

SHADE TREE

# Leaves



ISSUE 03

FALL 2023

MW-ISA  
Midwestern Chapter



International Society  
of Arboriculture

KANSAS · MISSOURI · NEBRASKA · OKLAHOMA



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## ID that Tree...

ANSWER ON PAGE 11.





## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT, ANDY BERG:



It's hard to believe that we are already into the fall season, though in St. Louis it's either 40 degrees or 80 degrees within the same week with very little in between. Battling the weather extremes regarding tree care has proven difficult this year. What can be more difficult for someone in the private realm with residential clients is providing an explanation for tree decline when the primary culprit is a weather-related complex. Many folks want absolute answers, a physical culprit they can see, and a guaranteed

solution! Oh, if it were only that easy...

Trees in the Midwest will soon enter their hibernation phase, but our work as arborists will press on in many of the areas we practice. Utility arborists have plenty of work in the hopper, municipalities and parks can keep crews rolling on pruning and removals, and consultancies seem to still connect with their niche markets. I've worked in many areas of arboriculture, and it seems to me like the companies in the residential/commercial tree care domain are those that struggle the most during the "slow" season. While generating leads, procuring new sales, and taking in revenue is paramount to the private sector, the dormant season is an excellent time for education and training. Take advantage of webinars, workshops, and other educational opportunities that will only strengthen and better your organizations.

On the topic of education, our Board of Directors is hard at work with the Annual Conference & Tradeshow that will be held in St. Louis on January 24-26, 2024. While we don't typically have a "theme" for our Conference due to the diversity of domains in the industry, you can expect a wide range of topics that will allow you to leave as a better arborist. Last year in Tulsa we launched a full day utility breakout session while simultaneously having practical talks and those related to science and management. You can expect a similar format this coming January, as well. We will be diving into tree health, pests of the Midwest, tree risk, technology, and getting a look at the new structure of the ANSI A300, just to name a few topics. We are also welcoming St. Louis native and ISA Executive Director, Caitlyn Pollihan, to join us and provide an ISA update at our Business Luncheon. Stay tuned as we continue to assemble the agenda and have it finalized soon.

Lastly, if you can donate to the cause, or otherwise have connections, please consider exhibiting and sponsoring the Conference. An exhibit booth at the Tradeshow is an excellent opportunity to connect with prospective clients and build your network. Further, a sponsorship greatly lends to the capabilities of MWISA and allows us to develop bigger and better programs and events, ultimately providing greater exposure for your companies and organizations.

Enjoy fall while it lasts and expect a lovely, frigid winter!

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## NEWLY CERTIFIED MW-ISA ARBORISTS:

Daamon Ball  
Blake Bayne  
Timothy Epler  
Rowan Hoffman  
Andrew Little  
David McKnight

Robert Mizumura  
Donnell Robertson  
Justin Turner  
Bryan Waller  
Cori Watson  
Christian Winkelmann

## 2024 MW-ISA Conference & Trade Show

January 24-26

Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel

St. Louis, MO



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ISA Certified Arborist Exams

January 24 - St. Louis, MO

Registration Deadline: December 23

[www.isa-arbor.com/Credentials/Exam-Information](http://www.isa-arbor.com/Credentials/Exam-Information)

### 2024 MW-ISA Conference & Trade Show

January 24-26 - St. Louis, MO

Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel

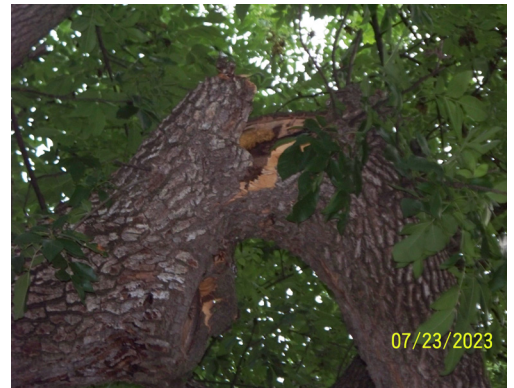


# MID-WEST TREE FAILURE DATABASE

On July 5th, 2023, I formed the Mid-West Tree Failure Database. This project is a place where arborists can submit information related to tree structural failure so we can eventually write species profiles on how certain tree species perform over time, what kind of fungus infect them, and their general structural failure pattern. Anyone can submit data and see the collected information. Data can be submitted here: <https://arcg.is/iCqyq0> and results can be seen here: <https://arcg.is/W5GO1>

