THE CONNECTICUT
ARBORIST

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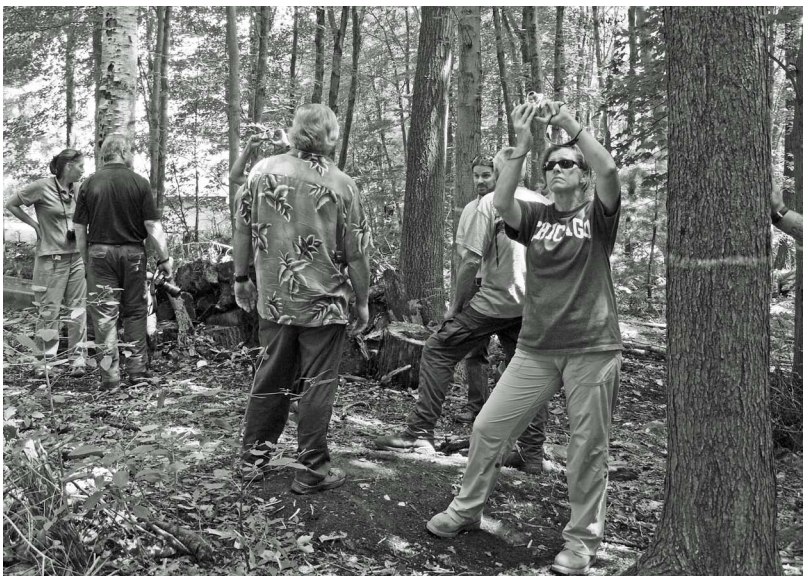
Asian Longhorned Beetle in Worcester - a Look Back

In August 2008, the Asian longhorned beetle was first reported in Worcester, MA. At first, what caught people's attention was that this find was in an inland city, not one of the ports such as Boston, New London or Bridgeport that were being much more closely scrutinized. However, focus soon shifted to the sheer size of this infestation. Beetles were literally falling out of trees, clogging swimming pool filters and riddling trees with exit holes. Whatever else might be said about the Worcester infestation, it is large.

Now, six years later after the first find, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS – a part of the USDA) along with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) have declared the infestation "delimited" - that is, they have completed the surveys needed to determine the extent of the area infested by this insect. These two agencies made this announcement through a press release on September 30.

The Delimiting Effort

Perhaps this sounds like a small step after so many years, but it is in fact a testimony to the large size of the infested area and also the hard work of many people over those years. In the end, APHIS and DCR determined that the infested area is contained within the 110 square mile regulated area. This does not mean that the entire regulated area is infested, any more than a forest fire burns every tree within the fire perimeter. It does mean that, in the context of this one infestation, agency personnel are confident that ALB is not outside this regulated area. 110 square miles is a large area. To give a reference, it would roughly cover the combined area of Windsor, Bloomfield, Avon, West Hartford and Hartford.



Sandy Ingellis captures lessons from CTPA's visit to Worcester in 2012. The tree to her right is marked as positive for ALB and is to be removed.

As it is, the area in Massachusetts covers four full municipalities (Worcester, Boylston, West Boylston and Shrewsbury) and portions of two other (Holden and Auburn).

The hard work is best expressed by referencing the number of trees removed along with the number of trees inspected. Over the past six years, APHIS and DCR together have detected and removed 23,792 infested individual trees and an additional 10,403 high risk trees, for a total removal tally of 34,195. They have also removed all of the host trees on 1,426 acres and have inspected somewhere in the vicinity of 5 million trees. The majority of the trees inspected were scrutinized from the ground, but over 163,000 of these trees have been climbed and 2,205 inspected from a bucket truck, These ground inspectors and climbers have been looking for oviposition sites, exit holes, other indications of the beetles' presence or the beetle itself. In recent years, finds of the adult beetles have become more and more infrequent.

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CTPA Annual Meeting, January 15, 2015 - The Farmington Club, Farmington, CT

Emerald Ash Borer Workshop in Southbury

On September 18, CTPA organized a workshop on the emerald ash borer at the firehouse in Southbury. This workshop, which combined both indoor talks and field visits, was structured so that attendees would be brought up to speed regarding the status of the insect outbreak in Connecticut. They would also be able to find the insect for themselves through examining infested trees and log bolts.

During the day, control of EAB was extensively discussed. This included an overview of control methods presented by Dr. Richard Cowles of the CT Agricultural Experiment Station. Later in the day attendees participated in a field demonstration of a chemical control application, led by Aaron Dickinson of the Rainbow Treecare.

