

Short History of Arboriculture
Submitted to Dennis Ryan, Editor
NEC-ISA Nov. 1997

ARBORICULTURE

The care of trees in North America dates to the precolonial times. Native people cultivated trees for the food they produced. They did not cut down trees that produced nuts other foods or medicine.

When the settlers came to colonize they were feed by the natives. Many colonialists were saved from starvation by the natives showing them the value of trees and other natural foods. The new settlers rejected the native food sources and cleared the dank and dismal woods, as they called the wooded areas, for crop fields. They needed fifty to sixty acres of crop land to provide enough European foods for one person. They ignored the native ways of life and food sources.

Most crop areas were developed along the river flood planes. Towns were placed at waterfalls to have power for gristmills. Settlers traveled along the rivers because there were no roads. Until the nineteenth century all energy was expended for the production of food for the family. During the nineteenth century manufacturing of products began to be concentrated in factories. Before that small blacksmith shops did all the repair and making new tools.

Some larger towns had central commons for animal pasturing. In some of these common's trees were left for shade for the animals. A very few large cities had left trees along the roads.

Roads were developed when there were some extra crops to take to market. These were maintained by the people over whose land the roads passed. They were called toll roads because the people charged a toll to pass over them. There were very few town or state highway departments before 1900. Some trees were left along these roads to shade the animals and people. Roadside trees were enjoyed for the shade but were not cared for. When they died they were cut down for firewood. In the nineteenth century some people began to grow shrubs and trees in nurseries. Most landscaping, except on a very few large estates, were attempts to shade houses.

Shade trees along city streets had developed so that some larger towns and cities were aware of the need to care for them. The first large scale planting of shade trees began about 1850. The planting of Elms along the streets lasted until about 1900. Some Maples were also planted because they were available nearby in the woods along the roads.

By 1900 interest in shade trees had developed to the point that some legislatures passed laws to protect the trees. Some cities had passed laws to protect trees earlier but there was no provision for the care of the trees.

Dr George E. Stone began to recognize the need for knowledge about tree care by the eighteen eighties. He began to lecture about tree care about 1895. The first listing of a course in tree care was by the Massachusetts Agriculture College in 1907

The first organization formed by tree care people was in 1913. Dr. Stone encouraged the formation of the Massachusetts Tree Wardens Association. The organizational meeting was held in Boston August 22, 1913. The second tree care group came about after the Connecticut Legislature passed a tree protection law in 1919. They formed the Connecticut Tree protection Examining Board. This was the first licensing board for tree workers in the Country. Due to the need for help to pass the test, given by the Connecticut Tree Examining Board, several tree men, including Neal Millane and F. A. Bartlett, gathered the tree workers of Connecticut together to discuss forming a Tree association. This resulted in the formation of the Connecticut Tree Protective Association in 1922. The idea was carried to Columbus, Ohio when Walter O. Filley moved there. The idea of a National Tree Association developed into the National Shade Tree Conference at Stamford, Connecticut in 1924.

Prior to Dr. Stone's lectures at the Massachusetts Agriculture College there was very little knowledge about shade tree care. A number of people started doing tree

pruning based on orchard pruning. John Davey and F. A. Bartlett had started sending out crews to care for estate trees at the beginning of the twentieth century. These crews pruned, filled cavities, and treated for insects and diseases. In order to have men to do the work they had training classes for new men. The United States Department of Agriculture published pamphlets about tree care in 1938. Dr. Richard Fenska wrote several books about tree care in the nineteen thirties. Dr. P.P. Perone wrote "Tree Maintenance" in 1941. These books were the bibles for tree care in urban areas. Since then several people, including Dr. Richard W. Harris, Dr. Alex Shigo and others have elaborated on many aspects of urban tree care.

Before the nineteen twenties there was very little safety. Men climbed trees without ropes using ladders to get into the trees. After that they started using pole climbing spikes to climb around in trees. I asked an old-time tree man in the nineteen forties how they got from branch to branch and he said they just jumped across. If you were injured in those days you were reprimanded for being careless. During the nineteen twenties they started using ropes to tie into trees so they would not fall. One half inch long fiber, four strand, hard lay manila rope was used. A bowline-on-a-bight was tied in the end of the rope to make a sling to hold the man. With a taut line hitch one could move about a tree to do the work. After some years leather saddles were developed to tie to the rope.

Synthetic ropes were then developed for use because of their greater strength. I remember getting the first synthetic ropes in the nineteen sixties. Today many new safety devices are available for climbing trees. In the nineteen fifties aerial man lifts were developed. In the nineteen sixties many types of aerial lifts were available for tree work. They also adapted many mobile cranes for use in tree removal work. This has made tree care practices much safer.

The national Shade tree conference developed into the International Shade tree Conference in 1960. It then became The International Society of Arboriculture on January 1, 1976. This association along with the National Arborist Association, which was formed in 1938, has been responsible for urban tree care research in the urban trees. The trees in the urban areas have been protected by the educational work of these mentioned organizations. Many chapters of these organizations have also contributed to arborist education and arboricultural development. They have worked to develop the consciousness of shade tree care by the public since their formation. Due to the efforts of arborists to control insects and diseases, that were attacking trees, a new attitude for urban trees has developed. Arborists have been surveying cities and town trees for many years. They have developed many systems to list trees and their needs for future growth. Many programs for replacing trees that were injured by the urban development and expansion was started as the trees died. Tree wardens in cities were responsible

for tree ordinances to protect trees and replant areas in need of trees. Improvements in the green environment of our urban areas were discovered due to the needs of the arborists to control the urban green conditions. The work of the mentioned organizations using scientific knowledge has created the ability to protect the urban environment. The improvement of the urban green areas in our cities and towns is directly related to the efforts of the city and town arborist.

The research and educational endeavors encouraged by the International Society of Arboriculture and the National Arboretum Association has resulted in a promise of greater comfort and beauty in the future life of the urban areas.

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