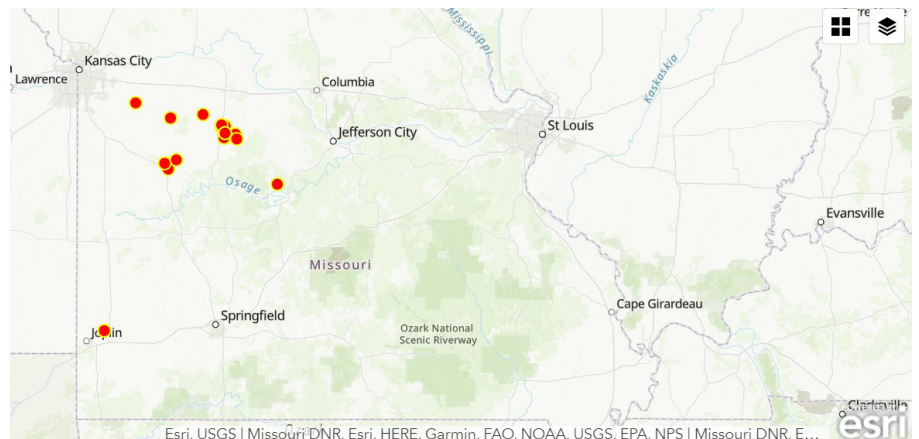
Going forward, the quarterly articles I write for MWISA will feature data from this database and/or specific tree failure stories. Here is a sample of the data we have and a short story on our first tree failure report.

From July 5 to September 7, 2023, the Mid-West Tree Failure Database has collected 19 tree failure reports. These reports have all been from Missouri, mostly from Mid-Missouri around where I live in Sedalia. Of that data, we had 11 reports of branch failures, 6 trunk failures, and 2 root failures. The days that had the most failure reports were August 4 with four failure reports and August 18 with three failure reports. The tree species that were most reported was tied with both sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) and white oak (*Quercus alba*) having four failures each. Most trees that experienced a failure (7 trees) were between 22-29 inches in diameter. Eighty-four percent of the trees that experienced a failure were in good condition and 16 percent were in fair condition.



One failure that I want to highlight from this data was the very first report I made on July 23. An old green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvatica*) that experienced a branch failure in Sedalia, Missouri. This branch failed in the morning hours with winds that were less than 5mph. This tree had an extensive column of decay which ran down the failed branches from where the tree had been previously topped about 20 years ago. While this failed branch landed on a car, it did not do any significant damage. In the future, I will be pruning this tree so it can be retained. Some things are not so unscathed in tree failures and here are some photos from a failed pin oak (*Quercus palustris*) that did cause some significant damage to a shed.

Lastly, thank you for reading and please send in tree failures reports when you see them.



## 2023 AWARD NOMINATIONS

Greetings Midwest ISA members,

I hope that this finds you all in good spirits. Tree work is historically known for its resilience and dedicated teams of wholehearted arborists. This year, let's all take the time to acknowledge hard work and dedication. Who among us is making a difference within the ISA? What team member is taking on a new role? How are we working to adapt to new policies and educate our neighbors? The Midwest ISA looks to recognize achievement in the field of Arboriculture each year and 2023 is an exceptional opportunity to do so. Please take the time to go online and make it known that we are a group of outstanding people that do great things in the world of trees we live in. We all know how we feel when someone else pays us an honest compliment, now is a great time to give that feeling.

**AWARD OF MERIT:** Recognizes outstanding meritorious service in advancing the principles, ideals, and practices of arboriculture. Granted only to members of the MW Chapter of ISA.

**AUTHOR'S AWARD OF EXCELLENCE:** Recognizes authors of outstanding publications, news stories, radio and television programs for sustained excellence in the dissemination of timely information pertaining to the field of arboriculture. The information provided must have impact on the Midwest chapter audience.

