

From Common Laborer

By DICK WOODS

IT ALL STARTED when I enrolled as a two year student in the Agricultural Technical Institute (ATI) in Wooster, Ohio.

My goal was to become better qualified in horticulture, and more specifically the areas of landscape design, turf management and arboriculture. After a year in the program, I'm convinced I made a good decision. These are the dividends I expect to receive: an Associate Degree in Applied Science; learn a trade; and, study under some of the best professors, instructors and businessmen in the field.



One of my early jobs was planting nursery stock. We're ready to place this tree in a customer's yard here.

Editor's Note: Dick Woods is a student studying for an associate degree in applied science at the Agricultural Technical Institute, Wooster, Ohio. He is typical of the young men across the country who are entering the Green Industry today. This article was written for WEEDS TREES AND TURF by Dick to express his appreciation for the training he is receiving and to tell others about his experiences.

I was a little naive at first, I didn't know what was in store for me. I can say now that I've worked



Landscaping is a lot of "fun" when you are knee deep in mud on a cold April morning.



Insect and disease control are important considerations to homeowners in northern Ohio. I learned how to apply chemicals for their control.



Some of the equipment I learned to operate included this boom. It is useful in removing large dead limbs from trees.

some of the hardest and longest hours in my life, but felt some of the greatest feelings of accomplishment. Let me tell you about some of them.

My school courses are pretty much what students in the beginning years of college are exposed to, math, chemistry, business management and other subjects. In addition, ATI is also exposing me to courses in turf-grass culture, horticulture, arboriculture, landscaping, nursery management, propagation of woody ornamentals — all of which I know will be put to use when I graduate.

Perhaps the part of my studies that needs the greatest amount of explanation is the earn/learn occupational internship program. This is where the student works for 18 weeks with an established business in the field. The company must be located in Ohio and approved by ATI. It is something like on-the-job training.

Because of my interest in landscaping and arboriculture, my professor, J. E. Kinsey, suggested that I talk with Larry Holkenborg of Larry Holkenborg Nursery, Inc., Sandusky, Ohio.

I first met his full-time foremen, Paul and John Leimeister. This gave me a chance to see how the company operated from an employee's view. They gave me a copy of the Company Policies to read and understand. Paul said that all employees are given these policies in order to maintain a position with Holkenborg Nursery. I asked many questions about what they did and they, in turn, asked me what I wanted in the way of a job. Then I met Larry, who by the way is a landscape arborist and a landscape horticulture graduate of Ohio State University.

After spending the better part of the afternoon going over aspects of the business, we decided to make the final decision on my internship position pending housing facilities and a favorable report from Larry's foreman.

Everything worked out fine, because at the Ohio Short Course last January, Larry, Professor Kinsey and I signed the contract. It was agreed that Larry would provide the best training possible in all related fields, would change my job duties at various times for maximum exposure to the business and explain and dis-

To Foreman In 3 Months

cuss other aspects of the job.

I first arrived to work on March 26. In about as much time as it takes to remove a tie and put on a pair of gloves they had me planting and selling nursery stock. I began digging trees and shrubs to place in show beds for immediate delivery to customers. Paul Leimeister showed me how to properly dig a tree or shrub. It was *work*, but after many days of digging I learned how to do the job well. I even learned some of the short cuts to this phase of the business.

As the weather became warmer and more predictable, we began the initial spring lawn cleanup program. This involved power raking, mowing, fertilizing and general cleanup of lawns and border shrubbery. This job became boring to me as time went on, but the end result was always a beautiful lawn.

When lawn cleanup jobs were

completed in May, all of us began planting trees and shrubs. Larry would explain to me different shrubs to use in various landscape situations. He demonstrated the correct way to plant an ornamental. As expected, I didn't always plant them correctly at first. That's when the most learning was gained; the job would have to be done over until it was right.

The details of my various assignments under Larry Holkenborg would fill a book. Larry is a perfectionist; any job I did had to be done right or I quickly found myself doing it over and over again.

Before I was promoted to temporary foreman, my assignment was to design and implement a landscape plan.

That's when the "fun" began.