Dr. Claire Rutledge of the Experiment Station provided an update on where the EAB is within the state, while DEEP State Forester Chris Martin provided a status report on the regulatory situation. As of yet, the quarantine has not been extended beyond the western half of Connecticut. That is expected to change soon, as the beetle is known to be in Middlesex and New London Counties, in addition to the four western-most counties.

Altogether, there were approximately 75 attendees, including 17 guests from APHIS who are part of the ALB eradication team in Worcester. Also attending were homeowners and members of the public, who were invited so they could learn more about the developing impact of this insect on Connecticut's landscape and what they can do.

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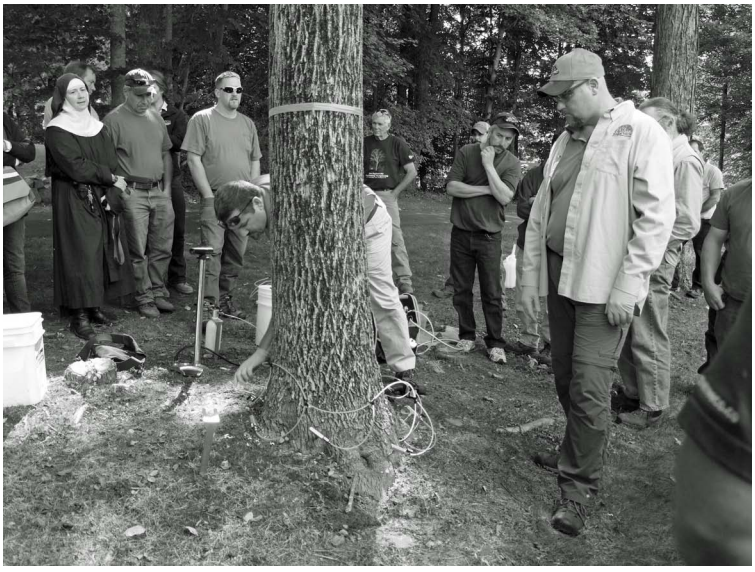
Using a draw knife to find EAB larvae. Attendees had an opportunity to experience for themselves how to find the beetle in infested trees.



Aaron Dickinson demonstrates the use of a systemic insecticide to treat for EAB. The tree was not yet showing signs of being severely infested.

TCI EXPO 2014 To Be Held in Hartford

note - the following article was provided by the Tree Care Industry Association, a CTPA Allied Member

The TCI EXPO will be held this year at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford, CT, November 13 – 15. There you can join thousands of tree care industry professionals as you meet with colleagues, vendors and manufacturers from around the nation, check out the latest equipment and industry trends, attend forums and roundtables, earn valuable CEUs and more.

TRADE SHOW FLOOR

Throughout the EXPO, the Trade Show will host hundreds of exhibitors in attendance, displaying the full range of products, services and equipment of interest to tree care workers. The trade show floor is open throughout the conference, giving ample time to browse, try out new products, evaluate cutting-edge equipment, and take advantage of trade show only prices.

The trade show floor houses more than just the exhibitor booths. Live tree demonstrations will take place throughout the conference, on topics such as rigging, aerial rescue, cutting, climbing, and more. Attendees can earn .75 CEUs per session, just for watching!

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

TCI EXPO offers 77 hours of education throughout the conference. These sessions are organized along three main topics: business, safety and arboriculture. This three-pronged structure is designed to give TCI EXPO attendees a well-rounded perspective.

These sessions cover a wide range of topics and are presented so that all levels of experience have an opportunity to benefit. These include the basics on pruning, rigging, crane use, safety statistics, and tree climbing and the latest in tree care business trends, digital marketing, mobile apps, innovative partnerships, and emerging arboricultural disciplines.

Most education sessions are delivered in a lecture format, while others are conducted in the form of interactive workshops and peer-led forums.

In addition, pre-conference workshops will be held in Plant Health Care, conducted by Dr. Mike Raupp and TCIA's Tchukki Andersen, Electrical Hazards Awareness, A – Z Pruning Workshop, a Your Bottom Line workshop, which will deal with safety, quality and productivity.