**PRESIDENT'S AWARD:** Recognizes an individual, group, company or agency that has provided a significant impact in the field of arboriculture during the previous two years. This award would be presented at the discretion of the current MW Chapter ISA President.

**AWARD OF ACHIEVEMENT:** Granted to members of the Midwest Chapter ISA only, this award recognizes sustained outstanding effort or contribution to the advancement of ISA within the Chapter.

**HONORARY MEMBERSHIP:** Recognizes individuals or groups who are not members of the Midwest Chapter who have provided outstanding or noteworthy service in promoting arboriculture within the Chapter. Recipients will have made material contributions to the advancement of arboriculture through research, field practice, promotion, invention or literature. They should have an ongoing interest and may include individuals, groups or organizations.

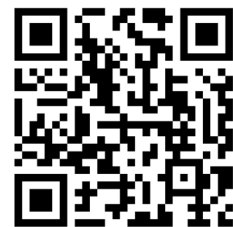
**HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP:** Bestowed upon members of the Midwest Chapter that have contributed materially and substantially to the progress of arboriculture in the Midwest Chapter and have given unselfishly in their efforts to support and advance arboriculture.

In addition, the Chapter presents the Arbor Day Gold Leaf Award. The Gold Leaf Award is designed to recognize an individual, organization, or community in the Midwestern Chapter area for outstanding Arbor Day programs or community landscape beautification projects. This is an opportunity for the Midwestern Chapter to recognize projects that have had an impact on a community or region with an international award. Projects should show an impact over several years.

Sincerely,

Brian Houser

SCAN ME



**AWARD NOMINATIONS  
DEADLINE EXTENDED  
TO DECEMBER 1, 2023!**

### NEW MW-ISA MEMBERS:

Margaret Owens	Donnell Robertson
Quintin Johnson	Dylan Baker
Christopher Kamakas	James Standlee
Mathew Frank	Alfonso Alvarez
Nathan Clark	Stan Braude
Adam Brown	Sage Steinmann
Joshua Shroyer	Waylon Gaye
Udaykiran Bhuma	Meghan Bush
Jacob Keyes	Brandon Lara
Roger Scherrer	Emil Banaszak
Juan Rodriguez	Shaun Mellor
Taylor Neff	Shelby Miller
Anne Brady	Christopher Bucklew
Daamon Ball	Eric Merriman
Tony Gould	Samantha Rozic

## CLIMBER'S CORNER: TEACHING NEW DOGS OLD TRICKS

As tree climbing is advancing at breakneck speeds, it's becoming clear to me that old dogs in this industry can learn new tricks. I am all for more efficiency in tree climbing, any new advancements that can reduce wear and tear on my body are happily embraced. Many other older arborists are adopting new techniques that will add years, maybe decades to their climbing career as well. Now, the problem with all of the new shiny stuff, is that the old tried 'n' true is getting cast into the discard pile. Some of it rightfully earned its place there, but many older techniques still hold great value to old and new climbers alike. Here are a few things to blow the dust off of, or integrate into your bag of tricks.

**Pole tools.** The ol climbing crutch has a bit of a bad image with the climbing community. In the wrong hands, a pole saw can be pretty bad for a tree, and too much pole use will keep a tree worker from pushing themselves out where they need to be, limiting their potential, and earning them the title of 'Crotch Cricket'. But it doesn't have to be all bad. There are a ton of things a pole saw has always been great for.

- Working tips of limbs or tops, the extra reach allows smaller cuts for clearance or reduction pruning. As well as a means to safely make cuts above your tie-in point.
- Setting rigging lines, or advancing climbing lines.
- Limiting movement through the crown of sensitive trees during tree preservation efforts.

**Throwing knots.** Before throwlines hit the scene, throwing your rope into a tree was a great way to get it there, a bulky knot tied at the throwing end would help achieve the height needed as well as weigh the end to aid in getting it back down to you. While I don't throw rope from the ground to access a tree very often these days, I do use throwing knots in trees very frequently. There are many different throwing knots with unique attributes that can be used for different applications. Some unfurl after clearing the target, some slip and untie if they become jammed in a union, and some will stay tied no matter how many times you miss your shot.

