

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: A SECOND USE

by L.M. Anderson and D.B.K. English

In a previous article, we described how a municipal forestry department can find out what the public thinks by asking a series of questions and analyzing the answers. In a survey the basic flow of information is from the public to the agency. In another format, questions and answers can be highly effective for sending information in the opposite direction — from the agency to the public. We are referring to judicious use of a quiz in which correct answers are provided. Newspapers often print quizzes with trivia questions on unrelated topics or on themes. By preparing your own quiz for your local newspaper, you can convey information on tree care in a pleasant and effective way. Many readers find quizzes entertaining, and the newspaper may be happy to use them on an occasional basis.

A tree quiz during the planting season may ask about appropriate treatment of root balls before planting, proper depth, fertilization, watering, and staking. Proper pruning techniques can be communicated similarly, although these may require some line drawings or other art work. *(Be careful about using copyrighted material — any illustrations you may have that were produced by federal or state government agencies will not be copyrighted and you can use them freely.)*

An autumn quiz can present some ideas about tree physiology — why leaves turn color, what species in your area turn in response to temperature vs. daylight hours. The fall quiz could also focus on ways to identify a few of the prominent tree species in your area.

As an example of how quizzes can be used to convey information, **try this one:**

1. About how many questions should be included in a newspaper quiz?  
(a) 2 (b) 10 (c) 20 (d) anything from 5 to 30.
2. The best way to provide answers to the quiz is to put them in  
(a) immediately following the questions  
(b) another page in the same issue of the paper  
(c) the following week

- (d) upside down next to the questions
3. When contacting your newspaper about running the quiz you should  
(a) expect them to run it right away if they have room  
(b) let them know if the quiz is timed for the season and should be run soon  
(c) put your name and phone number on the copy in case any questions arise  
(d) all of the above
4. The quiz should be published without identifying its author or source. T F
5. Quizzes should only be offered to the newspaper about twice a year. T F

### Answers

1. (b) About 10 questions will be a satisfying length, producing an article large enough for readers to notice, but not so long that they don't read it all. Quizzes with 20 or 30 items are too long.
2. (a) Often people just want to know if they are right. Even having to turn the paper around may keep them from reading the entire answer. Placing the set of answers immediately following the set of questions, right side up, is the best way to assure that the answers are read.
3. (d) You should expect your newspaper to run the quiz as soon as there is room. Let the editor know your items are season-related (e.g., "Please run this in February because that is when people should be planting trees in this area.'). Put your name and phone number on the copy of the quiz so that the newspaper can contact you if they have any questions about the content of the quiz.
4. F. Conclude the quiz with a statement of where readers can go for more information — including your agency's name and phone if it is geared to provide such a service. And in any case, the source of the quiz should be identified for the reader.
5. T. Don't wear out your welcome with the editors of the paper or with the public by over-

doing it. Twice a year, or even once a year during the tree planting season, can help get necessary information to the public.

Quizzes don't have to go in the newspaper. They can be included in any literature produced by the forestry program, or used as promotional contests by tree businesses. They can be a fun element in a booth at a local fair, if your community has a citizen's tree commission that operates such a booth. By mixing educational and trivia-type questions together, you can make an enjoyable article that will also teach. **Try these:**

6. It's ok to rototill your lawn up to the base of a tree in your yard, because most tree roots are so deep in the soil the tiller won't reach them. T F
7. Red maples turn color in the fall in response to  
 (a) the cooling of temperatures  
 (b) the shortening length of daylight

(c) the age of the leaves themselves

#### Answers

6. F. The "feeder roots" that actually draw water and nutrients into the tree are located in the top foot of soil. Rototilling, car parking, and other activities that affect this layer of soil can drastically harm the tree's health, although the major roots may seem unaffected.
7. (b) Some trees respond to temperature, some to light, some to both. Red maple (*Acer rubrum*) responds to changes in the hours of daylight.

*Research Social Scientist  
 and  
 Outdoor Recreation Planner  
 Urban Forestry Research in the South  
 Southeastern Forest Experiment Station  
 Athens, GA 30602*

---

## CONTRIBUTED ABSTRACT

### Response of Douglas fir to topping

by James R. Clark

Analyses of the response of large trees to topping have focused on shoot growth in the area adjacent to the cut surface. Information on the impact of such treatment on growth of unpruned lateral shoots has been lacking. A group of Douglas firs (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) located in western Washington were topped in mid-summer 1979. The dbh ranged from 12.6 - 23.0 in.

Immediately adjacent to the cut surfaces, little or no regrowth took place in 1979 or 1980. In 1981 and 1982, vigorous, vertically-oriented shoots developed and averaged 42.4 in. of growth over the 2-year period.

Growth of lateral shoots (6-8 ft. above ground level) was unaffected by topping. Elongation in the year prior to topping and the two years following topping was: 1979 — 6.9 in., 1981 — 7.6 in., 1982 — 6.2 in. These elongation rates were not statistically different.

That the response was localized near the cut surface was further evidenced by a comparison of the crown spreads of topped and nearby untopped trees. Crown spreads of topped trees were similar to those of untopped trees of similar dbh. No stimulatory or inhibitory effect of topping on crown spread was found. Thus, in these Douglas fir trees, the response to topping is highly localized. *Center for Urban Horticulture, GF-15, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195.*