TIPS FOR FIRST TIME ATTENDEES

- Register early! If you sign up before October 10, you qualify for early bird discounts.
- Pick up a TCI EXPO Gold Card. This give unlimited access to Thursday, Friday and Saturday educational seminars, plus trade show entrance for all three days, keynote seminar, welcome reception, and more. If you buy four, you can get one free.
- TCIA members can stop by the TCIA Marketing & Publications booth on the trade show floor for a FREE consultation on marketing strategies, and to review advertising materials.
- Attend the Welcome Reception (Thursday, 6 PM – 8 PM), and mingle with other tree care professionals over a buffet, cash bar, and complimentary hors d'oeuvres.

To learn more about TCI EXPO, register for the conference and view the schedule of events, visit http://expo2014.tcia.org. See you in Hartford!

The TCI EXPO provides attendees with several opporutnities for education on the Trade Show floor. Details on the EXPO can be found on the TCIA web site - http://expo2014.tcia.org

The ALB in New York and New Jersey

A beetle in the hand... The top photo is of an ALB captured this year in Worcester (photo by Scott Cullen). Below is an insect rearing chamber in Worcester, in which mated females are only allowed to lay eggs on selected trees. This is a test as to whether ALB can survive on these non-preferred species..

While the word regarding ALB in Massachusetts is cautiously optimistic, the situation in New York is not as clear. In New York and New Jersey, there have actually been seven separate infestations over the years. In the two in New Jersey, in Carteret and in Jersey City, the beetles have been declared eradicated, with the last live Jersey beetle being seen in 2006. In the vicinity of New York City and on Long Island, there have been five individual infestations, together totaling 137 square miles in area quarantined. In three of those – the ones on Manhattan, Staten Island and Islip - the beetles have been declared eradicated. The Queens/Brooklyn infestation stubbornly hangs on.

The Central Long Island infestation is an older infestation that has now become the focus of renewed efforts. In the late 1990's, about the time ALB was first found in Brooklyn and Queens, it was also found in Amityville, on Long Island. It was thought the two locations were likely connected due to wood being moved from the city to the island. However, it was also thought that this infestation was well contained. Predictions in early 2013 were that this infestation by the insect would soon be declared eradicated.

However, in July 2013 an alert North Lindenhurst homeowner, from outside the quarantine area, sent an email and a photo of a beetle. In August, 2013, a new infested tree was located, also outside the earlier quarantine area. The battle with ALB in Central Long Island was now back on. Numerous finds over this past summer indicate that efforts to find and eliminate the beetle will continue over the next few years, until it can be confidently declared that the beetle is gone from Long Island.

CTPA Arborist Scholarship Opportunity

CTPA would like to let all college students from Connecticut studying arboriculture or urban forestry know about the CTPA Arborist Scholarship. The scholarship is for $2,000. Applications forms are available on the Association web site or by contacting the CTPA office.

The criteria are fairly straightforward. Those applying must be a Connecticut resident and a full-time student in a two year or four year program. The CTPA Board chooses among qualified applicants based on their essays and the letters of recommendation provided, and will give preference to students planning to practice arboriculture in the state following graduation.

Scholarships will be awarded at the Association Annual Meeting. In order to receive the scholarship, students must also finish the first semester with at least a 2.0 gpa.

A reminder - the CTPA Annual Meeting is coming up on January 15, 2015. Planning for the meeting is still underway but is already looking very good.

ALB in Worcester *(continued)*

Where CTPA Fits In

While everyone is glad that the ALB has not been found yet in Connecticut, the people here do not by any means consider themselves as off the hook. With infestations having been found in Worcester and in New York City, northern New Jersey and on Long Island, Connecticut has literally been surrounded by the insect. CTPA board members, especially Bud Neal, recognized the importance of getting people out to see these infestations, both so they could see what infested trees look like and also so they could better understand the response efforts. Working with fellow board member Sandy Ingellis, Bud began organizing trips to Worcester in 2010.

Over the years, those on these CTPA tours have seen quite a bit. From the first year, when we worked our way through a poison ivy infested red maple swamp (note to self – do not wear shorts and sandals next year) to subsequent visits, we saw search dogs in action, witnessed numerous crane removals, saw the progress in the ability to chip and use the wood from the removed trees and the effectiveness of the reforestation efforts. APHIS and DCR have allowed us a ringside seat on the action. It has been very informative.

Many highlights stand out. The first year, we saw a crane set-up in the middle of a residential street being used to systematically carry a climber up over the houses along the street and into the crown of infested backyard trees, and then lift each severed, 60 foot tall tree back up over the houses and onto the ground, to a waiting chipper. The contract crew simply worked their way down the street, removing infested and high risk trees as it went. Seeing crane removals of this sort became a staple of our visits.

