

An Arborist takes  
care of a tree for life.



# OUT ON A LIMB

WINTER 2019, VOLUME 39, ISSUE 4



NAA Arborist School exceeds all attendance records! See article and photos on page 5.

## THE CONFERENCE BY ARBORISTS FOR ARBORISTS

By: Jim Keepers, Conference Chairperson

The 2020 Nebraska GREAT PLAINS Conference is embarking in a new endeavor to get back to its Arborist “Roots”. We will no longer host workshops or discussions about landscape design or nursery plants. Instead, as the title of this article states, the 2020 conference is being developed solely by Arborists, for Arborists. It is an event you won’t want to miss!

The conference will be held on the 28th & 29th of January, at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln, NE. Time has also been allotted on the 28th for the NAA’s Arborist Certification Exam, also at the hotel. The conference registration brochure will be available on the NAA website in December.



Cornhusker Hotel

What are the old and new features for our 2020 event? In addition to the great food, we have retained our famous silent auction but eliminated our live auction. We will still host our traditional raffle. All money raised from the silent auction and raffle will go toward NAA’s educational fund for scholarships to NAA’s Arborist School.

We have retained the two-day format, with a new social gathering after the first day of the conference. The NAA’s business meeting will be held on the first day of the conference. This will be an important meeting for all association members to attend. Our association president, Kevin Popken, and other NAA board members will discuss the status of the NAA, and our prestigious NAA awards will be presented. Our exhibitor hall will be smaller this year, but we will feature companies that specifically support tree-related business!



Dr. Michael Raupp working in the field.

Our 2020 event will have some of the most outstanding and notable keynote and workshop presenters in the Arboricultural career field, plus a former Nebraska Forest Service member. The conference will kick off with a presentation from our keynote speaker, Dr. Michael Raupp, a.k.a. “Bug Guy”, Professor and Extension Specialist at the University of Maryland. Dr. Raupp is a world-class Integrated Pest Management Expert who has been a featured presenter at the Tree Care Industry (TCI) Expos. I have been attempting to line him up as a presenter at our NAA event for years, so this is a treat. He is one of the most entertaining speakers when it comes to the subject of pest control. You most definitely won’t fall asleep in his class! Dr. Raupp will also be featured in a conference workshop.



Dr. John Ball talking at the NAA/NNLA Summer Field Day

Our second keynote and workshop presenter, and certainly no stranger to our conference, is Dr. John Ball, Professor, SDSU Extension Forestry Specialist, and South Dakota Department of Agriculture Forest Health Specialist. Not only is Dr. Ball an Arborist, he is a world-class Arborist Safety Expert as well. He has been featured at the Iowa Shade Tree Short Course held in Ames, IA, and numerous TCI Expos.

*Continued on page 3...*

## A QUARTERLY UPDATE OF THE NEBRASKA ARBORISTS ASSOCIATION

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### SUBMIT ARTICLES:

If you have anything you’d like to submit for inclusion in the Quarterly Update, please contact Jim Keepers at [jlkeepers45@gmail.com](mailto:jlkeepers45@gmail.com) or (402) 332-0715 or (402) 618-8837.

Submission deadlines for the NAA  
2019 quarterly newsletters:

- 1st Quarter - February 1, 2020
- 2nd Quarter - June 1, 2020
- 3rd Quarter - September 1, 2020
- 4th Quarter - November 1, 2020

*Photo contributions throughout  
courtesy of Jim Keepers.*

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Kevin Popken, NAA President

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As my term as board president winds down I want to take a moment to thank you all for the opportunity to serve on the board for the past 6 years. I have said many times that some of my favorite people are tree people, it has been a pleasure to spend time with members of our association many of whom have become dear friends. With that in mind I hope that some of you who will consider serving on the board in the future, there is always a need for individuals willing to bring new ideas and direction to our association.

While there are great National and International associations (TCIA and ISA) our own Nebraska Arborist Association is unique, I know of no other state association that provide the level of educational training and experience like the NAA.

We consistently have individuals come to our program offerings from Wyoming, South Dakota and Iowa and other states. We have speakers who come from much larger population areas out east who always remark on the offerings as well as the involvement we see in the NAA.

A great deal of thanks goes to our executive management company Advanced Association Management. Kathi and her team do a phenomenal job year after year to make things flow and function smoothly. Thanks to our board members, past and present who I have had the opportunity to work with. Finally I would also like to thank Jim Keepers, Jim apparently never sleeps, he is always busy behind the scenes, taking pictures and writing articles, drumming up exhibitors and donations for conferences, he always gives 150% to the association, the association would not be what it is today without his tremendous input.

Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season and looking forward to seeing you all at our winter conference in January.

All the best,  
Kevin Popken  
President Nebraska Arborist Association

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# THE PERFECT TREE FOR THOSE IMPOSSIBLE CUSTOMERS

By: Jim Keepers, NAA Newsletter Coordinator

A few years back, a husband of a prospective customer came to me and told me he wanted a specific tree for his yard with the following qualities: it must not have any fruit; it must not drop any seed pods; it must not make a mess in the yard, such as shedding branches and bark; it must not attract insects, specifically bees, because he was stung badly by a bee in his mother's garden; all the tree leaves must be small and fall at the same time; and last but definitely not least, its flowers mustn't give off any odor. He understood he would need to water this tree (at least limited watering, according to him), but he wanted to make sure it would still thrive if he forgot to water it.

My head was spinning. I told the husband I didn't think I could meet his requirements and that finding a tree that fit the bill was very unlikely. I was certain that, in all honesty, he didn't want a new tree planted in his yard, but that he was simply trying to please his spouse by exhibiting effort to find a tree that only she wanted.

Over the years, I have always thought about this customer's ridiculous request and I've continued to keep an eye out for a unique tree that might fit his requirements. While attending the Omaha Home and Garden Expo this fall, I happened to turn the corner and there, before my eyes, stood a grove of trees meeting all the husband's very unusual tree requirements...sculpted palm trees. I had found their "perfect" tree!

