

Profit, Safety, Unusual Tree Problems Accented at Indiana Arborists' Jan. Meeting

By DR. PAUL E. TILFORD

"Net profit, the goal in all business, depends on many interrelated factors, such as price, sales volume, cost of goods or services, and expenses," Don Surber, of National Cash Register Sales, told the Indiana Arborist Association at the opening of its 18th Midwinter Conference, January 4 to 6, at the Claypool Hotel, Indianapolis, Ind.

The price charged for goods or services deserves more consideration than some arborists give to this important phase of their business, Surber continued. Prices must be directly related to the costs of a particular business and should not be overly influenced by competitors' quotations.

It is easy to lose money on small jobs. Therefore, special attention should be given to charging if these constitute much of the business. Sometimes, an increase in price of as little as 5% can boost net profit considerably. Volume of sales is also important to any business, but a continual increase is not always profitable if accompanied by increased sales costs. Surber pointed out that "many times, less volume will give more profit."

Supplies and equipment for use in the business or resale usually can be bought at better prices with quantity purchases. However, it may not always be profitable to stock heavily on items that can be readily procured. Many businesses find it costs about 14% to hold inventory. If capital is borrowed at 6%, the cost of holding excess inventory may really amount to 20%.

Aerial Safety Stressed

Panelists discussing aerial lift safety during tree trimming were John Harley, Indianapolis Power and Light Co.; Rex Wilkinson, Muncie Tree Surgery

Corp.; and Paul Ramsey, N. G. Gilbert Corp., Muncie.

Harley emphasized that only original parts supplied by equipment manufacturers should be used to make repairs. Make-shift substitutes can cause serious accidents, he noted, citing a case where a section of hydraulic hose containing metal reinforcing strands was used to replace a broken pneumatic hose. This destroyed the insulating qualities of the boom and a man was electrocuted later when it was pushed into a high voltage line.

Some cheap black hoses contain enough carbon to be conductors and should never be used on aerial lifts. Harley also stressed the importance of safety belts for the man in the bucket.

Rex Wilkinson reported National Safety Council studies of 184 aerial lift accidents. Of these, 47 were due to equipment failures and 137 to operator failures. Equipment failures were mostly caused by boom bolts and welds breaking and by failures in hydraulic mechanisms.

Paul Ramsey recommended daily inspections of aerial equipment made jointly by the operator and crew foreman. The machine should be run through all its movements, and cables and hydraulic systems especially should be checked for flaws, with an inspection sheet for a guideline. Aerial lifts should also be examined by factory-trained personnel at least once every 12 to 15 months, Ramsey advised.

Turning to arborists' public relations, Noel Wysong, secretary of the Midwestern Chapter, International Shade Tree Conference, emphasized the importance of advertising and publicity material, telephone image, correspondence, conduct of workmen, appearance of equipment, personal contacts, and most im-

portant, quality of work. "Establishing good public relations in the community is a job that can't be done in a day or a week. In fact, it's a job that is never completed; it must be worked at constantly," he counseled.

Unusual Tree Problems Accented

A highlight of the Hoosier arborist gathering was Dr. J. C. Carter's discussion of uncommon and unusual tree diseases. Dr. Carter, Head of the Section of Applied Botany and Plant Pathology, Illinois Natural History Survey, Urbana, described some lesser known leaf diseases: *Dothistroma* pine needle blight, oak leaf blister, *Actinopelte* leaf-spot of oak, island chlorosis of hackberry, and hackberry mosaic.

Pine needle blight, oak leaf blister, and oak leaf spot are caused by fungi, he observed. Spraying for pine needle blight with such fungicides as Bordeaux mixture or organic mercury during April and early May has been recommended, but has not controlled the disease in Illinois. Spacing trees at wider intervals to permit free movement of air between will help reduce infection and defoliation, Dr. Carter recommended.

Oak leaf blister is adequately controlled with one Bordeaux spray applied before buds open in spring, while *Actinopelte* leaf-spot does not cause sufficient damage to warrant treatment. Island chlorosis of hackberry seems to be associated with heavy infestations of the potato leafhopper, *Empoasca fabae*. Cause of leaf mosaic or yellows and stunt of hackberry has not been determined, Carter noted. He suggested that affected trees be removed and destroyed since they are deformed in growth and appearance.

A bacterial canker of oak,

sweet gum and elm, Fusicoccum canker of mountain ash, Melanconium canker and dieback of birch, and Botryosphaeria canker of redbud and tupelo were among unusual bark diseases discussed by Dr. Carter. Usually, he pointed out, these diseases are more severe on less vigorous trees and on those growing under unfavorable conditions.

Watering during dry periods, fertilizing to stimulate growth, surgery in some instances (when the affected areas can be pruned away), and complete removal of trees not responding to treatment for these bark diseases were recommended controls.

Stem diseases covered by the Illinois expert included witches-broom in pine, spruce dwarf, and fasciation. Causes of these unusual diseases are not known. Witches-broom in pine and fasciation disease of several species can usually be controlled by pruning away the affected branches. Spruce infected with dwarf disease should be removed and destroyed.

Too Many Trees

Dr. Paul Tilford, editor, International Shade Tree Conference, described the typical small-city street tree problem as one of "too many trees of the wrong kinds." This situation has come about because most small cities have not controlled street plantings. Abutting property owners have planted—and usually overplanted—whatever kinds of trees they wished. In many places these practices continue, with the result that each spring brings new problems that will become serious 25 years later.

To prevent such problems, cities must take over control of street trees by ordinance, Dr. Tilford stated. Cities must either plant the trees or require abutting property owners to obtain permission before planting approved trees at properly spaced intervals. Without control, new problems will continue to be created. Dr. Tilford cited the street tree ordinance of Wooster, Ohio, and the Wooster Shade Tree Commission as one small city's effort to do something about its shade tree problems.

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