The dogs were part of our third visit, in 2012. The use of dogs to find ALB was an experiment. Dogs are well-known for their sensitive noses and ability to be trained to sniff out all sorts of things, including, for instance, bed bugs. Why not try them on exotic, wood-boring beetles? We watched as two dogs in trials searched through the woods for trees known to be infested with ALB. The dogs found the trees, no problem. However, for a variety of reasons, APHIS chose not to continue using dogs in their effort to locate infested trees.

We also saw early on the use of large, plastic traps to attempt to lure in and catch the beetles as part of searching out the ALB's presence. These traps, which look something like small, black torpedoes when hung in the trees, are now being used by DCR on a regular basis, having proved their worth in helping to locate the beetle. While not considered 100% definitive as to determining that beetles are not in an area, a positive find in a trap certainly indicates that the beetles are present. Hence, their continued use.

We went back and visited forested sites from which all mature host species had been removed and discussed the APHIS approach, which includes allowing the host species to regenerate from stump sprouts and seed. The thinking is that, by the time these potential host trees are of sufficient size, ALB will either be eradicated or greatly reduced from the area. We also got to see the large, $300,000 wood grinding machine when it was brand-new in 2011, and which we have seen in action each year since. All the wood from the removed trees is double-ground and has gone to a variety of uses over the years. These include use as feedstock for electrical generation,

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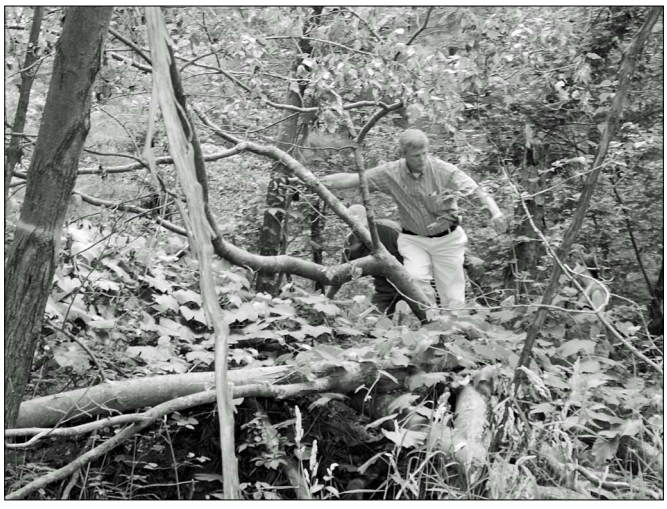
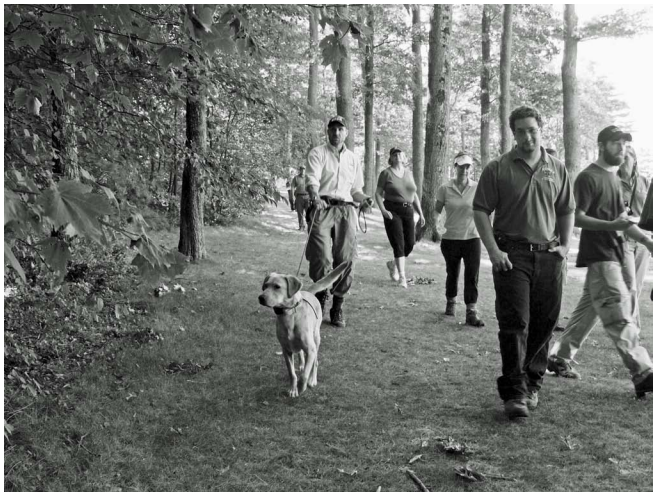
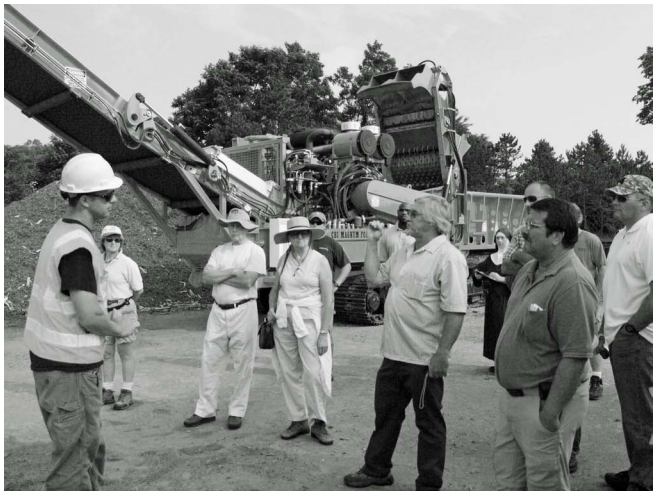
Especially in the first couple of years, it was normal to find clear signs of the insect, such as larval galleries within split wood. As the work has proceeded, actual finds have tended to decrease in numbers.