The idea for these trees began over 30 years ago when a creative husband came up with a plan to design and sculpt a palm tree as an anniversary gift for his wife. She had grown up on the sunny beaches of Florida but now resided in the Midwest with their family. He wanted to give her something that would remind her of her home long ago. What was originally meant as a unique gift, turned into a lucrative family business.



The palm trees are constructed from treated metal, copper or stainless steel. Their trunks are made of composed steel. Over time, the tree's cover will age. It takes about six months for this process to happen.

Sculpted palm trees provide shade and can be set up to give off a comfortable mist. Some come with lighting installed in their branches, which creates shadows and designs on the ground below. The tree trunks can be painted, but this is not recommended.

The price for one of these trees will vary according to its design, but some can cost upwards of several thousand dollars. An average sculpted palm tree, after the design has been completed, takes over 40 manhours to produce. Installation takes time as well and typically requires an additional fee beyond the cost of the tree itself.



The trees are built to withstand our harsh and ever-changing weather conditions. Steel bolts or a welding process are used to mount the tree to either a wooden or steel plate, from which it is then anchored to the ground. For more information on sculpted palm trees, visit [www.DesignerPalms.com](http://www.DesignerPalms.com).

I learned a valuable lesson from this experience; some requests might seem impossible, but if you look long and hard, you might just surprise yourself with what you find. In this case, I was able to find the "perfect" tree that checked off all the boxes for this customer. This was certainly one of the most unusual experiences I've encountered in 24 years in the business, but it was very interesting, to say the least!



**Arborist Mark Chisholm on the Today Show**

*The Conference For Arborists By Arborists article continued from page 1...*

Arborists Mark Chisholm, a member of the family-owned Aspen Tree Expert Company, will be presenting two different climbing workshops on the conference's first day. Mark has acquired a vast knowledge of tree climbing wisdom. He knows the ropes (literally) inside and out about crane removals, aerial rescue, cabling and bracing, proper pruning techniques, and complex climbing and rigging techniques. Mark is also great with tree physiology.

Certified ISA Arborist, Nicholas Grebe, will continue the discussion on climbing during the second day of the conference. Mark works for the forestry division of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. He has prior experience working for several private arborist companies in the Twin Cities Metro for the past 12 years.

International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Board Certified Master Arborist Noel Boyer, All About Trees owner, will round out the conference with a presentation on Wednesday. A Master Arborist is the highest credential awarded to a Tree Care Specialist by ISA, and Noel's presentation is sure to be a delight!

For a complete listing of conference presenters and to read about other events taking place during the conference, refer to the registration brochure coming in December.

There will be ample time at our 2020 conference to discuss Arborist-related issues with old friends and meet the up-and-coming Certified Nebraska Arborists who will be our Association's future leaders. CEUs are available through this event as well. Please mark your calendars and make plans to attend this improved and exciting event. We look forward to seeing you all at the 2020 Nebraska GREAT PLAINS Conference.



**Noel Boyer**

**Remember our Arborist Creed: "An Arborist takes care of a tree for life."**

# THE 'THREE SISTERS STORY' CONTINUES

By: Jim Keepers, *Maturing Certified NE Arborist*

In the September issue of the NAA newsletter, I told you the story of three magnificent American elm trees, fulfilling their mission as street shade trees along 85th Avenue in Omaha. Now I will tell you the rest of the story of these stately trees.



**Grapple saw cutting a large tree branch at same time it holds onto the branch.**

For years, Terry Hughes and his Hughes Tree Service crew have been trying to extend the life of these gracious elm trees. Now the task of saving these trees fell into the lap of Stacy Hughes, Terry's son and owner of Hughes Tree Service. In the end, these skilled Hughes Arborists lost their battle to save the last remaining elm, and Stacy instructed Chad Nelson, Hughes Production Supervisor for Production Operation, to go ahead and have a crew remove it this past summer.

Now my story starts to involve the human element of tree removal, so I decided it would be helpful to provide you a little background information on Chad. Chad has been with Hughes for over 25 years. His first job at Hughes was a summer job dragging branches and he did this for two years. He decided to stay on, and as more sawdust got into his veins, he learned more about the Arborist craft and now directs the company's production crews. Chad assigned a crew and a date for removal of the tree and grinding of the stump.

This is where the story gets interesting! Instead of sending out a normal removal crew involving climbers, ground personnel and various arborist-related equipment, such as chainsaws, chippers and bucket trucks, the decision was made to send out the Grapple saw, Grapple truck loader and a crew of just two people. Paul Dietz was the crew chief and Grapple saw operator, and Anthony LaChappell was the Grapple truck loader. Both these individuals have worked for Hughes Tree Service for a number of years.

The Grapple saw is not a handheld chainsaw, but a saw that is connected to a crane and operated remotely by one very skilled Arborist operator from the ground. The operator can accomplish all Grapple saw operations and crane movements from his/her ground position.

Hughes has had this Grapple saw for at least two years. It was assembled by Altec onto an EFFER crane. One of the cool features of this crane is it can extend up to 60-feet, facilitating tree removal in space-restricted situations.

The advantages of using the Grapple saw over an Arborist climber is that it's safer, quicker, requires less crew time, no chainsaw is needed, and it makes it easier to stack the cut branches into one area.

A ground person is no longer needed to run around at the base of the tree, collecting cut branches as they fall from above, which obviously poses a risk to that person. All in all, the cost of equipment and manpower is drastically reduced as well.

That being said, there is an initial expense in acquiring the Grapple saw/crane and assembling the two, along with the Grapple truck loader, but with proper management and operator training, it can certainly be cost-effective in the end.

The story of 'The Three Sisters' on 85th Avenue concludes on a very sad note, with the loss of all three magnificent American elm trees. On the other hand, the story of tree removal in Omaha looks bright, with the introduction of state-of-the-art arborist equipment, and the addition of highly trained and skilled Arborists, such as Paul and Anthony, in the business. I can say without a doubt, both these individuals are a valuable asset to Hughes Tree Service.

