

Tree crew leader wages go up

AMHERST, N.H.—Wages for crew leaders increased from an average of \$11.25 per hour to \$12.00 per hour this year at member companies, according to a National Arborist Association survey. That is a 6.67 percent increase over 1990 wages.

Median wages for climbers and ground persons pretty much remained at 1990 rates, however. The new survey indicates the national average for climber hourly pay is \$9.95 and for ground persons is \$7.50.

Wages in the Pacific were highest of any other region reporting, across the board: \$12.50 for crew leaders, \$11.50 for climbers and \$8.00 for ground persons. Likewise, wages in the Southwest were lowest: \$9.50, \$6.75 and \$4.85, respectively.

One hundred twenty-eight NAA member firms responded to the annual survey.

NAA wage survey

	Crew Leaders	Tree Climbers	Ground Persons
National	\$12.00	\$9.95	\$7.50
Northeast	\$12.50	\$10.75	\$8.00
Southeast	\$9.88	\$9.00	\$6.50
Midwest	\$12.00	\$9.50	\$7.00
Rocky Mtn.	\$9.75	\$8.75	\$6.87
Southwest	\$9.50	\$6.75	\$4.85
Pacific	\$12.50	\$11.50	\$8.00

Source: National Arborist Assn.

Landfills valuable to the green industry? This letter-writer thinks they are, indeed

CLEVELAND—A letter received at LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT regarding September's "As I See It" column from Charles T. Pick, national project manager for DK Recycling, Lake Bluff, Ill.:

"Composting brings a number of new and valuable products and services to local landscapers, and composting sites themselves can offer considerable savings to area dumpers.

● *"I find it difficult to believe that (a landscaper mentioned in the editorial) has suffered a 350 percent increase in landscape waste tipping fees. Even in Illinois, where yard waste was banned from landfills in July of 1990, yard waste tipping fees are generally at or below regular solid waste tipping fees. Furthermore, the numerous composting sites that have emerged over the last 18 months offer more convenient locations than previously available, cutting haulers' transportation costs considerably.*

"It is highly unlikely that landfills or composting sites are currently charging 350 percent more for leaves and grass than they are for regular solid waste. Indeed, we have seen tipping fees increase by several hundred percent, but over the course of several decades.

● *"Small companies do not need 10*

'Small companies can save money by composting in-house.'

acres to compost. My company handles the yard waste from over 100 maintenance companies and three municipalities on only seven acres. Roughly 4,000 cubic yards of waste per year could be easily composted on half an acre. A small company can contract a grinding contractor to process brush from time to time, and a tractor or skid-steer loader could easily manage the composting material on a site of this size.

"Small companies can save money by composting in-house, not to mention the value of having a constant supply of mulch and soil amendment to reduce or eliminate bark, mushroom compost, and peat moss purchases.

● *"Incineration of yard wastes is not a viable option either. Have you ever tried to burn a pile of grass or plant material with an 80 percent moisture content? It doesn't work too well.*

"More composting sites are coming on line every day, and composting techniques

are becoming more sophisticated. By December of 1993, businesses and cities will have a slew of conveniently located sites from which to choose, and lots of beautiful compost to use."

□ Editorialist Terry McIver says the comment that 10 acres are needed for a workable compost site was based on remarks made at a recent Cleveland symposium on yard waste. "Perhaps one of the speakers was describing a 'best case' scenario," McIver responds.

Bob Smart, of Yard Smart, Inc., contacted again by LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, says his tipping fees at a city site were \$5/ton four years ago. Today, the fee is \$50/ton. He pays more than \$900/month at the site he now uses, from April to June.

"The impact of disposal fees on green industry companies may not be excessive, as you suggest," McIver continues. "Again, my comment was based on the rumblings of a room full of disgruntled landscapers and grass cutters who seemed to think the problem was very real."

McIver points out that Charles Baird (the author who provided the editorial's source material) says the U.S. has plenty of land—not including our precious national parks—which could be converted to landfill sites.