

President's MESSAGE

EAB in Washington, D.C.

Aloha, fellow WAA members. First of all, I would like to say “mahalo” (thank you) for letting me represent the WAA at the ISA conference recently held in Honolulu. It was a wonderful opportunity for me, representing you, to network with arborists from all over the world. I spent plenty of time bragging about the WAA and our wonderful membership. After comparing notes with others, I can honestly say that the WAA is one of the finest chapters under the ISA umbrella and we can all be proud of our chapter and our accomplishments.

Some of the many purposes of the ISA annual conference are to learn new techniques, gain insight into the latest research, exchange ideas, renew friendships and make new acquaintances. It is always interesting talking to arborists from around the world to gain insight into their perspectives on certain issues. An issue that was discussed amongst municipal arborists aboard a bus while touring the city was that of tree girdling. My esteemed new colleagues and I concluded that a park worker cutting grass is incapable of mowing around a tree without girdling it. Our early perspective theories believe that somewhere in their genetic makeup there is DNA from a beaver.

Another perspective I was seeking out was that of anyone with experience in dealing with emerald ash borer (EAB). As suspected, the arborists from the Michigan chapter had all sorts of insights and advice to offer the WAA. Many an arborist told me horror stories of the little green menace and how the faces of their communities changed overnight. Most of these communities are still reeling from the deforestation effects of EAB and will continue to do so for years.

What came as a surprise was that many of the Michigan arborists assumed that EAB was active in Wisconsin. Their perspective was that if it was in Michigan, it must be in Wisconsin. When I explained that EAB has not yet been found in Wisconsin, the Michigan arborists immediately became retrospective with ideas and advice.

All the EAB-experienced arborists I spoke with began to brainstorm aloud with questions and comments such as, “What if I could start over again? If we knew back then what we know now, we might have made better decisions. How can we stop this pest from doing as much damage as it is doing in Michigan?”

After a few hours of discussion and debate about eradication zones, quarantines, species diversity, detection trees, consumer protection and EAB toolkits, we all came to a common perspective on the top three most effective means in which we as arborist may be able to help stop the emerald ash borer. Research, research and more emphasis on research is what we concluded is needed now.

I understand that most WAA members have neither the time nor the desire to do their own research work. I also understand that one benefit of being a WAA member is to receive timely information on issues, trends, techniques and new research findings via the newsletters, Web site, seminars, workshops and conferences which we provide. So, in order for us to get the research that we all need, we need to work together.

What WAA needs right now is for all the membership to help the cause. I am making a WAA presidential plea to all members for you to do three things for the WAA and arboriculture in Wisconsin.

1. Contact U.S. Senator Herbert Kohl
2. Contact U.S. Senator Russell Feingold
3. Contact your U.S. Representative

For all three, please request that they provide \$3 million to the USDA Forest Service for EAB research. All the necessary contact information can be conveniently found on pages 76 and 77 of the updated WAA directory that you have recently received.

Most of you know that the WAA is an all-volunteer association that relies on its membership to function, thrive and grow. Please don't rely on somebody else to be heard. Take action now. Contact your congressmen and let your voice be heard.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever did.”

– Margaret Mead

Mahalo

Mark Freberg, WAA President