Stacy Hughes says it best, "Tree care is a hard business, and I have come to realize a company must modernize its equipment and constantly train their employees if the company wants to stay ahead of the game and make a profit!"

He's absolutely right. Modernization has certainly made its way into the arborist career field, and it will be the way of the future.



**Last remaining American elm tree along 85th Avenue in Omaha.**



**Grapple truck operator Anthony LaChappell**



**Grapple truck loader**



**Grapple saw and the EFFER crane truck configuration.**



**All that remains of the sister American elm tree before its final removal.**



**Grapple truck loader and Grapple saw working together.**



**Stacking all the tree branches in one pile using the Grapple saw and crane.**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Nebraska GREAT PLAINS Conference**  
Tuesday & Wednesday,  
January 28-29, 2020  
Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln, Nebraska

**Nebraska Certified Arborist Exam**  
See Nebraska GREAT PLAINS Conference  
information for pre-registration (required)  
January 28, 2020

**Winter Deciduous Tree ID  
Advanced Arborist Training**  
Friday, February 21, 2020  
VFW Hall and Wayne Park, Waverly, Nebraska

**Advanced Arborist Training**  
Wednesday, August 12, 2020  
Carol Joy Holling Center, Ashland

**GREAT PLAINS Summer Field Day**  
Thursday, August 13, 2020  
Carol Joy Holling Center, Ashland

# ARBORIST SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

By: Jim Keepers, Maturing Certified Nebraska Arborist

Let's take a glimpse into the life of Kait Barth, the recipient of the 2019 Arborist School Scholarship. One of Kait's instructors at Metro Community College (MCC) asked me to talk to Kait about the NAA, its scholarship program, and what she would need to do to become a Certified Nebraska Arborist. I had the opportunity to interview her before she submitted her scholarship application, and I was certainly impressed.



Kait was born and raised in the small town of Leshara, Nebraska. She has always been interested in nature and horticulture. Kait is presently enrolled at MCC, working toward obtaining her Horticulture degree with an interest in Arboriculture. She is a Certified Extension Douglas-Sarpy Counties Master Gardener and presently works in Mulhall's Plant Care Department while also attending Metro classes. During her experience at Mulhall's, she has developed a keen interest in tree pathology and enjoys the detective work behind this science.

After Arborist School was completed, I asked Kait to write up a few words about the classes and what she gained from her experience. She shared the following... "I was so privileged to receive an NAA scholarship to the 2019 Arborist School. The experience of attending the classroom instructions and having the opportunity to participate in the fieldwork will enable me in my journey to become a Certified Nebraska Arborist, and in my efforts to also become a versatile Horticulturist and Naturalist. I have already learned so much from taking these classes and have really come to value the knowledge that I have gained. I am excited about my future in this field! Thank you so much for this amazing opportunity!"

I firmly believe Kait will be someone the NAA can count on to encourage more young individuals to explore the Arborist career field.

If you know of a person who has a keen interest in trees, please spend time talking to them about an exciting career in Arboriculture and help them understand the path to becoming a Certified Nebraska Arborist.

Kait, we wish you the very best in your career as a Certified Nebraska Arborist!

# NAA CLASS EXCEEDS ALL PAST ATTENDANCE RECORDS



By: Jim Keepers, NAA Newsletter Coordinator

In the past, I have had the opportunity to either monitor or perform photo documentation of NAA Arborist School classes and I must say, the 2019 'Plant Health & Tree Biology Class' was the largest I have ever seen.

This year's class had a total of 39 attendees. There were 30 full-school attendees, nine NAA CEU attendees, and one individual who registered to take the NAA Arborist Certification Exam. The class was so big, it was moved to one of the largest classrooms at the Carol Joy Holling Camp, located just outside of Ashland.

I'd like to send my gratitude to the following instructors: John Fech, Jennifer Morris, David Olson and Laurie Stepanek, for their valuable time and effort to instruct this class. Again, a special thank you goes out to Kevin Popken and Kathi Schildt for their hard work in organizing such a large class.



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# MODERN RIGGING IN ARBORICULTURE: VOLUME 1

By: *Dustin Nelson, Certified Nebraska Arborist*



What exactly is modern rigging in the Arboriculture industry and why is it needed? Honestly, that is a pretty tough question and to define it would be even harder. I would consider modern rigging the use of hardware (including ropes) to rig trees out. But even that definition is so broad, it's almost better to define what I would consider traditional rigging to be instead. In a nutshell, traditional rigging would be removing a tree with only a rope using natural friction in the tree or at the tree base to assist in the lowering procedures. This method was the norm for many years and many still remove larger trees this way. That being said, why do we need more gear if we can do it with only a rope? It's a fair question but not a short and simple answer.

With more hardware, you can accomplish a wider variety of tasks. With proper knowledge, the sky is the limit when it comes to rigging. Hardware is merely a tool that is used to accomplish a goal that a person knowledgeable in rigging procedures hopes to achieve. There is a multitude of tools available today specifically designed for the Arboricultural Industry. Examples would include Porta wraps to add friction for the man running the rigging, lifting/lowering devices such as the GRCS (Insert Photo) or the Hobbs that allow you to lift heavy loads, rigging blocks and rings to reduce rope wear and friction in the rigging system, and various other gadgets I won't dive into just yet. When these systems are set up correctly, not only are they safer, but they make dismantling a tree more predictable and consistent when compared to traditional systems. I can't get into too much detail here without turning this newsletter into a novel. So instead, think of this article as a rough overview comparing the two techniques and expect to see further articles about rigging in future newsletters.