My responsibilities were: all work be completed as prepared by the landscape design, proper planting

depth and watering of shrubs as previously learned; being sure that the area was cleaned up after work; leaving watering instructions with landowner for newly planted stock; preventive maintenance on equipment; and making out the daily work order for the jobs completed each day. This also involved getting the customer to sign off the job on these work orders and writing a report.

I found that one of the greatest challenges I've experienced in my 19 short years is being a foreman over men twice my age. It made me put myself in their place when I would assign various jobs to be done. I had to ask myself if I would do this job or that job. I quickly realized that being a foreman is no picnic!

All the while, Larry's right-hand men, Paul and John Leimeister, kept
(continued)

Ohio's Earn / Learn Concept

By J. E. KINSEY, Asst. Professor Horticulture
Agricultural Technical Institute, Wooster, Ohio

Stretching technology to fill a need is the objective of the new Agricultural Technical Institute (ATI) in Wooster, Ohio. Billed as the only two year technical institute in the U. S. devoted entirely to agriculture, ATI serves a state-wide function, drawing students from all corners of the state and many from out of state.

Ornamental horticulture is one of the largest enrollment areas, although the 450 students attending ATI this fall may pursue any one of 15 agricultural programs. The horticultural areas of specialization include: floriculture and greenhouse management; landscape design, construction and contracting; turf management; and nursery management.

As part of these curricula, students take basic courses such as math, chemistry, botany and communications. All take five courses dealing with agricultural business to help them become more proficient at personnel, money and materials management. Technical preparation courses include: plant materials, plant propagation, landscape design, landscape construction, turf management, diseases and pests, mechanics, ir-

rigation and drainage, garden center management, arboriculture and nursery management.

An earn/learn occupational internship is required before the student receives his Associate Degree in Applied Science. It takes 18 weeks of on-the-job training with cooperating horticultural businesses and industries. Supervision includes activity reports and a term paper by the student, evaluation by the employer and visitations by the instructor.

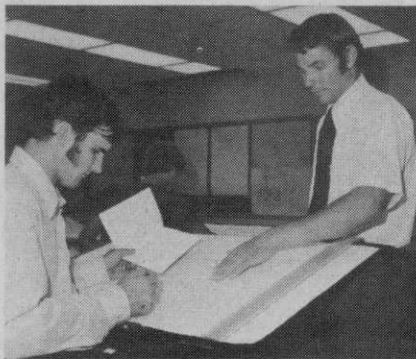
The first internship program at ATI was so successful that half of

the 50 students in the horticulture areas were offered permanent jobs when they graduated.

While affiliated with Ohio State University and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC), ATI basically stands on its own feet. It has a thirty acre campus and a \$3 million physical facility. Maintenance and landscaping responsibilities are detailed to students, including the greenhouse, turf-grass plots and greens, and ornamental gardens. Students also operate all the equipment needed to maintain the areas.

As further development, students attend many conventions, trade shows, field days and clinics as well as field trips to visit industry. Guest speakers are frequently invited to discuss industry problems.

ATI has helped fill the void between the top level ownership-management and the laborer as middle eschelon managers, foremen and supervisors in Ohio. Programs in other states are also accomplishing goals, too. Through this effort, the Green Industry can be assured of having qualified and trained leaders in the future.



My professor, J. E. Kinsey (r) reviews my landscape designs in a classroom at ATI.



After you are tied into a tree, a climber can easily work without fear of falling. I'm pruning this tree up near the top. Note that I'm tied into a main leader.