The first year took many attendees by surprise as to the extent of effort on the part of APHIS and DCR to find the beetle. This included stopping in a red maple swamp with infested trees.



The beetle-sniffing dogs were a highlight of the 2012 tour. The dogs did well, finding infested trees in the woods, but APHIS did not continue the program after the one year trial.



What to do with so much wood was clearly a question. Through 2010, APHIS contracted for a tub grinder, before bringing in their own piece of equipment in 2011.

ALB in Worcester *(continued)*

as mulch for trees replanted in ALB hit areas and to commercial mulch producers.

Perhaps the most satisfying story, from the arborist's perspective, is that of the rapid response and removal of ALB in Boston. In 2011, knowledge from the presence of ALB in Worcester led an arborist to spot this insect in six trees on an institutional property literally across the street from the Arnold Arboretum in Boston. Previously, all of the "first finds" of ALB in other infestations across the country had been by non-professionals. Not only does this mean that these other finds had been by luck and accident, but also the infestations had already grown large. In the case of Boston, heightened awareness on the part of an arborist led to the early discovery of the insect, before an infestation hardly had a chance to get started. The trees were removed and some of the team from Worcester was diverted to Boston to combat this new infestation, finishing the job. Preparedness on the part of the arborist likely saved one the world's most prominent arboretums from a devastating blow to its collection of trees, along with sparing one of the United States' major cities from a major loss of canopy cover.

What Next?

Our host throughout those years has been Clint McFarland, Federal Project Manager for the ALB Eradication Program in Massachusetts. Clint, working with Bud and Sandy, has been extraordinarily generous of his time in seeing to it that our tours were varied, thorough and representative of current activities. Coincidental with the completion of the delimiting phase of the survey, Clint has moved on to a temporary assignment elsewhere with APHIS. We at CTPA hope that this is a prelude to a promotion for Clint.

Meanwhile, CTPA continues to work with Patricia Sharp from APHIS, who is presently filling the Project Manager role as the eradication now moves into the 'Secondary Survey' phase. With the limits of the infestation now defined, efforts can be targeted on the complete eradication of the insect within the regulated area. Bud and Sandy are already thinking in terms of plans for next year's visit, as the process works towards a successful conclusion in the not too distant future.

Arboriculture 101 is underway for the fall 2014 session. In the background, Doug Pistawka explains how to use a tree id key, while groups of students work on identifying the sample twigs.

Safety Corner - Keep an Eye Out for Stinging Insects!

by Charlie Iselin
Owner, Iselin Tree Experts

As I sit down to write this, it occurred to me that the weather this year, at least in my part of Connecticut, has been somewhat uneventful. After a cold, long winter and slow to arrive cool spring, we had a very mild summer. No complaints here. It has been good working weather with no heat waves, the thermometer barely touching the upper 80's.

By mid summer we started to notice an abundance of stinging insects. This observation seems to be in line with others in the green industry. In fact, on several occasions, when I went to buy hornet spray, I was informed that they were out of stock because landscapers were lining up to buy cases of the stuff.

During our safety meetings, we try to cover a wide array of hazards on the job, stinging insects certainly being one of them. When we arrive on a job, we do a job briefing. As we go over the scope of work, we look for hornets and other stinging insects and quietly notice their flight paths. This can help but there will always be surprises.

The following is a true story. The names have been changed so as not to embarrass the subjects, or victims, as the case may be.

Last week, I took a few days off to celebrate my anniversary with my wife. Upon my return I received a call from my lead foreman at 6:00 am. He called to say that he would not be in to work today because of some mild bumps, bruises and the residual effects of yellow jacket venom. I said that's fine and I hope you feel better soon. Then of course I asked what happened. He told me that yesterday they decided to do a large pruning job with a four man crew. Upon arrival and during the job briefing, they noted some yellow jacket activity but nothing too major and no evidence of any nests. The job was going well and by 2:30, they were done with all of the aerial work. The only thing left to do was some pruning of low deadwood in a grove of hemlocks. This could be accomplished with a pole saw from the ground.

