

BOOK REVIEW

Arboriculture: Integrated Management of Landscape Trees, Shrubs, and Vines, 4th edition. 2004. By Richard W. Harris, James R. Clark, and Nelda P. Matheny. 579 pp. Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ. ISBN 0-13-088882-6.

My association with this book started when I selected the first edition as the text for my arboriculture class at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point. Richard Harris wrote an excellent text the first time around, and subsequent editions, with co-authors James Clark and Nelda Matheny, have only improved.

The book logically starts with basic tree biology and is followed by two chapters dealing with site evaluation and soil and water relations. These three subjects form the basis for much of what we attempt to do with trees and other landscape plants. After a needed chapter describing the benefits of trees, the authors describe in detail how to use site characteristics to select appropriate planting materials. Because most urban sites are so disturbed, the next chapter deals extensively with site modification and management.

Two chapters cover planting—one dealing with more traditional, nursery-produced plants and a second describing techniques employed to transplant large trees, an increasingly common occurrence in developed landscapes.

A separate chapter titled “Special Management Situations” covers topics such as pavement conflicts, roots in sewers and in conflict with buildings, recycling wood waste, fire-safe landscapes, and management of forest remnants.

A chapter on preserving trees extensively covers the interaction of construction activities and trees, followed by two chapters on nutrient management and water management. Nutrient management is certainly an unsettled topic for arborists, with much discussion on need, rates, timing,

and other factors. The authors do a fine job of covering this somewhat controversial topic.

The chapter on pruning is lengthy, with sections covering basic principles, standard pruning, specialized pruning (pollarding, topiary, etc.), conifer pruning, and shrub and vine pruning.

A chapter on controlling plant growth is followed by tree hazard management, a topic that is of increasing concern to arborists. “Preventive Maintenance and Repair” describes commonly used tree support systems, wound care, and cavity treatments.

The final two chapters cover diagnostics and plant health care, subject areas in the direction of which much of the future of arboriculture is moving. Diagnostics and plant health care are covered thoroughly and clearly and serve to introduce the reader to these complex issues.

Although I am now retired from the university, were I to select a textbook for a course on arboriculture, this is the text I would select. The book is well written, the material is up to date, and complex topics are clearly explained. Not only is this text an excellent choice for the classroom, it belongs as well on the shelf of the practicing arborist. Arboriculture is a field of science that is expanding rapidly, and textbooks need to be updated to include new information on a regular basis. Happily, the authors of this text are keeping it up to date with the latest science on tree management. I am most pleased to have a copy of this book on my shelf, along with the first three editions that I used as a textbook.

(Reviewed by Robert W. Miller, Emeritus Professor of Urban Forestry, University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point.)