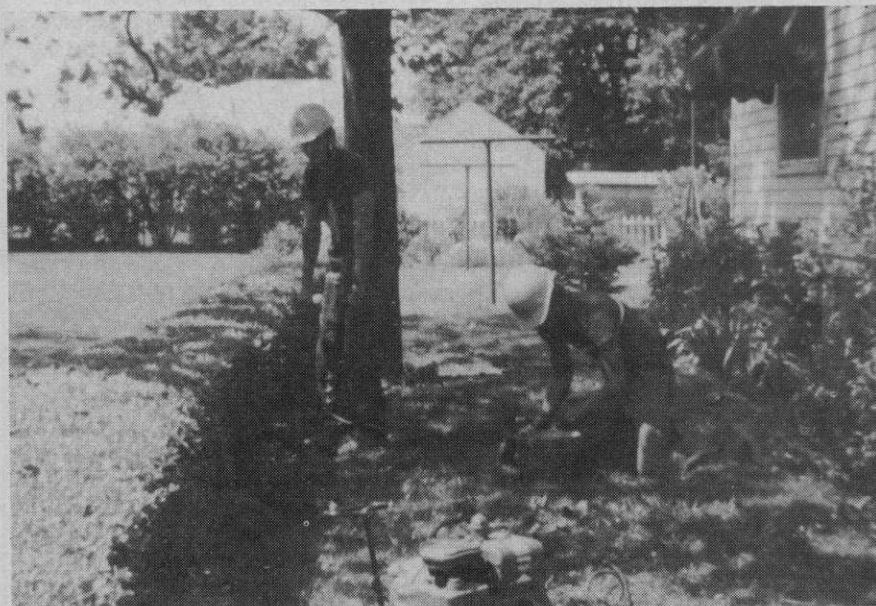
teaching me new and better ways to complete different jobs in a shorter amount of time. It's one thing to learn out of a textbook or by experience, but quite another to be taught by an expert such as Paul. With the Sandusky area as my classroom and Paul as my teacher, I was able to pick up his excellent techniques.

Paul would demonstrate how to prune shrubbery and then stand back and observe while I tried it. When I'd make mistakes, he'd correct me and coach me until I got it right. This showed that they really cared for the best job possible. Pruning is not an easy job; it requires much time and patience. But as Larry says, "A good job only takes a little longer."

In June we started tree pruning. I was a real rookie at this job, since I'd only climbed one other tree in

my entire life. John first showed me how to tie the basic knots used by arborists. I was all thumbs at first, but slowly I was able to tie the various knots. Then he showed me the safest ways to move about while in a tree. This was one area in which Larry is very strict. He was always teaching and showing the safest ways to get a job done. I can honestly say that safety was foremost in every job I did during my internship.

Larry supervised my tree climbing training like an eagle. He watched my every move, commenting where I put my feet, how I tied myself in, where to place a rope, which limb to throw a rope over, etc. For a while I thought I would go "bananas." But Larry's interest in my safety paralleled my own concern for my safety. I had no desire to fall out of a tree. So



Part of my training involved deep root feeding. Larry and Paul showed me how to operate the drill and how to fill holes with fertilizer. Deep root feeding is an important step to proper tree care.

I paid close attention to what he told me. Larry has written a paper on the safe climbing technique. He feels a man should always be tied in when climbing a tree. (See WTT, Aug. 1972 P. 20)

Once I felt at ease in a tree, we got down to learning the job to be done. One of the most important and useful steps learned was that of making flush and proper cuts. It looks easy, and it is if you know how to do it. However, good instruction is a must.

Next, I was taught how to operate the company's boomtruck and hydraulic stump remover. Experience with every piece of equipment in their inventory was my objective. Over the period of my internship I believe I satisfied this.

In late June I was promoted to fulltime foreman. I'd had a taste of this in May and now Larry decided I was ready for the big time. Most of my jobs involved landscaping, although I did do some nursery and tree work. My foremanship taught me to look at each individual as a completely different person. I found that each had different ideas and each expected different performances than the next person.

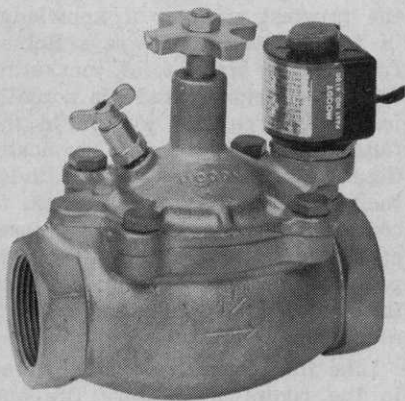
I also discovered that having all the responsibility was not as easy as it looked. There always seemed to be a new problem to solve or a decision to be made. I grew to understand why Larry, John and Paul has spent so much time in properly teaching me the "tools of the trade."

