

FOREST CITY TREE: TREE PROTECTION CONTRACT APPLICATION



A roto-mist sprayer comes in handy, when more than one side of the tree can be reached with it.

William P. Lanphear has been an arborist since he graduated college in 1937. He was president of the National Arborist Association in 1971. He is immediate past president of the American Society of Consulting Arborists. He is a member of the International Society of Arboriculture, and the Ohio chapter of that organization. He is also a member of the Ohio Association of Nurserymen and the Cuyahoga County Association of Nurserymen. His company, Forest City Tree Protection Co. is located in Mayfield, Ohio, a Cleveland suburb.

Please describe your equipment inventory.

Forest City Tree Protection Co. has five sprayers in operation. We have a large roto-mist that we use in private and public work, whenever possible. We have two 600 gallon Bean hydraulic sprayers, one is a 60 GPM and the other is 35 GPM. We also have a 30 GPM sprayer. We use them for different types of spraying. For spraying elm trees we usually use the 60 GPM in conjunction with the roto mist. If we can reach the tree from more than one side, we use the roto mist, which is handy. If we cannot, we use a hose from the hydraulic.

What chemicals do you use?

We do other spraying than elm tree spraying. We do a dormant oil spray, which is mostly hydraulic. Then we go into foliage sprays for various problems. We also spray evergreens. We spray specialized things like hollies and magnolias, and crab apple trees for fungus. For the elm tree spray we use an emulsifiable concentrate. We use Methox-

ychlor, which is applied pretty strong. In the dormant oil we use the highly refined superior oil.

We also inject elms with Lignasan. Lignasan is a name, but there are trade names, one is called Elm Innoculate. We recommend that, but in addition to spraying and sanitation and all the other elm protection we recommend the injection. We haven't had much luck saving elms that are already diseased, unless it is minor, like 5%. Then we feel we can cut out the diseased portion, inject the tree and save it. If it is diseased in any amount more than 5%, it is pretty hard. We will inject it and try to save the elm if people want to spend the money to try, but with no guarantee whatsoever. It is like a cancer treatment, you try to save the patient, depending on the worth of the tree and the ability of the customer to pay for it. For routine care, we don't advocate it. If the tree is that far gone, you will probably have to take it down. In the prevention field, if the tree is healthy, we recommend spray and injections, and trimming out the dead wood and removing disease nearby. We do quite a bit of that. We also inject trees with the Mauget system of fertilizing and providing necessary elements. We have another injection system called Medicap. We don't have quite the problem in the Cleveland area which requires the use of Medicap because we have more of an acid situation. Where you have chlorosis due to a lack of iron or magnesium, we would use the Medicap injection.

We had an epidemic last year of cottony maple scale. That comes every once-in-awhile. We were pretty well pressed to do that. Every year some type of problem comes along.

FOREST CITY

We seem to have a routine of birch sprays. We sprayed twice for them. And hollies. And we have a routine of spraying all we can with dormant oil. I like to get the aphid eggs and scale insects and those things. I think that's one of the better sprays and we encourage the people to do that.

They had an idea of using lady bugs from California on the cottony maple scale. Its true, lady bugs do eat scale, but from what I understand, from some of the experts, the variety that they shipped up here wouldn't do any good, especially the first year. What you should do is spray and release the proper type of lady bug the second year. Then they'll begin to eat the scale. The first time you get them here they go into hibernation. Another problem with that is that the people want to spray too soon. You don't spray the egg masses. You spray around the first of July or thereabouts when the eggs hatch out.

We use a lot of different chemicals during the growing season. We have used quite a bit of Benlate for fungus problems. We do some injecting with Lignasan. We use Prath chemicals quite a bit. We use Zygon and some of the other fungicides. We use specifics for each problem. We keep a large inventory of chemicals.

Do you keep a large inventory of chemicals?