Now when I say modern rigging is more predictable and consistent, I'm not saying someone with expansive experience in traditional rigging can't be safe or reliable. I'm just stating that it takes less time to master the learning curve of hardware since the friction in the devices stays constant from one species of tree to another. Therefore, it becomes easier to train new employees in lowering

procedures and safer for all involved. In a sense, it takes out a decent amount of the guesswork involved when running ropes on the ground. One example would be with the addition of lifting devices, and the knowledge of how to use them properly, block pulleys can make climbing removals more certain as well. With the added capability of being able to lift the pieces you are cutting toward the rigging point (instead of being forced to succumb to where gravity chooses to take the piece you wish to cut and adjusting your work plan to accommodate), lifting devices make the job safer and you can better anticipate where the piece will go. To take it a step further, sometimes those same lifting systems/situations will allow you to make your cut and get completely out of the way before the ground crew applies the right amount of pressure to release the holding wood on the section of the tree being removed. I'm not saying traditional rigging doesn't have a place in modern Arboriculture. What I am saying is the bigger, more technical, and the harder the tree, these modern techniques and tools will make a bigger difference in ease and safety of accomplishing the task at hand.

If you wish to better understand some of the practices I am talking about, there are many great resources out there on the topic of rigging. I would love to go into greater detail here, but unfortunately, it will have to wait until future articles where I can go into additional detail on each specific technique/device. If applicable, I will try to include recommendations for reading materials/videos to supplement those techniques.

In the meantime, I would recommend planning on attending the NAA Winter Conference in January. Mark Chisholm will be teaching a two-part seminar titled Tree Removal Strategies for the Most Difficult Scenarios that I'm sure will include an abundant amount of information on this subject.

*Dustin Nelson is a Certified Nebraska Arborist and a member of the Nebraska Arborists Association (NAA) Board.*

## ARBORIST SPOTLIGHT

By: *Jim Keepers, NAA Newsletter Coordinator*



**Jeff at 11 years old**

As the sleet and snow start to fall, and the wind kicks up a stiff breeze, I sit and write my final Arborist Spotlight for 2019. This is a task I find very enjoyable because I have the opportunity to learn about the unique Arborists working in our challenging and dangerous career field. I want to thank all our association members, especially our Certified Nebraska Arborists, for the great job they do, no matter the weather conditions or the clients they are working with.

As I reflect on our great Arborists Association, I think of numerous individuals I have featured and will continue to feature in my spotlight articles. I must say, it has been a very hard process selecting the individual to be featured.

The Arborist being spotlighted this quarter is Certified Nebraska Arborist, Jeff Davis, from Ithaca, Nebraska. Jeff is the owner and operator of Ashland Tree Service. Jeff's business can be classified as a small to average-sized Arborist Company. With his sidekick, Jason Smith, who has been with Jeff off and on for a number of years, the two spend numerous hours in the field, no matter the weather, taking care of our Nebraska trees in the Omaha, Gretna, and Ashland areas.



**Jason Smith assessing a tree stump before cutting.**

Let's take an in-depth look at this individual, who has Arborist blood running through his veins. Jeff was born in Blair, Nebraska, to Ethel and Wally Davis on March 6th, 1964. He is the youngest of five children and has two brothers and two sisters. Jeff graduated from Ashland-Greenwood Public High School in May of 1982. *Continued on next page...*



Jeff moving brush to the chipper.

Although he didn't start in an Arborist career directly out of high school, his talents grew while working on local construction jobs at Mahoney State Park and he eventually joined the arborist side of the business. Jeff took a job as a Groundsman for Wright Tree Service and quickly moved up to Trimmer, and then Top Trimmer during his time with them. He worked clearing lines for OPPD and spent some time with Asplundh Tree Service. Jeff soon felt an urge to start his own Arborist business. In 1992, he bought Sterling Grell and renamed the company Ashland Tree Service, all while working part-time for Asplundh.

Jeff's life changed in 1997 when a brutal, early-October snowstorm passed through the area, causing massive tree damage. Jeff resigned from Asplundh and went full-time with his new Ashland Tree Service. Jeff has never regretted the move but has felt frustration with the ever-changing Nebraska weather, which can make it a challenge to provide service to his various customers.

Jeff married his wife Susan in 2001 and gained three wonderful step-children, Ann, William and Claire. Jeff enjoys working with his hands and has spent countless hours refurbishing their 1906 farmhouse, including making tongue-and-grooved cedar planks for the ceilings and walnut moldings from the trees he has cut down.



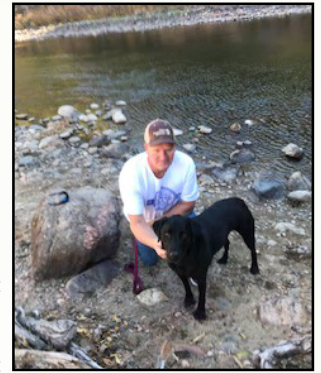
Jeff cutting a tree limb with a gas power pole saw

Jeff has a passion for water sports and for his pets, which include Vincent "The Wonder Dog" and five farm cats. He also enjoys racing remote control (RC) cars and has an RC track on his property. Jeff is now trying his hand in the kitchen, creating delicious meals for Sue to enjoy when she comes home from her bustling insurance business. It might be in the Association's interests to line up Jeff to cater an event in the future!

In closing, I want to express that I believe Jeff Davis has the Arborist's skill, knowledge, experience, talents and customer know how to make him a great candidate for a position with the NAA Board of Directors. When you see Jeff at the 2020 Nebraska GREAT PLAINS Conference, thank him for his contributions to the industry, and let's see if we can convince him to give up some of his valuable time to be a member of our Association's Board of Directors.

I hope this article has given you a little more insight into Jeff Davis, the Arborist, the family man. I have been able to see Jeff and Jason in action on two different occasions and have been impressed with Jeff's tree-working knowledge. They do make a great team!

Thank you to Jeff's wife Sue and step-daughter Ann for their assistance and support in sharing information about Jeff for this article.



Jeff and his wonder dog, Vincent



Jeff & Jason working hand in hand during a tree removal.

## FUTURE NEBRASKA ARBORISTS LEARN THE SKILLS OF PRUNING & CLIMBING

By: Jim Keepers, Maturing Certified NE Arborist



The Nebraska Arborists Association's 2019 "Pruning and Climbing Class" was a success. A total of 33 students attended the class held at Carol Joly Holling Camp just outside of Ashland. What made this class unique is out of the 33 attendees, a total of 30 were full-school registrations. The remaining three were there for educational CEUs. Weather hindered some of the outside climbing lessons, but with a little improvising, we were able to make it work.

