

URBAN FORESTRY/ARBORICULTURE PROGRAM¹

by Bob Nobles

Although the title of this panel presentation, as printed in the official program, is *Urban Forestry/Arboriculture Program*, it is my understanding from those who solicited my participation that I would address at least two areas which are of concern to many ISA members: 1) What is urban forestry, and how does it differ from and relate to arboriculture; and 2) To what extent is the "Government" involved in urban forestry. There are many spin-offs of these two basic problem areas, and I hope that Bob Felix and I can help identify some paths for better understanding. If I can be of help it is largely due to the fact that my job enables me to travel about the country.

Most of those with whom I'm closely associated, know that I avoid a definition of urban forestry. It is less important, at this time, to define and classify than it is to communicate and avoid unproductive turf-guarding. These are not new thoughts. I've been repeating them for a number of years! However, this time I'll give you a definition of urban forestry. I lay no claim to its accuracy and adequacy. It is, however, the definition agreed upon by my agency, the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, and the State Forestry Organizations, for implementing the urban forestry program which the Congress has authorized and funded and assigned to our agency for implementation.

Urban Forestry means the planning, establishment, protection and management of trees and associated plants, individually, in small groups, or under forest conditions within cities, their suburbs and towns. This is a direct quote from the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978.

Further: Urban Forestry is a concept that encompasses the planning and management of all urban forest resources for their present and potential contribution to the physiological, sociological and economic health of urban society. Inherent in this concept is the development of an awareness by the urban populace of the role of

natural resources in the urban environment. In its broadest sense, urban forestry may relate to street and residential trees, urban woodlands, wildlife habitats, open spaces, windbreaks, greenbelts, roadside screens, curb areas, parks, and other areas within the urban environment capable of supporting vegetation, as well as to landscape design, tree care, and the utilization of urban wood. Urban Forestry can and should complement arboriculture.

Remember! This is a definition accepted by the Forest Service and the States for implementing the Urban Forestry Assistance program assigned to us by the Congress. We cannot claim that this is the one and only legitimate definition of urban forestry. It differs some from the definition agreed upon by the Society of American Foresters, and it differs some from definitions expounded by other responsible organizations and individuals.

Many of us feel that urban forestry can be more than arboriculture. We do *not* feel that the two terms have the same meaning. Arboriculture is an important function of urban forestry, probably, the most important one. But, there is more to urban forestry. Instead of reading from a list of activities, let me point out just a few on-going efforts within the general area of urban forestry:

The Virginia Division of Forestry assigns its urban forestry personnel to the State Planning Districts where they have intimate knowledge of proposed highway, utility, and housing construction. They are much involved with water protection and development programs. With these assignments, they have an opportunity to be especially productive in the long-range planning for urban trees on a county-wide and state-wide basis. Urban Forestry can be a significant factor in land-use planning.

The Maryland Forest Service has made an urban forestry assignment for the express purpose of helping developers of residential and commercial tracts protect existing trees . . . *before* the

¹Presented at the annual conference of the International Society of Arboriculture in San Diego, California in August 1979.

bulldozers appear on the scene. Frequently this has meant that new homes could be placed within existing forests, attracting more buyers at higher prices.

In Missouri, urban forestry personnel have taken the lead in forming active, regional organizations of municipal foresters; and a recent, successful drive for an increased millage rate was strongly supported by urban forestry personnel who made hundreds of contacts of urban residents owning rural woodlots. The millage increase benefited natural resources throughout the State.

Urban Forestry personnel of the Georgia Forestry Commission and the City of Atlanta have jointly sponsored the planting of thousands of trees on Interstate inter-changes. Within 10 years, modest thinnings have been harvested to augment the urban wood waste utilization program, a vital part of a big energy conservation effort in that state.

In New Hampshire, urban forestry personnel have created an urban forestry center which has become a solid source of information for the urban dweller and the rural homeowner alike.

In Florida, urban forestry personnel have the additional responsibility of protecting and managing egret rookeries within the city limits of Fort Lauderdale.

And in Spartanburg, South Carolina, urban forestry personnel oversee the harvesting, sale, and eventual utilization of pulp sticks from yard trees.

BUT, you may say, many arborists are involved in these same fields and have been for many years. We surely do not deny this. And most of the arborists so involved have operated with solid competency.

