

Project Trees

60,000 for 50,000 Modestans

By MARIETTA GUNN

MODESTO'S park department operates as a division of this California city's Park and Recreation Department.

As a separate division, its work involves tree care work for 31 parks, maintenance of 2 golf courses which involves 200 acres, and the care of 60,000 street and park trees. Current budget for planting, removing, and propagation of trees, according to Superintendent Wm. W. (Bill) Brown is \$155,000 yearly.

Tree crews clear plant growth on rights-of-way, and thin, prune, spray, and fertilize trees and shrubs. Foreman Ray Pifferini whose tree section handles these activities says a tree crew for a typical tree removal day ranges from 7 to 11. Last year they removed 393 trees, and planted a total of 1300 trees. Pifferini says that removal of 16 grown trees constitutes a good day for them. This includes leaving all removal sites clean, including eliminating the stumps.

A typical tree removal day begins with a Sky Ranger aerial bucket mounted on a motorized truck. Operator-controlled buckets carry manual and hydraulic pruners, ropes for guiding fall of trees and limbs, and a self-contained Pioneer chain saw. One or two groundsmen accompany the trimming rig, which keeps well in advance of the rest of the removal crew and equipment by first felling larger trees in open areas. This work pattern allows the trimmer sufficient time to capably accomplish any job where trees may be in close proximity to power lines or residential property requiring extra precautions and extensive pruning.



Operator controlled Sky Ranger aerial bucket is maneuvered by trimmer as he drops large limbs with aid of hydraulic pruners, rope, and self-contained chain saw. Tree foreman Ray Pifferini believed that this tree died because of excess water. Removal was delayed until tree division was sure that tree was dead.

An Asplundh chipper towed by a basket truck follows the trimming trio. While ground crews sort fallen branches and debris, meanwhile feeding the chipper, two men arrive with a 2-ton flatbed truck for loading debris and limbs not fed into the chipper. Large limbs are sawed into manageable size and delivered to designated spots per public re-

quest or taken to the sanitary fill site for burial and eventual decomposure. Main sections of large trunks are placed on the flatbed by a Hyster fork lift, while a Vermeer stump digger eradicates the three or four inches of stump left protruding above ground. One operator tows the Vermeer via pickup while the fork lift is self-propelled to



Large trunk sections are positioned by Hyster forklift and sawed to size before loading on flatbed truck for removal. All removal sites are left clean by tree crew.

the removal site by one operator.

Chips Used In Modesto Park Areas

Chips are generally distributed in city parks for mulching. Acid or oily chips are spread on road bed entries to the municipal fill site. The fill site is located on undeveloped city property already proposed as part of the city park system. Debris is emptied into 15-foot trenches, impacted by tractor, filled and levelled.

Most prevalent tree and shrub problems plaguing the Modesto area are elm beetle, elm scale, ash scale, and red headed caterpillar. According to the tree foreman Pifferini, anthracnose has been responsible for eliminating many sycamores. Unusually prolonged, damp springs the past 2 years have created ideal conditions for the fungus. Pifferini says the department hesitates to spray profusely in consideration of residents. Rather, they use arsenic lead during dry summer months when rains will not cause wash-off. Surrounded by orchards and general agricultural activity, Modesto city plantings are susceptible to the same infestations attacking commercial grower's crops. Rural orchards were highly infested with several types of mites and persistent leaf rollers this year.

Unless the city is seriously endangered by invasion of such rural infestation, the department delays spraying street and park trees, but does recommend spray mixtures for residential gardens. They offer assistance in preparation and application.

Ten years ago a Modesto Master Tree Plan was inaugurated to assist in prevention of massive or rapid spread of infesta-

tion and disease. They alternate tree varieties in selective areas. These are designated by a city map on the wall of Pifferini's office. Specific trees are identified by colored plastic strips arranged in logical sections for both present and future controlled planting. Listed in the plan are varied types of Ash, Locust, and Liquidamber. Other species included in the scheme are Pistachio, Elm, Maple, Walnut, Hackberry, Purple Plum, and Zelkova. Seven varieties of Locust have been tested and planted in this area and the department presently favors the Shade Master Honey Locust to any of the formerly used types. High on the list of disease and insect-free trees in the area is Ginkgo. Considerable numbers of Ginkgo are scattered throughout Modesto and are foolproof for the area, according to Superintendent Brown. Albizzias in Modesto parks are disease and insect resistant, but do not lend themselves well to street plantings because of messy bloom and leaf drop.