The class was once again lead by instructor Jerel Converse, Certified Nebraska Arborist. Thank you, Jerel, for the leadership and skill you demonstrated during the class. Jerel was assisted by the following Certified Nebraska Arborists: Mike Ayres, Josh Kroupa, Luis Seqoviano and Tom Anderson. We appreciate their dedication to educating the students and thank the entire team for an outstanding job.

Another special thanks goes to Kevin Popken, NAA President, and Kathi Schildt, NAA Executive Director, for the time they have devoted to getting this class off the ground and running. It certainly takes a village, and the efforts of everyone involved are most appreciated!



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# CLEVELAND, OHIO: WILL THE RIVER BURN AGAIN?

By: Jim Keepers, NAA Newsletter Coordinator

Now that I have gotten your attention, I first want to tell you why I was in Cleveland on the 20th & 21st of November. Then I will address the rest of the story concerning the burning of Cleveland's Cuyahoga River.



**Listing of Conference Exhibitors**

I received a scholarship offer from the Nebraska Forest Service (specifically Graham Herbst, Nebraska Forest Service, Community Forester Specialist for Eastern Nebraska) to attend the "Partners in Community Forestry Conference" sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation. I have never attended a conference of this type and was concerned that it would be too much of a technical event. Also, I am not keen on giving up my bed and favorite recliner. After spending 30 years traveling worldwide for the military, home is the best place for me.

After reviewing the scheduled speakers and subject matter to be covered, I said yes and to my surprise, I found the conference very enjoyable and the exhibitors were very interesting. I was surrounded mostly by State Foresters from around the United States and a few ISA Certified Arborists. There were over 500 attendees at this event. I won't go into lengthy detail describing the sessions, but I must say, they were packed with tree information that set my head spinning. Now I have lots of notes to sort out. The conference also allowed me to earn a total of 10.25 CEUs toward my Nebraska Arborist Certification training. I did collect contact information for some possible speakers and exhibitors for future Nebraska GREAT PLAINS Conferences.



**Dan Lambe, Arbor Day Foundation addressing attendees at Conference General Session, Arbor Day photo.**

There is one very important point I don't want to leave out of this article and that is the theme of the conference. The theme was only three letters and that was "NOW". They took this theme and expanded it into the following: "The time is now for urban trees and forests," and, "This is our time." I feel this three-letter theme, "NOW," is very powerful and I firmly believe it can be adapted to our association.

Now that you've heard the backstory about why I was in Cleveland, let's focus on the topic of this article. On the afternoon of the first day of the conference, there were six different 'Urban Forestry Field Experiences' to choose from and I selected "A River Runs through It". A walking tour of the Cuyahoga River enabled us to see the changing riverfront, cultural touchstones, the new initiatives for green infrastructures, and the role trees have played in this initiative.



**"Collision Bend" in Cuyahoga River, downtown Cleveland, Ohio, on Aug 22, 2015 from 47th floor of Terminal Tower, photographer Tim Evanson. (Wikipedia Cuyahoga River website)**

The Cuyahoga River is a twisting river that runs through Cleveland and feeds into Lake Erie. So the river is running north. Most rivers in the United States run south. Cleveland was, and still is, a steel-producing city. Iron ore, coal and limestone are shipped to the steel-making foundries along the Cuyahoga River. The ship being towed by the tug is moving backward, and that, I felt, was very unusual.

We had a chance to see what remains of the Ohio and Erie Canal, running along part of the Cuyahoga River. The River had become so polluted over the years, it caught fire not once, but a whopping 13 times! On June 22, 1969, the river exploded and was one of the most memorable fires ever to occur. From then on, Cleveland became known for its burning river.

The Cleveland City Fathers decided it was time to do something about the condition of the Cuyahoga River, and their efforts spurred the American Environmental Movement. Now the water is so clean, you can eat fish caught from it, as well as, participate in numerous water sports like rowing and sailing. In 2019, the Cuyahoga River was named the "River of the Year".

Efforts continue, as the city works to improve the Cuyahoga River and the riverfront. Cleveland is still remembered by old-timers as the city with the burning river, but images like these are causing memories to fade and a new image of the Cuyahoga River is being formed.



**Cuyahoga River Burning, photo weheatricksteves.com website.**



**1920 photo showing the foundries along the Cuyahoga River. (Wikipedia Cuyahoga River website)**



**Major Cuyahoga River fire 48 years ago. (Wikipedia Cuyahoga River website)**

I know this article might be a little out of the norm for the NAA newsletter, but I felt it was important to point out major problems like a burning river can be solved when we work with nature to improve our environment. I believe that as Arborists who take pride in caring for our trees properly, we are improving our environment here in our great state. Remember this: when you go out to plant, prune or remove a tree, your efforts do affect our environment.

# A LOOK BACK IN YOUR ASSOCIATION'S HISTORY

By: *Jim Keepers, NAA Newsletter Coordinator*



**Phil instructing at the first NAA EAB field class.**

I have always felt we do our association members an injustice when, at their passing, we remember what they have accomplished and tell their loved ones how much we really appreciated their efforts.

With this and future articles, I want to change this method of showing appreciation at death, and tell these individuals while they are alive, "Thanks for a job well done." My other goal is to share information with our new association members about the individuals who put their blood, sweat and tears into the Nebraska Arborists Association.

So, let's get this ball rolling and recognize a Certified Nebraska Arborist who has been instrumental in the formation of the association, and who continues to work for its development and wellbeing.

The individual I want to thank is Philip (Phil) Pierce, Certified Nebraska Arborist and Consulting Arborist, Military Veteran of the United States Air Force, NAA Board Advisory, and retired City of Omaha Forester. His last, and I feel, his most important title is husband to Edie Pierce.

