landscape work come together and I hope the prayer life of our Monastery has blessed this Association. In our Monastery our care for creation is also our prayer. So, I hope our work and prayer for our trees blesses your own work and love for trees. I am indeed grateful to God for this Professional Association, and I thank you for this wonderful award.

R. M. Esther Agee O.S.B.

Trees

Joyce Kilmer 1886 –1918

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing
breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

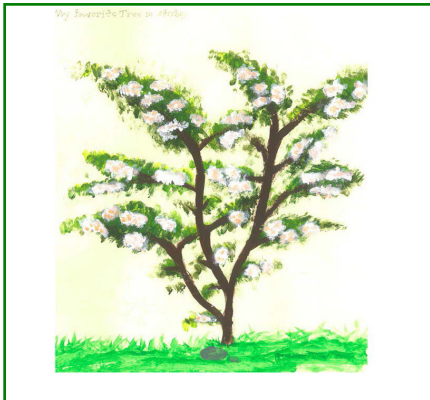
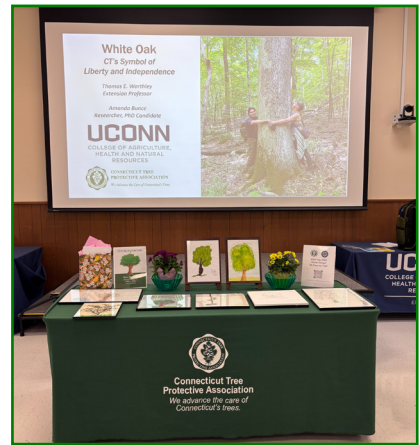
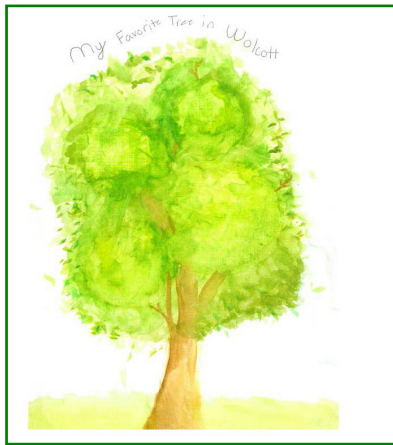
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.



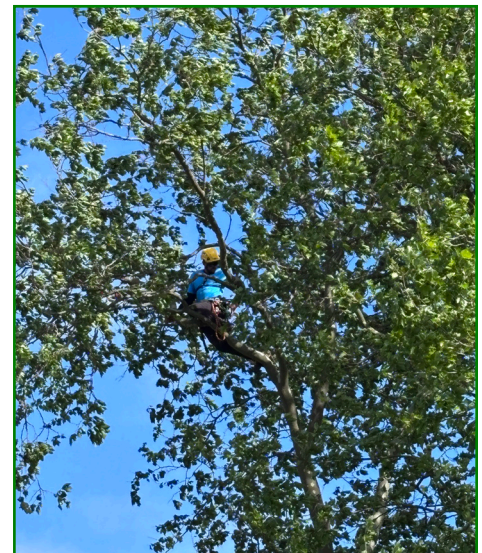
Arbor Day 2026 - UCONN EXT. Middlesex

CTPA was grateful to celebrate Arbor Day on April 24 at the Middlesex UCONN Extension Center in Haddam. This year, more than 100 posters were submitted by schools across Connecticut, and the CTPA Board of Directors selected eight outstanding winners. Students represented the towns of Wolcott, Southbury, Sterling, Old Lyme, and Colebrook. Approximately 70 students, families, and friends joined us for the celebration. Each student shared what made their chosen tree meaningful before receiving a framed copy of their poster and a CTPA goodie bag. Their stories were thoughtful, personal, and inspiring. Following the awards, students headed outdoors to help plant a White Oak. Under the guidance of our team, they learned proper planting techniques and the importance of watering newly planted trees. The group then returned indoors for a short presentation by Dr. Tom Worthley, including a sneak peek at the 250th-anniversary film he and his student created about Connecticut's trees. We extend our sincere appreciation to Northeast Horticultural Services, Dan Dalton, and Dr. Tom Worthley for their hard work and planning in making this Arbor Day celebration truly special.