Larry Holkenborg is the kind of guy who doesn't believe in training a man from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. five or six days a week. No sir! He expected me to "burn the midnight oil," too. By the beginning of June, I had received my certificate from the National Arborist Association for completion of eight lessons in Series I of two series of the Home Study Program.

I was also accepted as a student member of the International Shade Tree Conference, Inc. Larry took me to the meeting of the association's Ohio Chapter and later made it possible for me to attend the 49th annual meeting of ISTC in Boston. I consider this a highlight of my internship. It let me rub shoulders with true professionals in the field and opened my eyes to the great challenges confronting this dynamic Green Industry.

Completion of my training came in July. It was time to return to school and to the books. I knew that while my on-the-job training was drawing to a close, my training and

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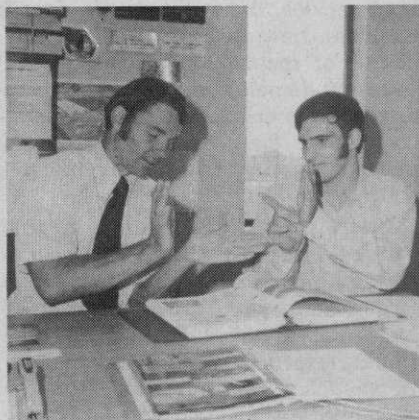
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Professor Kinsey spent much time teaching me the basics of landscaping. Here we're solving an academic problem.

LABORER TO FORMAN (from page 20)

learning had really just started. I would be constantly learning while in school. The internship could have been longer, but then it would have defeated the objective of the two year college.

Now as a "student of the textbook" again, I look back and reflect with appreciation on the opportunities I have been given. Dedicated arborists such as Larry Holkenborg deserve more than a letter of thanks. They deserve to be recognized for their foresight in helping people like myself become professionals like them. Perhaps that is the reason for this article.

I also believe that the help given me by my professors at ATI has been invaluable in my training experience. Without them, the concept of the two year college and earn/learn internship would never exist. If anyone has the opportunity that I have had, I sincerely hope that theirs will be as successful and meaningful as mine has been. □

Consulting Arborist Society Meets In Boston

The American Society of Consulting Arborists held its summer meeting in Boston, in conjunction with the International Shade Tree Conference. Over 75 members and guests were present at the breakfast meeting.

Keynote speaker was Nat Dunn of Memphis, Tenn. who described his experiences during the past 30 years with tree evaluations. He particularly related them to storm damage and how his clients fared with the Internal Revenue Service when claiming losses.

Dunn pointed out that in the IRS



When a job was completed, the customer and I would review the work done and then sign the work order. Only then am I sure that the job is finished.

manual, casualties from wind storm, tornado, ice, etc., are related to property value before and after. Nowhere does it specify "resale" value. He further said that there are many "values" other than just monetary to be considered. They include shade, noise abatement and aesthetic values.

He called ASCA member's attention to the fact that the IRS manual to its workers does say that no shade tree evaluation formula should be used. But it plainly points out that "replacement costs" are allowable, he said. He then based his claims on the costs of replacing the damaged trees as acceptable cost figures.

The keynoter said that the individual IRS agents may try to claim that two "real estate appraisers" must give values of "before and after." However, the IRS manual merely states that two "competent appraisers" give before and after valuations. Long time arborists with the knowledge of evaluating trees should surely qualify as "competent appraisers" in the eyes of the IRS when it comes to trees, he said.

Fred Micha, chairman of the case history committee, added to the story on tree-evaluation-and-the-IRS. He said that although the IRS manual specifies that the shade tree evaluation formula can not be used as such on private properties, it can be used on commercial properties.

Local arrangements for the breakfast meeting were made by Wilfrid Wheeler, William Rae and George Goodall, Sr. New England members of ASCA presented those present with jugs of maple syrup and cranberry sauce.

The annual meeting of the American Society of Consulting Arborists will be held in Tampa, Fla., Feb. 14-16.