Phil was one of the driving forces in the formation of the Nebraska Arborists Association (NAA). He was also a charter member of the NAA. He filled the positions of Board Director, President-Elect, President, Past President, Certification Committee Chairperson, and his present position, Advisor to the NAA Board. He developed the first arborist certification program for the City of Omaha and the NAA. He cofounded and taught many of the classes at the NAA Arborist School as lead instructor for the Pruning and Climbing Seminar and ran the Association's Tree Climbing Championship competitions. Because of Phil's teaching ability and arborist knowledge, he was asked by the NAA board to conduct the first-ever EAB training class held in Nebraska.



**Phil Pierce, 1967**



**Barb Osborn and Phil Pierce at NAA Winter Conference.**

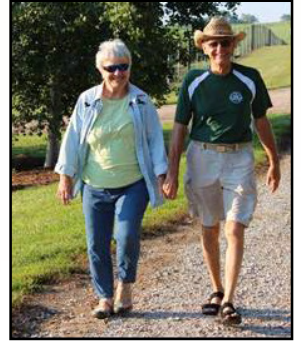
For his arborist accomplishments and his support of our Association, Phil was awarded the NAA's Arborist of the Year Award and the NAA's Lifetime Achievement Award.

What else can I say about a man like Phil Pierce, who has devoted his life to the care of Nebraska trees? I figure the following comments from Dave Mooter and Mark Harrell say it all. While Phil was Omaha City Forester, Dave mentioned Omaha's trees had never looked better. Mark sums up his working experience with Phil as, "The most enjoyable and productive 20 years I have ever had working with one individual."

Thanks, Phil, for a job well done! We hope you will be around for many more years, helping the Nebraska Arborists Association grow and prosper!



**Phil & Edie's wedding photo taken on June 27, 1970.**



**Edie & Phil still walking hand-in-hand after 49 years of marriage.**

# ASH TREE BARK SCRAPING

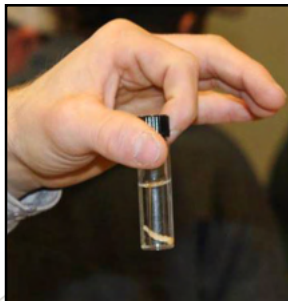
By: *Jim Keepers, NAA Newsletter Coordinator*

In addition to Standard Tree Biology, and Tree Insects and Biology, a new class activity was introduced to class attendees during a recent Plant Health Care and Tree Biology class. This activity was 'bark scraping' and was conducted by David Olson, Forest Health Specialist, Nebraska Forest Service. David set up tables with ash tree logs or branches, along with the tools required to do the bark scraping.

The class attendees arranged themselves around the tables and accomplished the delicate task of removing the bark from the samples. They were looking for ash beetle larva and the galleries created by them. This was a very intense task and the students exhibited a keen interest during the scraping lesson.



**David Olson instructing the students on how to do bark scrapings.**



**A preserved Ash Tree Larva.**



**Anna Yost, UNL Landscape Services, examines the Emerald Ash Larva she just removed from an Ash log.**



**Certified Arborist Brian Mutchie, and future Certified NE Arborist Anna Yost work together to remove an Emerald Ash Larva out of an Ash log.**

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# TREE GUARDS FOR BARK PROTECTION

By: Scott Evans, Certified Nebraska Arborist & Extension Horticulture Program Coordinator, and Jim Keepers, Maturing Certified Nebraska Arborist



It is not too late to put tree guards on your trees to protect the bark during winter. Guards also work year-round to protect the bark from rodents and sun scale. Young, newly planted trees are especially susceptible to sun-scald. Furthermore, tree guards will help protect trees from trimmer and mower damage.

Jim recommends using the black guards pictured. The standard white tree guards also work, but it is recommended that they are removed in the spring because of their white color. These guards cause heat to build up between the guard and the tree trunk. Black drain tile can be used, but it must be split down the middle which can be time-consuming and cumbersome, as it is not as pliable as standard tree guard. The black drain tile comes in different widths but can only be purchased in a roll, which then needs to be cut to the proper length for the tree it will be used on.



The black and white tree guards come in different sizes and lengths depending on the height of the tree you need to protect. In preparation for winter weather, Scott states the ideal tree protector should extend up the tree trunk to the anticipated snow line, at least 12-inches, then another 18 to 24-inches to account for blowing and drifting snow.

Tree protectors used for year-round protection should have holes that are small enough to keep rodents like voles out. Hardware cloth – metal mesh with ¼” openings or other similar items – will also do the trick. They should be placed at the base of the tree, touching the ground, up to the first lateral branch. Don’t wait too long! Get your trees ready for winter today!

## FIRE BLIGHT

Article from Wikipedia website & photos provided by Jim Keepers, Maturing Certified NE Arborist

Fire blight is a contagious disease affecting Crabapples and fruit trees such as apples, pears, and some members of the family Rosaceae. It is caused by the pathogen *Erwinia amylovora*. Research states spraying trees with streptomycin or injecting plants with oxytetracycline can prevent new infections. A tree can be saved if the blighted wood is removed before the infection spreads to the roots. There is no known cure and prevention is the key. The following photos show fire blight infection on a Crabapple tree.



Infected fire blighted tree.



Fire blight on trunk of crabapple tree.



Healthy crabapple tree.



Fire blight destroyed crabapple leaves.



What has caused this *Acer x freemanii* ‘Jeffersred’ Autumn Blaze (Common name: Freeman Maple) to develop this unusual branching angle off its trunk?

## PESTICIDE STORAGE

As the season winds down, many of us store our gardening tools and do not give a second thought about pesticides left in our sheds or garages. Many pesticides are sensitive to temperature and can lose their effectiveness if they freeze. Unattached garages and sheds have the highest risk of freezing. Check the label for proper storage. Pesticides should be stored in a secure location where they cannot be accessed by children or pets. Check out this link for more information: <https://cropwatch.unl.edu/2016/winter-pesticide-storage>

Written by Certified Nebraska Arborist, Scott Evans, and published in “Scott’s Weekly Updates” from the Extension Douglas-Sarpy Counties Master Gardener “Roots n Shoots” November 2019.