CT Climbing Competition May 30, 2026

The 2026 Connecticut Tree Climbing Competition was held on May 30 at Lighthouse Park in New Haven, where strong coastal winds added an extra layer of challenge for both climbers and volunteers. The day began at 6:00 AM with gear checks, volunteer assignments, and the national anthem, followed by a full-group safety walk. The event drew media attention from WTNH, who interviewed Emmett Shutts, Head Technician and CTPA President, along with climber Jake Slade. Their segment aired on the evening news, bringing great visibility to the competition and to the arboriculture profession. This year's field included 25 climbers—three women and seventeen men—organized into five groups. We were pleased to welcome many new volunteers and to see so many returning supporters. After all events were completed, the top competitors were announced. Jake Slade, Val Brito, and Tim Reynolds advanced to the Master's Challenge. Val Brito earned his first Master's Challenge title in Connecticut and will represent the state at the New England ISA Climbing Competition, June 11–13, 2026, in Warwick, Rhode Island. The Climbing Committee was unable to sponsor a female competitor this year, as all eligible women were out of state during the event. A heartfelt thank-you goes to everyone who helped prepare Lighthouse Park on Work Day and Set-Up Day, including New Haven Parks, Recreation and Trees, Davey Tree Experts, and Bartlett Tree Experts. We also extend our appreciation to Bartlett Tree Experts, SavATree, and Davey Tree Experts for their support on Competition Day. An extra special thank-you to Annie Mixsell, New Haven Tree Warden, for her tremendous coordination—prepping trees, clearing brush, and ensuring the park was ready for a safe and successful event. Her partnership made this competition possible.



Branching Out Together 2026 Workshop

The Branching Out Together Workshop was such a success, The Connecticut Urban Forest Council, The Tree Wardens' Association of Connecticut and The Connecticut Tree Protective Association decided to hold another one in 2026. This year the workshop was held for only one day on March 18, 2026 at Connecticut College in New London. Registration was at 143 people and the day was packed with talks, exhibitors and opportunity to learn new things. We would like to give a special thank you to The DEEP Division of Forestry for its support and Connecticut College for hosting this great event.



An Introduction to the Connecticut Environmental Council

An introduction to CTEC (Connecticut Environmental Council)

In recent years, legislation regarding pesticides has been on the table up at the State of Connecticut Capital. This is a good time to know that the CTPA has a long-standing membership with CTEC and in turn CTEC has a strong presence at the State Capital with Capital Consulting. Each month Capital Consulting gives a legislative update to the CTEC board and a member of the CTPA board is present. CTEC has an exhibitor table at the Summer and Annual meetings. Take a minute to stop by, introduce yourselves and say hi. If you have any legislative questions or concerns, they are there to answer your questions. Here is an introduction to the key people with CTEC and Capital Consulting.



Mark Kelbacher is the President of the Connecticut Environmental Council (CTEC) and Owner of MissionGreen Services, a leading lawn care and plant health care company serving Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. With more than 30 years of experience in the green industry, Mark has built a career focused on responsible land stewardship, environmental sustainability, and advancing professional lawn care practices. As President of CTEC, Mark plays a leading role in advocating for

science-based regulations, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), environmental responsibility, and policies that support both the protection of natural resources and the viability of green industry businesses. He regularly works with legislators, regulatory agencies, industry stakeholders, and allied organizations to educate policymakers on the benefits of professionally managed landscapes and the importance of preserving access to proven management tools. Mark also serves on the Government Affairs Committee of the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP), where he collaborates with industry leaders from across the country on federal and state legislative issues affecting landscape and lawn care professionals. His advocacy efforts have included work on pesticide policy, pollinator protection, invasive species management, workforce

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development, environmental regulations, and industry best practices. Throughout his career, Mark has been a strong voice for homeowners, landscape professionals, and the green industry, promoting practical, science-based solutions that balance environmental protection with the need to maintain healthy, sustainable landscapes. His passion for advocacy and industry leadership has made him a respected representative of the green industry at both the state and national levels.



Michael Dugan – Capital Consulting

Since 1989, Mr. Dugan has been lobbying legislators, state agency officials, constitutional officers and municipal officials on behalf of a wide variety of clients. As a Capitol lobbyist, Mr. Dugan has assisted numerous corporations, associations and nonprofits navigating the halls of state government. Clients have come to rely on his strategic counsel and advice to achieve success on their legislative and regulatory agendas.

During his over two decades of lobbying Mr. Dugan has represented dozens of clients before state gov-

ernment, included but not limited to: Coca-Cola, Pepsico, Visa, eBay, Diebold Election Systems, Connecticut Society of CPAs, Outdoor Advertisers, Emergency Physicians, Funeral Directors, Physical Therapist, School Psychologists, Town Clerks, The Trust for Public Land and the Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut.

Prior to becoming a Capitol lobbyist, Mike was the 2nd Congressional District Campaign Coordinator for the successful 1986 campaign of then Governor William A. O’Neill. Following that campaign, he was the Legislative Assistant for two different Speakers of the Connecticut House of Representatives. Mr. Dugan was recognized by *Hartford Magazine* as one of the “Players” among the Lobbyists at the State Capitol. He continues to be active politically, serving as an advisor on numerous statewide and local campaigns. He has served as a delegate to several state and congressional conventions.



