Having kept tree records for administrative purposes for several years, the parks department staff felt it was about time we improved our tree management operation and utilized a computer.

The potential was intriguing. While sitting in the office, we could check tree species, insect and disease problems, tree quantities, and have that information visually in front of us by pressing a button.

The concept is not new, but for us it has become a reality. Most tree managers do have some technical system for identifying species, disease and other information. In this age the computer offers tree managers an opportunity to store all of the technical data needed to implement tree programs.

A management concept developed by Herman Weskamp, Professor of Urban Forestry, at Mount San Antonio College, Walnut, CA, gave us the motivation to initiate a computer tree program for the City of La Verne.

In order to even consider having a tree program, a need must exist. If that need is present, then that is your starting point. The expense of a computer can be very costly but, in our case, we were fortunate enough to have an IBM System 34 Computer. One of the biggest hurdles facing us was convincing Administration of the justification. Much to our surprise, Administration was very enthusiastic and receptive of the idea.

It is important to get input from field personnel, especially when making changes to the existing program.

The Data Processing Department was very cooperative and open to suggestions in programming our tree information. Jay Trunnel, computer programmer, discussed with us at great lengths the type of information needed in setting up a program. It is as important for the programmer to understand your goals, objectives, and purpose as it is for you, as a novice, to understand what he can do for you. Cooperation of both departments is a must.

continued on page 86
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