Tom folded up the bucket, disconnected his lanyard from the boom and clipped the snap onto the front of his harness. He then came down, stowed the outriggers, shut off the truck and grabbed a pole saw. As he was pruning his third or fourth hemlock, his lanyard snap fell off the front attachment point of his harness and was dragging on the ground. Rather than stop and reconnect it, or better yet, take off and stow the harness, he pressed on with the trimming.

By now, I am sure you know where this is going. Yes, the next limb he cut fell to the ground and opened up a sizable ground nest of yellow jackets. He was stung once, twice, then several found their way into his clothing. As he started to run, his dangling lanyard caught on a stub and his feet were suddenly up in the air and he was face down in the driveway. He bounced up, wiggled out of his harness and ran for it, stripping off his clothes as he went.

Two of the three remaining crew members were witness to this spectacle and sprang into action to help poor Tom. They probably would have been too paralyzed with laughter to help, had they themselves not been in similar circumstances in recent weeks. Jim thought fast and ran to the backyard to get the leaf blower from Wayne. Eddy went to recover Tommy's clothing and was stung in the process. Feeling as thought he was being swarmed, Eddy ran to the truck, climbed in the cab and rolled up the windows. Tom, still running as fast as he could, saw Eddy and also ran for the safety of the truck. Eddy saw Tom and the yellow jackets and quickly locked the doors. Fortunately for all, Jim showed up just in time with the leaf blowers and saved the day.

After a few minutes, the scene calmed down and the guys cleaned up as best as they could, helped Tom with this wardrobe and warned the client of the yellow jacket activity.

With regards to dangerous animals on the job, Connecticut is one of the safest places in the world to work. Think about it – no lions, tigers and bears here. Well… actually, we do have a few bears, as fellow CTPA Board Member Alan Fenner can attest. But you will have to ask him that story.

On a serious note, anaphylaxis shock is a serious risk. I have never had any employees that had a severe allergy to insect stings, but repeated or excessive exposure to any toxin can cause the immune system to ramp up. It is therefore important to keep an eye on anyone who has suffered multiple stings and check them for the classic signs of an allergic reaction. These include excessive swelling, shortness of breath and dizziness. At my company, we always keep an over-the-counter antihistamine handy in our first aid kits. This can help a bit but, if you suspect a more severe reaction, you must get the employee medical attention. Know what to do, who to call and where to go – and make sure your employees know that also!

Over 10, 000 times more people die each year as a result of insect stings than die due to shark attacks. And sharks are rarely found in trees.

In addition to running his own tree care company, Charlie is a member of the CTPA Board, where he a member of the Tree Climbing Competition, Arbor Day and Safety Committees.

Electrical Hazard Awareness Class on October 16

CTPA is offering its annual Electrical Hazard Awareness Class on Thursday, October 16th. Registration must be in advance of the class, and can be done through finding the flyer on line (www.ctpa.org) and contacting the CTPA office. The registration fee is $125.

The following is from the CTPA flyer regarding the importance of this class:

Electrical Hazard Awareness training is a must for everyone involved in tree care. Simply put, it is a Basic Matter of Safety. If you work with trees, you will encounter electricity. Electricity can be very dangerous. Do you understand all that you need to in order to work safely around electricity and power lines?

This EHAP workshop is being offered by CTPA to help prepare individuals for the electrical hazards they will face in their everyday jobs. Attendees will learn about the electrical distribution system, the hardware used in that system, the types of electrical hazards a tree care worker is likely to face and how to be prepared when you encounter electricity on the job.

If you are in tree care and have not taken an Electrical Hazard Awareness course before, you really should consider attending this one.

Please register early!

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Workshop on Single Rope Technique Keeps Audience Holding On

On August 28 at its headquarters, CTPA held a half-day workshop on single rope climbing techniques. Thes workshop was presented in conjunction with Shelter Tree, Inc. and featured Rich Hattier of ISC as the instructor. The reviews were all raves.

In his talk, Rich reviewed the evolution of climbing systems, including double rope and single rope systems. He then took advantage of the grounds around the office to bring the group outside, so that he could demonstrate the various systems and equipment.

With 27 pre-paid and 5 walk-in attendees, the turn-out was very strong for the workshop.

Photo by Cathy Dvorsky