

Training a New Generation of Tree climbers – A Holistic Approach - Najjar Abdullah and Phil Prohaska

Training and mentoring new employees on safe tree climbing techniques is a sound investment for every company and organization. As career pipelines and awareness of jobs within our industry grow, becoming a successful Arborist is more than simply learning climbing techniques. It is important not only to teach our new generation of climbers technical skills, but also to teach them a mindset of focused learning, motivation, and a healthy lifestyle. Learn what it takes to train new climbers for success and longevity.

Presenter Bio – Najjar Abdullah

Najjar Abdullah is an Urban Forestry Crew Leader and has been employed by the City of Milwaukee Forestry Services for 28 years. As a crew leader he oversees the management of 190,000 street trees through tree removal, pruning, and planting operations. As a lead trainer, Najjar has trained City of Milwaukee Forestry training staff as well as hundreds of new Arborists spanning over two decades. He also has participated in numerous State climbing competitions placing as a top finisher each time. His passion for training and developing Arborists and Apprentices has been successful in launching many new careers in our industry.

Presenter Bio – Phil Prohaska

Phil Prohaska graduated from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point in 2006 with a degree in Urban Forestry. After graduating, he worked full time for a private tree care company. While there, he refined his climbing, rigging, and aerial lift operation skills. After a few years he moved on to work for a utility line clearance company in southern IL. He continued climbing and using aerial lift trucks to perform tree work near power lines. After 4 years He moved back to the Chicagoland area where he took a position with his current employer, the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Phil has been working there for 12 years where he performs various tasks related to not just tree, but land management as a whole. While at the Forest Preserves, he earned his ISA Tree Climber Specialist credential.

Phil enjoys teaching topics related to production tree care. He helps teach climbing and tree felling courses at UW-Stevens Point, Mid-State Technical College, Gateway Technical College, Chicago Region Trees Initiative and works with the Illinois Arborist Association as a chair and lead instructor for portions of their Arborist Training Programs.