- Good times to try a throwing knot.
- Advancing or redirecting a climbing line.
- Traversing large crowns or adjacent trees.
- Setting rigging lines.
- Weighing a rope tail to route it properly down through a dense crown.
- Fishing out hangers that are out of reach.

**Moving rope climbing systems.** Although very common in some tree care operations, like crane work, small tree pruning, and training of new climbers, moving rope systems have lost favor in place of stationary rope in many other cases. As someone who has a career split between both sides of this transitional line, I've found it natural to use both types of rope techniques to their advantage, and will often switch between the two during the same climb, sometimes using both at the same time. But some climbers, especially newer climbers who hadn't put in the time to become proficient on moving rope before moving over to stationary may not know the value of moving rope, which leads to impaired versatility and inefficiency.

Clear advantages of moving rope systems.

- No ascenders or chest harnesses required
- Easy to advance
- Easy to change anchor points
- A working moving rope system can be tied with only rope, no other hardware is needed
- Reduced effort from 2:1 mechanical advantage
- No retrieval line or base anchor to work around

Now hear me out, I'm not saying that you should ditch your throwlines or your rope runner, throw away your ascenders and learn how to footlock, but taking a step back from what's new, and revisiting some older methods of working trees will be beneficial. Figure out for yourself what of these dusty old techniques is complementary to your climbing style and bring it along with you, not because it's traditional or old-school, but because it works.

- Not a dusty old tree dog yet, Will Branch



## PAST PRESIDENTS OF MW-ISA

### Dan Christie, 1987-1988, St. Louis, MO

At the time I was President of MW-ISA, the chapter consisted of nine states, covering most of the Midwest and included a broad spectrum of arboricultural practices, business experiences and tree knowledge.

As “arboriculture” became a bona fide profession, several of our member states increased membership substantially and formed their own chapters. This was a time of change and great improvement in our industry, as the Midwest worked to catch up to the East and West coasts. In the 70’s and 80’s the “tree guy” (as we were called), was considered a part-time/ weekend worker that could wield a chainsaw to top and remove trees. Consequently, safety, benefits, living wages, profit and work comp were foreign and/or nonexistent concepts.

My first job after graduating from University of Missouri School of Forestry was with St. Louis County Parks as a Beautification Foreman (1971). I moved up to Arborist and was responsible for Forestry Operations in all County Parks. I also expanded the tree and sod nurseries, and planted trees and shrubs throughout the parks system. It was during this time that I met and was mentored by many icons in the tree and landscape industry in St. Louis County.

I became President of the St. Louis Arborist Association and the St. Louis Landscape & Nursery Association (at the local level), was elected President of MW-ISA as well as, the Board of Directors of the then National Arborist Association (now TCIA). I was a member of many associated green industry groups which gave me a broad appreciation for the industry. During this period ISA and TCIA worked together to improve professionalism and public perception of the industry.

They also started conversations on worker safety, work comp, credentialing, training programs (for employers), plant health care, best management plans, employee wages, partnering with OSHA to develop safety standards and more.

In 1976, I started my own business (Metropolitan Forestry Services) with an emphasis on Plant Health Care (PHC)- keeping trees alive over removing.

I would recommend that anyone starting a business in this industry join and get involved in the organizations. You will learn what it takes to run the business, care for the trees and meet people from all over the country and world. I could not have grown my business without the support of my wife, “Flicky” and this is evidenced by me being recognized as “Flicky’s Husband” wherever I go.



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Have a job opening? You can now submit your job openings to the MWISA Staff to be listed on the MWISA website. This service is FREE to MWISA members! Check out the new page by visiting the MWISA website at [www.mwisa.org/jobs](http://www.mwisa.org/jobs).

# NORTH AMERICAN TREE CLIMBING CHAMPIONSHIP

Taylor Neff, ISA Certified Arborist, Missouri Department of Conservation

This October, Brady Paselk, Jacob Perkins and I competed in the North American Tree Climbing Championship (NATCC). Brady and Jacob had great climbs, earning 11th and 21st places. We spent two days up in the beautiful swamp white oaks of Garfield Park in Washington, D.C. We spent more of that time on the ground with incredible people.