Liz Connelly – Capital Consulting

Liz Connelly joins Capitol Con-

sulting as a Senior Government Relations Associate after more than six years on staff in the Connecticut General Assembly. Liz began her tenure with House Democrats as a top advisor to then House Majority Leader Joe Aresimowicz (Berlin and Southington). When Rep. Aresimowicz was elected Speaker of the House, Liz was then promoted to Senior Legislative and Communications Advisor to Speaker of the House. During her time as a senior advisor to the Speaker, Liz developed and maintains a wide network of legislators, state agencies, staff and advocacy organizations. In addition, she was responsible for dealing and negotiating with numerous business and industry representatives on behalf of the Speaker. Liz brings to Capitol Consulting a strong work ethic and a clear understanding of the legislative process to immediately assist Capitol Consulting’s clients. In addition to lobbying directly for the firm’s numerous clients, Liz will manage the firm’s social media presence, assist in the firm’s marketing for new business and maintain the firm’s bill tracking system.

Prior to working in the legislature, Liz served as a Communications and Media Coordinator at The Governor’s Prevention Partnership, a nonprofit organization that builds and offers youth prevention programs to prevent substance misuse and bullying.

Liz received her *Bachelor of Arts* degree from the University of Connecticut, where she double majored in political science and journalism.

The second session begins at 9:00 AM (repeated at 1:00 PM) and will take place at the rear of the property behind the pickleball courts. Nate Dubosh of Airspade will present “*Common Below-Ground Tree Problems and Solutions.*”

This session will address issues caused by excessive mulching and deep planting and will include a demonstration of compressed air root collar excavation to safely expose the root flare and assess root conditions. Attendees will learn to identify and correct circling and girdling roots, along with key air-spading applications such as root zone invigoration, vertical mulching, and trenching. The session concludes with practical soil-improvement strategies using compost and biochar to support long-term tree vitality.

The next session begins at 10:30 AM (repeated at 2:30 PM) in the Clubhouse. Dr. Susanna Keriö will present a “*CAES Forest Update.*”

Dr. Keriö will provide updates on forest health monitoring, current pest and disease activity, research initiatives, and statewide drought patterns. We look forward to this informative update and appreciate the ongoing work of the scientists at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. The final session will take place under the Sycamore Tree. Jamie Chambrelli, National Safety Director for Canopy Service Partners, and Marianne Bonito of the U.S. Department of Labor will present “*Inspect What You Expect: Building Better Job Site Inspections.*”

This session will explore how effective job site inspections can move beyond “checking the box” to identify hazards, strengthen crew engagement, and improve operational consistency. With OSHA insight from Marianne Bonito, attendees will learn about common compliance gaps and how proactive planning contributes to safer, stronger field operations.

CEUs are available for the following credentials:

CT Arborist License: 3D – 5.0 CEUs; 3A – 2.5 CEUs

ISA Certified Arborist: 5.25 CEUs

CT Forest Practitioners: 2.0 CEUs

Advanced Certified Tree Warden: 5.0 CEUs

TCIA CTSP:

Tree Biomechanics – 1.25 CEUs

Job Site Inspections – 1.25 CEUs

Physical/Mental Preparation in Arboriculture (SPANISH) - 1.25 CEUs

Based on the schedule, attendees can fully participate in a maximum of four sessions. We are confident you will find sessions that meet your interests and professional goals.

The summer meeting offers more than educational sessions. Be sure to visit both the field and tent exhibitors to explore the latest equipment, products, and services. Educational exhibitors include the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, USDA, PPQ, APHIS, CONN OSHA, Federal OSHA, DMV, and the Tree Wardens’ Association of Connecticut. The Farmington Polo Club has been a favorite venue for over 30 years. Food is available throughout the day, including chili and clam chowder in the morning, a full lunch featuring steamship round, ham, chicken, salads, potatoes, and vegetables, and afternoon fare of cheeseburgers, hot dogs, and ice cream. The renovated pool will also be open with a life-guard on duty—a great way to cool off during the day. Visit the raffle table in the exhibitor tent and purchase tickets before 3:00 PM for a chance to win prizes, including a chainsaw and other generously donated items. Proceeds support the Oscar P. Stone Scholarship and Research Fund, helping advance education and research in our industry. The continued generosity of exhibitors and attendees makes this program possible.

CEUs are available for the following:
CT Arborist License 3D - 5.0 and 3A - 2.50 CEUs
ISA - 5.25 CEUs
Forest Practitioner - 2 CEUs
Advanced Certified Tree Warden - 5.0 CEUs
TCIA CTSP - -Tree Biomechanics - 1.25 CEUs
-Job Site Inspections - 1.25 CEUs
- Physical/Mental Preparation in Arboriculture - 1.25 CEUs



Stop by the CTPA Raffle table and purchase a raffle ticket to help support the Oscar P. Stone Research Trust and a chance to win a great prize!!!