URBAN FORESTRY[1]

by Bob Nobles

My job as Urban Forestry Specialist for the U.S. Forest Service in the South and in the Caribbean is to communicate. In my last 20 years, I have spent a great deal of my time working with, and cooperating with, both the public and private sector in propagating, planting, and transplanting urban trees; protecting and maintaining roadside, park, and yard trees; and coordinating programs and policies involving these kinds of activities between public agencies, utility companies, and the private sector. I am convinced that our biggest problem in arboriculture is a lack of communication!

I have been an ISA member for only four years. These four years with ISA have given me as much satisfaction as 25 years with my professional society!

I will not attempt to define urban forestry to this group except to say that I consider anyone who has a responsibility for urban trees to be working in the general field of urban forestry! I do not feel that professional foresters have a lock on urban forestry, and a key to all the answers! As a graduate forester, I believe that discipline qualifies me to participate in urban forestry. Still, in the past few years, working out of Atlanta, from Texas to Virginia, it has come home to me that urban forestry is a varied and complicated field serviced by dedicated nonprofessional and professional horticulturists, botanists, entomologists, pathologists, landscape architects, planners, engineers, and foresters. Few of us have the luxury of working only with our specialty. Most of us are called upon to deal with, and be familiar with *all* these disciplines. We are fortunate, indeed, when we can enlist the services of a specialist to help with the immediate problem at hand.

Urban forestry may well be a misnomer. It may not adequately describe the propagation, protection, maintenance, and planting for urban trees. But even arboriculture does not satisfy all of us all the time! To me, it is less important to define and identify than it is to communicate! To me the great value of the ISA national and regional meetings is the opportunity to communicate, the opportunity for Californians to know what is going on in Florida, and for researchers to know the needs of the man-on-the-ground; the opportunity for the utility arborist to know what the municipal arborist is thinking; and for the horticulturist to get a better idea of the innovations in landscape architecture. And perhaps, most important of all, for us nonresearchers to learn the latest in basic and applied research.

My one big disappointment at these ISA meetings is the realizations that the high cost of registration, hotel, and meals prevents the attendance (and the membership in ISA) of a great number of young people who desperately seek this interchange of information, but cannot gain travel authorization and/or funding. Somehow we must reach this group. These people will be holding our jobs in the near future. Although the First Southern Urban Forestry Conference in Orlando in 1975 was a step in this direction, I wish attendees at that meeting could gain exposure to ISA meetings.

Let me comment, briefly, on a few matters which are regularly brought to my attention as I travel throughout the South. First of all, my job as Urban Forestry Specialist for the U.S. Forest Service requires me to work through the State Forester. Some southern states, Florida, Georgia, and Alabama, have comprehensive and innovative urban forestry programs. A few other states, South Carolina, Virginia, Texas, and Mississippi have initiated urban forestry programs in one or more areas. And other states in the South are contemplating urban forestry efforts in the near future. My job is to keep open a line of communications so that all of these states can find answers to their urban forestry problems, frequently by knowing how a neighboring state, or county, or city is handling a similar problem. Frequently, requests for information come direc-

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tly to me from municipal and utility arborists and from institutions wishing to initiate or expand urban forestry programs. In these instances, I inform the State Forester of the contact, and urge his participation. Sometimes he handles the matter directly. My counterpart in the 20 northeastern states is Dick Watt, who operates out of Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. In the western states, the Forest Service responds to requests for technical assistance through its state and private forestry offices in Missoula, Denver, Albuquerque, Ogden, San Francisco, and Portland.

The U.S. Forest Service has its authority to offer technical assistance in urban forestry under the Cooperative Forestry Management Act of 1950, as amended in 1972. It is the policy of the Forest Service to help plan, improve, and protect environmental quality of urban areas, and to encourage and support competent private enterprises. The Forest Service does not consider itself the only federal agency qualified to engage in urban forestry. The Extension Service has a basic responsibility, and in some areas of the south is doing an excellent job. The Soil Conservation Service, the Corps of Engineers, TVA, and the Agricultural Research Service, and especially, the National Park Service, are all interested in and to some degree, involved with urban forestry. The all-important work on the ground is the responsibility of others: the states, cities, counties, utilities, universities, and especially, the private sector. If we in the federal agencies can give technical assistance, call on us. In most instances, we will simply put you in touch with a source of information.

Many of you have heard of pending federal legislation for urban forestry. In the past few years, there has been at least one urban forestry-related bill introduced in Congress each year. This year will probably be no exception. It is possible that the Forest Service will be asked to administer any funds which go to the cities, through the states, for any urban forestry or arboriculture legislation. We should hear more on this subject in the next few weeks. But don't expect any dollars in the immediate future. As you know these things take time even after enactment.

