

NY community pays to put ancient cottonwood on life support system

NEWBURGH, N.Y.—How far will you go to save an historic tree?

If you're The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) apparently a long way. The tree in question is a massive eastern cottonwood in Newburgh, NY, just north of NYC. It's believed to be about 300 years old. When it was much younger (and smaller), residents mistakenly thought it was a balm tree and referred to their community as Balmville.

In 1992 the DEC hired four independent consulting arborists to inspect the tree. They said it was unsound and recommended that it be removed. But the DEC didn't want to lose the tree. In mid 1994 it hired ACRT, Inc., Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, to inspect the tree. A team of three ACRT professionals—consulting arborist Richard E. Abbott and plant pathologists Dr. Christopher J. Luley, and Dr. Kenneth C. Miller—plus engineer Donald E. Ruff from Canon Engineering in Jackson, MI, concluded that it was structurally unsound although it continues to grow.

They felt that the tree could be saved.

The ACRT team designed a mechanical support (see illustration) with a central column and four double reinforcing guys. Tree limbs are attached to the column by means of guy cables.

Also, the team suggested soil aeration via vertical mulching, fertilization, insecticide applications when needed, vine

removal and covering a hole to keep out animals.

Private funds are paying for the work as ACRT is seeking material donations from manufacturers, distributors and area businesses.

With the mechanical support in place, the ACRT team believes the tree has a 50 percent chance of remaining structurally intact for 10 years and a 25 percent chance of surviving another 20 years.

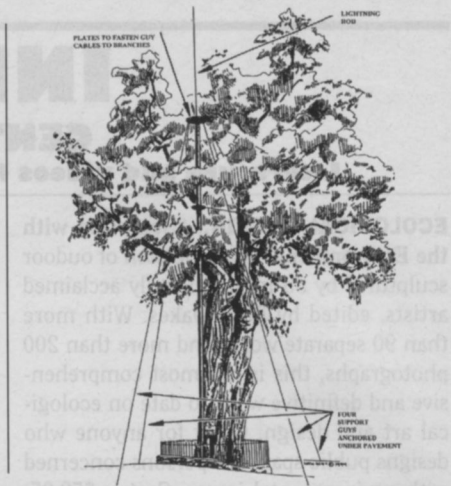
PLCAA workshops in Iowa, SC, Ore.

■ Questions from customers and the media on topics such as the "Home Pesticide Use and Childhood Cancer" study released earlier this year can be intimidating and confusing to lawn care operators.

But help is on the way. The Professional Lawn Care Association of America's continuing 1995 Regional Workshop series in August and September will include a presentation on Risk Communication by a representative of DowElanco.

The day-long programs also include information on enhancing customer service, by Bob Andrews, owner of two Indiana lawn care companies, and a past president of PLCAA.

The objective of the workshops is to "take PLCAA to the members," says board



member Larry Messina of Lawn Cure of Southern Indiana, who adds that PLCAA also plans to stage from eight to 10 winter workshops on a variety of topics.

Dates and locations for the summer workshops are:

- August 30, Ames, Iowa (Starlight Village Motel) hosted by Darryl Johnson of American Beauty Lawn Care;
- Sept. 20, Portland, Ore. (Shiloh Inn Portland Airport), hosted by Pat Nibler of ProGrass, Inc.;
- Sept. 27, Columbia, SC (Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center), hosted by Gene Broom of Service Master.

Cost for the workshops is \$35 for members, \$50 for non-members. Lunch is included in the registration fee.

To register for a PLCAA summer workshop, call the association at (800) 458-3466.

Ozone standards hang over D.C. green industry

WASHINGTON—Call this the tale of the ozone mowing ban.

The District of Columbia and 18 surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia are among the first in the nation required to meet EPA-imposed ozone standards.

"What we have been battling on the local level are attempts to outright limit or impose restrictions on the use of lawn and garden equipment during days that are forecast to be in violation of the ozone standards," says Ben Bolusky of the AAN.

Ozone is a by-product of gasoline engine use. Under the EPA rules, commercial landscape firms would be prohibited from using internal combustion engines on high ozone days. Bolusky says the forecasts (of high

ozone) come out the afternoon or night before, making it impossible for landscape firms to schedule mowing. Skipping to the bottom line, "We beat that one back considerably. What we've done is gotten the supertanker to change direction," he adds.

Rather than having the EPA going after behavioral changes of a punitive nature, a coalition of AAN and other national organizations such as the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) got the EPA to focus on technological changes. They proved that the vast percentage of ozone emissions came not from running engines, but from spills during fueling. They showed the EPA how inexpensive nozzles could capture 90 percent of the

errant ozone.

A second EPA misperception was that landscape firms running old equipment that spewed out exhaust fumes were part of the problem. But the LCA polled operators and produced figures to show that 41 percent of the landscape companies in the area buy new equipment every year, and 44 percent more buy new equipment every two to three years.

The story points up the value of having allies. "We probably belong to about 30 national coalitions dealing with national and regulatory officials. We're not bashful about lending our name to a business coalition we know serves the interests of our members," says Bolusky.