# ASH BARK BEETLE

By: Dave Olson, Forest Health Specialist, Nebraska Forest Service

Since 2016, much of Nebraska has been on high alert for the Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*). While this invasive pest stands to wipe out most of our native ash, it is currently only in several eastern counties. Additionally, there are many native borer beetles and moths which can lead to the decline of ash trees or move in when the tree is already on its way out.

The ash bark beetle (*Hylesinus* spp.) Family: Curculionidae, is a small beetle that is known to attack ash trees that are either recently dead or on their way out. The adult bark beetle is small, but may occasionally be seen when emerging or if bark scraping is done. Adults overwinter in shallow galleries then emerge in the spring to mate. Females then dig chambers inside the bark laying eggs which later hatch and begin to feed outwards. The resulting galleries sometimes have a feather-like appearance, and a number of small shot holes may be present in the bark.

Adults will sometimes create ‘ventilation holes’ in the bark near where the eggs are laid. This tree from western Nebraska was seeing twig dieback from the bark beetle likely brought in because the tree was already under some sort of abiotic stress.

Since these beetles feed on weakened trees, those infested with EAB are likely to also harbor a number of ash bark beetles. It may be easy to confuse a tree attacked by ash bark beetle to be under attack from EAB, due to the thinning canopy, epicormic shoots, and galleries present under the bark (See photos). However, ash bark beetle will always be much smaller than EAB, with circular holes, and galleries with straight lines with smaller lines diverging off those.

This pest usually requires no treatment since its presence indicates the tree is already in poor condition. Those in areas where EAB has not yet arrived may want to inspect bark beetle trees, however, to ensure that EAB is not the cause of the decline in the tree.

Contact Dave at [dolson16@unl.edu](mailto:dolson16@unl.edu) or call 402-472-6616 for information on other insect or disease problems.



# HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT BIOCHAR?

By: Heather Nobert, Forest Products Marketing Coordinator, Nebraska Forest Service (NFS)

Biochar continues to gain traction as an economically and environmentally viable solution to woody debris disposal. Simply put, biochar is a solid carbon material. Due to its simplicity, it can be adapted to a wide range of applications and modified to fit specific needs. For example, in an agricultural setting, biochar is mixed with compost, manure, or fertilizer to add nutrients, organic matter, and carbon to the soil. In an industrial setting, biochar might be pulverized and added to building materials such as concrete or used as an air filter.

Agencies, non-profit organizations, and private businesses have all recognized the benefits of biochar. The US Forest Service has funded several biochar projects and equipment demonstrations with the goal of developing biochar markets across the country. In Nebraska, the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, the Nebraska Forest Service, and many other partners have collaborated on projects ranging from feeding biochar to cattle to reduce methane emissions, to using biochar in agricultural and urban soils to improve soil health and facilitate plant growth and yield.

In January of this year, I had the privilege of traveling to Oregon to attend a demonstration of an innovative piece of equipment. The Carbonator 500 is one of three wood processing and biochar production machines in a line of “Carbonizers” made by Ragnar Original Innovation, or ROI. The equipment is designed to minimize air pollution by employing an air curtain. Air is blown over the top of the burning biomass to circulate any emissions from burning back into the system and fuel the fire. The Carbonizers are also designed to accept whole trees, stumps, brush, and C&D waste without resizing the material. The Carbonator 500, the largest of the Carbonizers, can accept woody debris at throughput rates of 20 tons of biomass per hour with an output of approximately 1 ton of biochar per hour.

In October, the Carbonator 500 came to Nebraska. Ty Simmons of Safety Tree Service in Kansas City, KS, Tigercat Machines, the Nebraska Forest Service, the USDA – Forest Service, and Council of Western State Foresters collaborated to hold a demonstration of the novel equipment in Chadron. The demonstration drew about 40 people and was held at the Solid Waste Agency of Northwest Nebraska (SWANN). SWANN manages the city’s woody debris which was used as the feedstock for the demonstration.

Another technology for biochar production that is gaining traction in the market is the Combined Heat and Biochar (CHAB) system. This type of equipment allows for simultaneous production of heat and biochar that can meet the needs of agricultural and horticultural operations. The Nebraska Forest Service, with Wilson Biochar Associates and TR Miles Consulting, will host a webinar on CHAB on Wednesday, December 11th. If you are interested in learning more about CHAB, or to hear about other upcoming events, please visit <https://nfs.unl.edu/workshops>.

Heather Nobert is the Forest Products Marketing Coordinator for the Nebraska Forest Service. She also serves on the board for the U.S. Biochar Initiative. Heather has a B.A. in Biology from Albion College and a M.Sc. in Forestry from West Virginia University. She has been working with biochar since 2013 in several roles in the U.S. and abroad.



**Biomass charcoal coming out of the burner.**



**Biomass is burned to produce Biochar**

# A SPECIAL OR UNIQUE TREE

By: Jim Keepers, Certified Nebraska Arborist



The last tree to be featured in the special or unique tree category is the Acer griseum, more commonly known as the Paperbark Maple. I am fortunate to have three of these interesting trees growing in a row on the west side of my yard.

I would consider this tree an understory tree since it will grow in either partial shade, or light sun. It will grow well in zones 5 through 8; however, it is a very slow-growing tree, which may be undesirable for some home landscapes.

Let's take a closer look at this tree and its most unique feature, the eye-catching, peeling bark.

When you compare this tree to other trees with peeling bark, it rates at the top of the list for color and texture. It is highly ornamental, showing off a cinnamon-colored bark and dark, green leaves.