We purchase large quantities of chemicals because we also sell them. We have not purchased our Methoxychlor yet for this year, but we purchase quite a few gallons of that, enough to carry us through the whole season. The main portion of it will be used in the spring dormant season. We will have enough left to do spraying at half strength in the summer. We also put on a dormant spray in the fall. We try to buy our material for the whole season.

An estimate of the total cost of our chemical use is hard to say. In checking our inventory before I left I found about \$20,000 worth of chemicals. Some of those will be sold though. We are using more expensive chemicals now. It used to be you could figure the chemical end of it was a relatively small cost and it was mostly labor and equipment. Now Methoxychlor costs around \$6, give or take a dollar, a gallon. For example, if you use a one-to-one ration



A high pressure hydraulic spray rig can cover the taller trees.

FOREST CITY

in your mist blower in the dormant season, you have a high cost. The same with your hydraulic, if you use eight gallons and the cost is \$6 per gallon, that is close to \$50, or 50¢ a gallon for every gallon of spray you put out. If you spray a tree that takes a 100 gallons you have put on \$50 worth of material.

How large is your staff?

I am the principal salesman. I don't have any other salesman or supervisors but we have crews. Last year we had six licensed spray operators. Every one that does the work does not have to be licensed, but we felt it wise to have as many as possible licensed.

Do you advertise?

We have been in business for years and we get a lot of business from recommendations. Also through the phone book. We then make our call to discuss what the needs are, survey the customer's property and advise them.

We mail a freight letter to our customers. We mail out a couple thousand. Some go to customers who were new during the year. They go on our general customer list and we send them our spray recommendations, along with a card they can check off. They may decide that they need other services that we haven't done before. In addition, we have regular spray customers who have been doing business with us for a number of years. We send them a confirmation letter telling them what we are going to be doing this year and what the price will be. If they wish to pay in advance, they can do that and get a discount. Those are routine customers. We have probably 300 or 400. We have our customers pretty well lined up. We also get calls over the phone for estimates. I think most of our business comes from established companies through recommendations.

Our total spray customers during a year's time is roughly 800, but some of those have one spray, some have numerous sprays.

How do you bill your customers?

I never ask for a deposit. We take the customer on faith. I don't check their credit, though if I had my doubts I might. Most of the custom-



Tree protection begins with proper planting of a healthy specimen.

ers that have spraying done are homeowners. You see what kind of set up they have, and if they want us to spray their trees, they are probably going to pay for it. We send a bill. When the work is done, we leave a notice. We bill for each spray as we go along. I don't demand cash in advance. We do send out our letter at this time of year, and we give a 10% discount if they pay by March 10.

What do you feel is in the future for your company?

Tree spraying is a highly trained field, and I think you have to be very careful in the materials you use. You have to be up to date and study the problems more than you used to, because you can't just go out and spray trees. You have to use approved chemicals, and they will become more and more limited. You can't just pick one of a whole lot of chemicals, you have to limit yourself to what is approved and what is labeled for that particular problem. That means you have to study a lot more, attend seminars, and educational sessions. You have to know what to use, there is no question about that. I thought 10 years ago that spraying would be diminishing and falling down, and in a lot of cases it has increased. Mainly because you still have the problems. They don't go away. Business has increased be-

cause it requires more effort. Maybe there are less people that are competent to do it.

What about competition?

There is a lot of competition among tree sprayers in the Cleveland area. There are quite a few companies. It depends on what type of spraying you are talking about, because you need different equipment to spray trees, tall trees that is, than you need to spray evergreens or bushes. I think a lot of the landscapers do turf spraying, and probably small evergreens, things like that, even though that is a different field than turf spraying. But they have to be licensed and know what they are doing. Some of those people are just spraying and doing it quick because they do not have all the information. You have to abide by the labels. You just can't mix up chemicals and go out and spray all types of evergreens.

There is a safe way of handling the pesticides. I am not an advocate of spraying everything that has a disease. A lot of times it is too late for spraying. A lot of times proper horticultural methods would solve the problem without spraying. I am not saying that spraying is needed at some time or another, because it is if there is a problem that has to be taken care of. We find we are still quite busy with spraying.