



'We have been recognized by government as a spokesman for the tree care industry; this dialogue is very important'

Arborists' Bob Felix

Traveling Tree Man

Bob Felix, executive secretary of the National Arborist Association, is a one-man, traveling tree show. If you need to know something about the tree care industry, he probably has the pertinent and most up-to-date information right there in his briefcase, or he probably talked to the number one person in that subject area within the last week either by phone or in person.

He is straight and to the point, and you know where he is coming from after 21 years in the tree care business before becoming executive secretary of NAA. He is excited about the tree business and where it is headed in this bicentennial year, and he stopped by offices of WEEDS TREES & TURF a few weeks ago to talk about what NAA is doing and where it is going.

"We have established a working relationship with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Occupational Safety Health Administration," he said. "NAA has been recognized as a spokesman for the shade tree industry, and this dialogue is very important. It enables the industry to have a voice in forthcoming regulations from Washington and on state levels."

The same day Felix said this, he had spent the morning in Washington with other NAA members with EPA officials discussing two issues — tank mixing; and mixing like insecticides when all the same pests are not named on both labels. Favorable rulings are expected, but whatever the final formal disposition, the NAA and the tree care industry were represented in the decision.

The NAA is also developing a 22-cassette training program for the entire tree care industry, not just NAA members. Areas touched on in the training program are cabling, plant pathology, soils, fertilization,

spraying, tree removal, identification and effects of pollution on trees. "The purpose here is to give the tree care industry diagnostic and practical tools to help companies and their workers do their job better," Felix said.

Felix is very excited about the new management and technical seminars being developed for tree care companies by NAA. The first management seminar was held last month in Chicago with very good response.

The committee structure of NAA is strong. Its utility committee is working on developing a forum for exposing common problems of utility tree trimming. The standard practices committee is revising and determining new needs for additional standards of the industry. The safety committee is preparing slide programs on the correct and safe way to carry out tree care work to be shown to employees.

The NAA has participated in and is supporting shade tree evaluation guideline (see May issue). Also, the bicentennial tree program being pushed by NAA is a way to put arborists on the map and get recognition for the tree industry. "After all," Felix said, "trees are the only living witness to the Revolution."

Audiometric testing standards to come down from OSHA is another area that will be in the news in months to come. "What are chipper and chain saw companies doing about these impending standards?" Felix asked. "What kind of impact will there be?"

"Our long-range goal is to increase our membership by becoming broader in some areas, enlarge our relationship with EPA, OSHA, and other government agencies, and pursue our relationship with other organizations and associations in the green industry," he said. □