## WHEN DO PINE NEEDLES DROP?

### Every Two Years

Eastern white pine • *Pinus strobus*  
 Jack pine (2-4 yrs) • *Pinus banksiana*  
 Scotch pine (2-4 yrs) • *Pinus sylvestris*

### Every Three Years

Korean pine • *Pinus koraiensis*  
 Japanese black pine (3-5 yrs) • *Pinus thunbergii*  
 Japanese red pine • *Pinus densiflora*  
 Japanese white pine • *Pinus parviflora*  
 Lacebark pine • *Pinus bungeana*  
 Macedonian pine • *Pinus peuce*  
 Ponderosa pine • *Pinus ponderosa*

### Every Four Years

Austrian pine • *Pinus nigra*  
 Red pine • *Pinus resinosa*  
 Swiss stone pine • *Pinus cembra*

### Every Five Years

Bosnian pine • *Pinus heldreichii*  
 Mugo pine • *Pinus mugo*  
 Limber pine (5-6 yrs) • *Pinus flexilis*

Compiled by Certified Nebraska  
 Arborist, Scott Evans

The Paperback Maple has a rounded growth habit, but because of its slow development, it is difficult to determine the exact point in its growth that the tree will develop its rounded appearance. My trees, after 14 years, still have their columnar shape.

This maple tree will reach a height of 25-ft and have a spread of 15- to 25-ft. It blooms in April and produces very small, non-fragrant, yellow flowers. During the intense heat of summer, this tree benefits from additional watering and would do quite well in an over-irrigated lawn. The leaves turn a beautiful, red color in the fall. I recommend this tree be planted near the house so its beautiful attributes of peeling bark and red, fall leaves can be enjoyed all year round.

## EAB TREATMENT TIME

Article from: Nebraska Extension: Community Environment: Hort Update for October 15, 2019

**Spring is the best time to treat for Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Do not begin treatment until EAB is confirmed within 15 miles of your location.**

With EAB now confirmed in Greenwood, Omaha, Lincoln, Fremont, and near Ashland, wait until spring to treat healthy trees that are up to 15 miles from these locations. For trunk injections, Mid-May through June is the ideal application timing for good control. For soil treatment, products containing imidacloprid are best applied in April just before trees leaf. Products containing dinotefuran are best applied mid-May to early June. Now is the



Photo from [www.myswingle.com](http://www.myswingle.com) website.

time to assess ash trees to determine if they are candidates for treatment. For ash trees that homeowners do not plan to treat, removal of the tree should be considered once EAB has been found within 15 miles of that tree, rather than waiting for the tree to become infested and die. At that time, ash trees can become brittle (more so than other species of trees that die from other causes) and they become a risk as well as more challenging to remove.

## NAA HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The office will close for the Christmas holiday on Monday, December 23 and reopen on Thursday, December 26. The office will be closed on Tuesday, December 31 and Wednesday, January 1 for the New Year's holiday. Mail, emails, and voice messages will be checked during the last two weeks of December so that urgent matters can be handled, if necessary, even during the days the office is scheduled to be closed.

The NAA staff and Board of Directors send best wishes to you and your families for the holidays. Thank you for your membership during 2019 and we look forward to serving you in the new year.

# PROPER TREE PRUNING

By: Jim Keepers, Maturing Certified NE Arborist

When a tree is pruned properly at the branch collar, it triggers a reaction in which the tree produces new tissue to repair the wound. A donut-shaped callus forms as the new tissue replaces the cut. This process blocks out decay from entering the tree trunk and serves as the tree's natural defense mechanism.



**Improper pruning cut into the branch collar.**



**Wounding tissue being formed in the shape of a donut.**

An improper pruning cut into the branch collar is known as a flush cut and will result in the tree not forming the distinct donut-shaped callus. Trees that are pruned incorrectly are unable to compartmentalize the wound and are more susceptible to decay, which eventually spreads throughout the tree trunk. Another common mistake is a pruning cut made outside of the branch collar. These cuts leave branch stubs and, once again, leave the tree susceptible to decay.



**Proper pruning cut at the branch collar. The wound has closed completely.**

## NOMINEES BALLOT

This ballot has been prepared so that as members you may vote on the slate of officers as prepared by the Nominating Committee in accordance with the bylaws. In compliance with Articles VII, VIII and IX of the bylaws, the Nominating Committee has prepared a slate to be submitted to the membership. In further concurrence with the bylaws and as defined by Roberts Rules of Order, the slate lists one candidate per position. In an effort to allow individuals to review candidate information, below is information about the individual on the ballot. In order to move forward with the business of the association, it is imperative that you return your ballot by the time specified. Without your vote and active engagement in the business of the association, we will not be able to have an association to promote our profession. **Ballots need to be returned by January 15th.**

Board candidates will be introduced at the start of the 2020 Nebraska GREAT PLAINS Conference NAA Business Meeting. All members listed in this notice of annual meeting are eligible candidates and have agreed to have their names placed on the ballot. The membership will vote on candidates prior to the conference. The NAA Board will have an opening to elect a person to serve as Secretary, and Director. Individuals elected will officially begin his/her term on January 28, 2020.



**SAMANTHA STEWARD (Secretary)** Samantha Steward is a Landscape Designer with Nebraska Nursery & Color Gardens. She has a strong passion for trees and making the world beautiful with plants. She is a Southeast Community College and University of Nebraska graduate in Horticulture, Agribusiness and Precision Agriculture. A couple of strengths she has are in organization and communication. She would describe herself as a sponge and is always wanting to learn new things.



**TOM ANDERSON (Director)** Tom has been in the industry for 20 years, 13 as a certified arborist. Tom started in line clearance for 6 years. He started my own company doing commercial, residential, and line clearance in 2006. After 5 years he went back into line clearance with Wright Tree Service and have been there ever since. He spends as much time possible training what he has learned and is trying to learn anything new and improved.

**CLIP HERE**



## 2020 SLATE OF NOMINEES BALLOT

**YOUR VOTE MATTERS! PROXY BALLOTS MUST BE RETURNED BY 01/15/20.**

- I accept the 2020 Slate  I do not accept the 2020 Slate  
 I abstain from voting

Secretary ..... Samantha Steward  
 Director ..... Tom Anderson

**Please return your ballot by January 15, 2020 to the NAA office by mail or fax to (402) 761-2224.**



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