We have never said that foresters *only* should be involved in urban forestry. In fact, our Manual clearly states that landscape architects, planners, horticulturists, arborists, entomologists, plant pathologists, etc., as well as foresters, are *expected* to help deliver the technical assistance assigned us by the Congress. Technical assistance is, in this case, the aid, training, and advice to a recipient usually resulting in a specific project accomplishment. In no way can Forest Service and/or State Forestry personnel be involved in the

actual planting or maintenance or removal of trees, or in any other, similar, action program. We strongly believe that all these disciplines bring different, complementing perspectives to the management problems of urban vegetation.

But, back to *who* should/might be involved in urban forestry. The real key is *competency* in these fields. An experienced individual, without formal college training, can be a competent professional in the finest sense of the word. I know of many thoroughly competent arborists in both the municipal and the private sectors who fall into this category. Conversely, a college degree in any one or more of these fields does not give instant competency! And I think this is an area where we find both confusion and distrust. Still, young people bring new ideas and hopes and challenges, and we oldsters are crazy if we do not listen and learn ourselves.

In our two-year-old, federally-financed, cooperative urban forestry program, we have seen some states assign inexperienced personnel to urban forestry programs. Some States have, because of the uncertainty of Federal funding, re-assigned traditionally trained and experienced foresters to urban forestry positions. Many states have developed a fine cadre of talented urban forestry personnel and have built a strong program to supplement the experience already available in the municipal and private sectors. Where premature assignments of inadequately-trained personnel have been made, we expect the picture to change considerably in the next year. Meanwhile, we acknowledge the training efforts extended by Davey and others of the private sector to increase the arboricultural knowledge of State Forestry personnel. When we can improve the attractiveness of the smaller cities, we can help alleviate the pressure on the big cities!

To better clarify the confusion of some concerning the areas of urban forestry and arboriculture let me draw on my own background:

For 17 years I had an urban forestry responsibility for many islands in the Caribbean. Although I had years of traditional forestry behind me, (the Rockies, Alaska, etc.), I did not know a mahogany tree from a horseradish tree when I first landed in St. Croix! Within a year a nursery had been

established and we had propagated every species we could lay our hands on. Within two years we developed a small sawmill to utilize the excellent hardwoods. In another year or two we had constructed a fence post treating plant so that we could harvest mahogany and teak thinnings from the private yards and small woodlots. Meanwhile, we planted improved species along the roadsides, pruned and maintained the established trees and removed huge mahoganies under power lines and overhanging crowded residences. In my spare time, I flew off to another island, to address the Legislature and/or the Governor, for the promotion of some budgetary or administrative action.

I mention these experiences for one reason only. I was engaged in urban forestry which included arboriculture, but basically, mine was an urban forestry responsibility.

One of our problems is the inadequate distribution, geographically, of competent consulting arborists. Perhaps Spence Davis will consider a directory of consulting arborists, one that will clearly indicate where this expertise is available. Meanwhile, few of us who feel we represent urban forestry want an organization separate from ISA. It is vital that we talk with each other and not drift off by ourselves. The trends towards State ISA chapters is a big step in the right direction. And, somehow, we must make it possible for on-the-ground personnel to attend these meetings at a more reasonable cost. Gordon King has already initiated arrangements for inexpensive accommodations for those wishing to attend the Hartford session in 1980.

In response to many inquiries, here is a list of urban forestry products for which the Washington Office of the Forest Service has contracted in 1979:

1. Penn State University: *A Guide to Urban Tree Inventory Systems.*
2. Olaf Unsoeld: *A. Federal Assistance for Urban Forestry; B. National Organizations Involved in Urban Forestry; C. Job Descriptions for Urban Forestry Positions in the Public Sector; D. Analysis of Some Municipal Tree and Landscape Ordinances; E. Certification/Licensing/Registration of Arborists.*

3. Asplundh Environmental Services: *A Study of the Information Needs in Urban Forestry.*
4. John W. Andresen: *Inventory of Urban Forestry Educational Curricula*
5. Carey Arboretum: *Directory of Urban Forestry Practitioners*
6. Dept. of Agriculture: *Five Urban Forestry Exhibits*
7. National Arbor Day Foundation: *Promotion of Tree City USA*

Now, what about "Government" involvement in urban forestry? The term, "Government" involves many entities, and I can speak for only one Federal agency, the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

I do not want *more* government intervention, whether at the Federal, State or local level. I want less! And our urban forestry Manual has been written with this kind of thinking in mind. The State and Private branch of the Forest Service does not intend to become involved in regulatory efforts. It is not our business! A few states, but very few, have regulatory powers in the area of urban forestry. Most will simply recommend, upon request, both the advantages and disadvantages of such options as ordinances and certifications. We feel very strongly that certification and licensing should be from within.