Bidrin and Metasystox R Used In Treatment Program

During spring months the department follows a regular regi-

Operator removes last traces of stump in residential area with Vermeer stump machine. In this particular instance, stump is from large sycamore tree which was victim of anthracnose.



men of systemic injection to relieve trees of damage from sucking insects. Bidrin, heretofore used in bulk form, is now available only in capsule form. It can be applied only once with equally successful results. In bulk form, Bidrin was formerly injected into a small drilled hole in each tree via a repeating veterinarian syringe, the hole plugged with sealing compound, and the tree washed. Present procedure consists of inserting a 2½ inch long, ⅛ inch diameter aluminum feeder tube into live wood. Introduction and compression of the capsule is followed by washing of tree after removal of tube and empty capsule. This method provides prolonged protection via distribution of the chemical in both leaves and wood. Bidrin, available only to qualified, licensed users, is not as readily nor inexpensively attainable as in former years. Bidrin's high potency content has occasioned more rigid agricultural control laws, therefore the department is now using Metasystox R.

Metasystox R solution must be used 3 times to equal the effectiveness of one Bidrin capsule injection. Superintendent Brown says that Bidrin at \$40 per gallon in bulk form has risen in cost to \$400 for the same amount in capsule form. During 1966, Brown says, the city treated 1000 trees at a cost of \$600. Expenditure now for treating an equivalent number of trees has skyrocketed to \$5,895 for an equal amount of chemical application. Modesto, he says, is forced to abide by agricultural controls. Therefore, they now use lesser solutions applied more often. However in particular instances, the more expensive and powerful Bidrin is the only solution for saving a valuable tree and is used.

Park Division equipment is replaced on practically the same level as in any other industry. When annual repair bills exceed purchase price of new equipment, the division finds it advisable to replace rather than continue expending funds on aged equipment. Mowers cur-

rently used include 1 Worthington, 2 Jacobsen, 16 21-inch Toro rotaries, and 16 edgers. Pioneer chain saws are used exclusively with an average of 4 per year purchased. A ratio of one small mower to every 4 is replaced on an annual basis. The department uses a LoBlo for windrowing and clearing of golf courses and tennis courts, and this fall

is purchasing a new Rake-O-Vac. For wide expanses and Aer-O-Mist is indispensable for windrowing and/or bunching fall leaves from outer park perimeters to the center for pickup and removal. Employing the Aer-O-Mist in adjustable position also aids in detaching the few remaining leaves clinging to nearly barren branches.

Youths Cannot Be Used On Hazardous Jobs

A federal order restricting youths under 16 years of age from performing hazardous jobs became effective January 1. Issued by Secretary of Labor W. Willard Wirtz, the order lists 16 specific agricultural activities. Because some are common to the vegetation care industry, they are being listed for readers. They do not affect youngsters employed by their parents.

The 16 occupations forbidden to minors below the age of 16 are as follows:

1) Handling or applying anhydrous ammonia, organic arsenic herbicides, organic phosphate pesticides, halogenated hydrocarbon pesticides, or heavy-metal fungicides, including cleaning or decontaminating equipment used in application or mixing of such chemicals.

2) Handling or using a blasting agent. For the purpose of this subparagraph, the term "blasting agent" shall include explosives such as, but not limited to, dynamite, black powder, sensitized ammonium nitrate, blasting caps, and primer cord.

3) Serving as flagman for aircraft.

4) Working as driver of a truck or automobile on a public road or highway, or driver of a bus.

5) Operating, driving, or riding on a tractor (track or wheel) over 20-belt horsepower, or attaching or detaching an implement or power-take-off unit to or from such tractor while the motor is running.

6) Operating or riding on a stall occupied by a dairy bull, self-unloading bunk feeder

wagon, a self-unloading bunk feeder trailer, a self-unloading forage box wagon, a self-unloading forage box trailer, a self-unloading auger wagon, or a self-unloading auger trailer.

7) Operating or riding on a dump wagon, hoist wagon, fork lift, rotary tiller (except walking type), or power-driven earth-moving equipment or power-driven trenching equipment.

8) Operating or unclogging a power-driven combine, field baler, hay conditioner, corn picker, forage harvester, or vegetable harvester.

9) Operating, feeding, or unclogging any of the following machines when power-driven: Stationary baler, thresher, huller, feed grinder, chopper, silo filler, or crop dryer.

10) Feeding materials into or unclogging a roughage blower or auger conveyor.

11) Operating a power-driven posthole digger or power-driven driver.

12) Operating, adjusting, or cleaning a power-driven saw.

13) Felling, bucking, skidding, loading, or unloading timber with the butt diameter of more than six inches.

14) Working from a ladder or scaffold at a height over 20 feet.

15) Working inside a gas-tight type fruit enclosure, gas-tight type grain enclosure or gas-tight type forage enclosure, or inside a silo when a top unloading device is in operating position.

16) Working in a yard, pen, or stall occupied by a dairy bull, boar, or stud horse.