When I talk about urban forestry, I usually refer, in some manner, to the enviable situation in Metro Atlanta, a situation with which I am intimately acquainted. I firmly believe that the cooperative atmosphere and high degree of accomplishment there, are due, directly, to the fact that personnel working in the public and private tree-related sectors in Atlanta are well acquainted and on a first-name basis. They are fully aware of each other's problems and restrictions. The city forester and city arborist have regular, not occasional, contact with the eight urban foresters who are employed by the State of Georgia and stationed within the Metro Atlanta area. In turn, these city and state men have frequent contact with Gene Nease of the Georgia Power Company, Dave Walker of Georgia Tech, and representatives of the private tree care sector. This regular interplay allows all of us the luxury of disagreeing with one another, sometimes heatedly, yet knowing that there is a basic understanding and trust among us that will see us through the emergencies, as well as the usual, daily problems.

Atlanta's tornado of March, 1975 provides an excellent example of how all urban forestry forces in Metro Atlanta can and do work together successfully and under the most difficult of circumstances. Although all of those directly involved with tree removals and tree maintenance and cleanup work following the tornado will tell you in no uncertain terms that there were a thousand snafus, and a thousand situations where the actions of one hampered the intentions of another, still, the success of the tornado salvage work was amazing. Atlanta's damages approached $100 million. The storm struck indiscriminately at housing projects, apartment complexes, industrial parks, and a super residential area before creaming the Governor's mansion. Of 2.8 million board feet of commercial timber on the ground, and all within the city limits, 82% was commercially salvaged: 45% as sawlogs, 45% as pulpwood, 5% as firewood, and 5% as chip mulch. No one person, and no one agency , was accountable for this remarkable salvage. It was a joint effort; an effort made possible by the fact that nearly all the urban forestry participants knew each other, and were accustomed to working together, before the

emergency. They knew in which areas they could and should assist, and the extent to which their counterparts in other agencies would initiate, continue, or complete a given part of the total cleanup job. Hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal disaster subsidies were saved the taxpayers because of the splendid cooperation and coordination of the City of Atlanta, the State of Georgia, the Georgia Power Company, and the private sector.

And speaking of coordination and communication, there is one more reference I'd like to make and that is a reference to John Andresen's *Bibliography of Community and Urban Forestry.* The Forest Service financed much of this bibliography, and my office in Atlanta has already distributed over 3,000 copies, on request. We may have to go to a third printing. Still, all of us realize that the bibliography is already out-of-date. How can we update it? What is the logical mechanism for making new research and applied innovations known to all of us in this vast field of urban forestry? We must come up with some answers and we must find funds to back up those answers. For communication is the name of the game, make no mistake about that.

I agree with Chandler Hancock about the importance of removing some city trees, instead of pruning them year after year, especially if the species does not lend itself to pruning or if growth regulators are impractical. I believe a well planned, gradual tree removal program, followed immediately by a well planned tree planting program is good, sound business, especially when considering the future of sick or injured trees, or trees which are safety hazards, improperly spaced, or of the wrong species. I'm prompted to commend the Georgia Power Company for its excellent publication, *Planting the Right Tree in the Right Place.*

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ABSTRACTS

Ferguson, Ryker, and E.D. Ballard. 1975. **Portable oscilloscope technique for detecting dormancy in nursery stock.** USDA Forest Service Gen. Tech. Rept. INT-26. Ogden, Utah. 16 p.

The proper timing for lifting nursery-grown planting stock is an important factor in the ultimate success of revegetation efforts. This report describes a portable oscilloscope technique used to determine the level of activity or dormancy of nursery stock and plants in the field. The equipment includes a battery-powered oscilloscope and square wave signal generator, both commercially available, and a specialized electrode that must be constructed. A variety of plant species, including conifers and deciduous trees and shrubs, were monitored during all seasons of the year. Oscilloscopic wave form appeared to be related to periods of plant dormancy and activity. Certain similarities in wave form-seasonal relations were observed in related groups of plant species. The report describes the equipment used in detail, and suggests several potential uses to nurserymen and research workers.

Woogerd, S.M. 1976. **Agricultural spray adjuvants.** Agrichemical Age 19(7): 20-21, 23.

A few years ago, the discovery that spectacular improvement in the performance of many foliage-applied herbicides was possible when certain surfactants were included in the spray solution, firmly established at least one role of the agricultural spray adjuvant in improving the efficiency of pesticide chemicals. Since then, we have been besieged by a whole gamut of surfactants and other additives, of varying effectiveness, from which to choose the proper product for a particular application. It is from this mass of confusion over what surfactants are, what adjuvants are, and which one to use and where, that we must try to provide some order and understanding. It is particularly timely now with avid public interest in and federal scrutiny of chemical usage and its relationship with the environment, to improve our efficiency in the use of agricultural chemicals.