We are resolutely convinced that the private sector, including consultants, contractors, nurserymen, etc. will eventually be the backbone of the urban forestry program, just as the private sector is now the backbone of the arboricultural industry. Our Manual reflects these convictions.

In an effort to get more of our annual grants to the private sector, as well as to the municipalities, we are urging the States to consider sub-granting some of their urban forestry funds to municipalities and organizations. This year we expect that nearly 1/6th of our total of \$3,500,000 will be sub-granted, to such organizations as the Oakland Tree Task Force, to "Tree People," to Iowa State University, to Los Angeles County, to large cities like Louisville, New Orleans, and Anchorage, Alaska, and to many small communities, especially in the Midwest. Currently, 25 states are sub-granting at least a part of their funds.

Remember, the Forest Service is only one of 35

Federal agencies with funds available for urban forestry, although the Forest Service is the only agency which receives funds specifically for urban forestry.

Particularly, we acknowledge the long and conscientious assistance which the Extension Service has given to the problems of urban forestry.

Some of that extension assistance has been so meritorious, through the years, that some names ought to be emblazoned in some arboriculture Hall of Fame, Doug Hamilton and Dick Harris of the San Francisco Bay Area, along with Alex Shigo, a USDA Forest Service Research Pathologist.

When States undertake urban forestry responsibilities, it should stimulate the market and increase the quality and volume of business for the private sector. This *has* already happened in some states.

As Les Mayne says, those of us in government

employ are often "conditioned" to public service. We public servants must guard against the assumption of urban forestry responsibilities that can logically be assumed by qualified areas of the private sector. We must guard against duplication.

Meanwhile, we *must* communicate. Some, in both the public and private sectors, are doing an excellent job of communicating, and few more are trying. But there is still a gap, between the public sector and the private sector, between the researcher and the practitioners, and amongst the many disciplines involved in urban forestry. We must close that gap. Bob Felix and I are making a solid effort to close that gap, but we can't do it alone.

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ABSTRACTS

SHURTLEFF, M.C. 1979. **Sprays for non-woody ornamentals.** *Grounds Maintenance* 14(6): 46-48, 50.

Diseases of ornamentals are generally controlled by various cultural practices. When these practices fail to control diseases, chemicals are needed. Fungicides and other chemicals may be applied in the following ways: 1) to seed to control seed rot or decay, damping off and seedling blight, 2) to leaves, stems and flowers to control leaf, stem and flower spots, blights, rusts and mildews, 3) to soil to control stem rots, root rots, wilts and cutting rots, 4) to plants just prior to storage to prevent decays and rots. The table in this article is a general guide to chemical control, not a master program. Because many of the diseases listed do not cause serious damage every year, it is not necessary to spray or dust annually for their control. Frequent applications for some diseases may be necessary in Eastern states where humidity and rainfall are high, while drier areas in the Western states may need no application. The chart in this article lists diseases and chemicals for African violet through gladiolus. It will continue in future issues of *Grounds Maintenance*, listing diseases and sprays for hollyhock to zinnia.

WALTERSCHEIDT, M.J. 1979. **Detection and correction of tree root disorders.** *Weeds, Trees and Turf* 18(6): 31-34.

To understand the problems of root suffocation, strangulation, and surface rooting, it is necessary to know a little about the four primary functions of roots; absorption, conduction, storage, and anchorage. The cause of girdling roots is not always known. It is suspected that quite often girdling roots result from poor planting of trees. Surface rooting seldom is directly harmful to the tree but can cause maintenance problems when the roots appear above the surface of the soil. Perhaps the most perplexing problems encountered by grounds managers are associated with construction injury. Some of the problems may not be evident for three years or more after a facility is completed. Be alert to discover declining trees early. The sooner corrective action is taken the more likely the tree will survive.