Our work climb had a great layout set up for a couple of fun swings. Unlike at MWISA where we scooted up a mulberry between two other trees, the belayed speed climb had a few handholds before essentially a straight ascent to the three bells. Our poor aerial rescue friend was stung by wasps, tried to descend, but engaged their ASAP and became nonresponsive 25 feet up. They are lucky Brady and Jacob were there because I certainly didn't reach them in the allotted time. We had an approximately 65-foot ascent event which Brady crushed, earning a silver medal.

"Overall, I was thrilled to cross another item off my tree climbing bucket list and I'm incredibly grateful for all the work that went into making a great competition in a terrific host city like D.C.," Brady said.

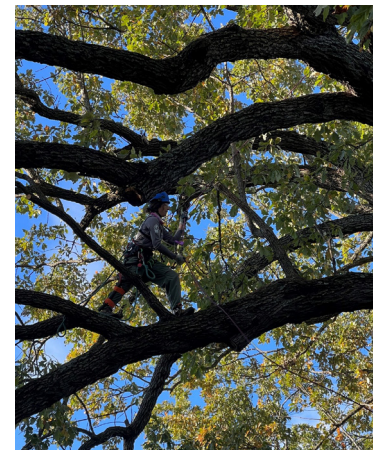
Although it took me nearly a minute to get up there, the view of the Capitol building from the top was worth every stride.

We hope to return to NATCC someday. Personally, I look forward to my third competition in Tulsa next year and am trying to spend more time aloft before then. I got into this industry because I fell in love with climbing at a public ascent event but have not climbed nearly enough since I left residential tree care and took a job as an urban forester. If I can compete, most can. As with most physical challenges, NATCC stirred up a mental challenge for me. I did not perform well and initially thought to myself: "Wow, I am going to embarrass our chapter," but soon let that thought pass like a cloud in the sky. How fortunate am I that I can spend a weekend outside in beautiful weather in a beautiful place climbing trees recreationally? I had to try NATCC after the fun I had competing at MWISA in Parkville. To my non-competing friends, I've described competition as carnivals for tree climbers: "It's like they set up these stations, you stand in line, give them your ticket and go for a sweet, sweet ride." My intent is not to detract from the professionalism, safety and thoughtfulness involved but to express the joy experienced.

Outside of the joy and the trees, of course it is the people that make these events what they are.

First, I wouldn't have had near as fun of a time without Carlos Garcia, Brady and Jacob in D.C. I would not have been there if Dallas Stephens of Arb Tech hadn't supported me at the MWISA competition, or if Ann Koenig, former climbing champion and MDC Community Forester, hadn't given me advice that led to choosing NATCC over a managed deer hunt I had already signed up for that weekend.

Continued...



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Continued from previous page... There were 11 competitors in the women's scoring group. Unsurprisingly, they are all incredibly badass and I learned from each of them. Libby Bower of Chicago taught me how to take apart my lanyard adjuster to install a new rope before gear check. Krista Strating and Serena Soucy of Ontario talked with me about not setting expectations but setting intention. It is not about competing against the others but considering what you'd like to take away from the day. Krista taught me how to crane, or double bag, with my throw line. Stephanie Littenberg shared her "nervous candy" with me; who knew Jolly Ranchers could help keep me calm before the horn.



Marilou Dussault won NATCC. We discussed city tree care in Quebec versus Kansas City. Marilou's love for trees and her work is obvious as she speaks: "I get to help them grow; help them shine," she said.

October certainly was a time for trees in the capital city. Before the competition, I spent four days at the World Forum on Urban Forests (WFUF). Put together by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Politecnico di Milano and Italian Society of Silviculture of Forest Ecology, WFUF aims to raise awareness of the benefits of urban forests to a global audience and improve access to information and networking to those advocating for our trees.



"We are funding this like it's scenery. It's life or death infrastructure," Beatra Wilson, Assistant Director of Urban & Community Forestry for USDA Forest Service said about trees in cities.

Every arborist has a role in protecting our urban forests and helping others love trees as much as we do. This topic could be its own article. Learn more at [worldforumonurbanforests.org](http://worldforumonurbanforests.org).

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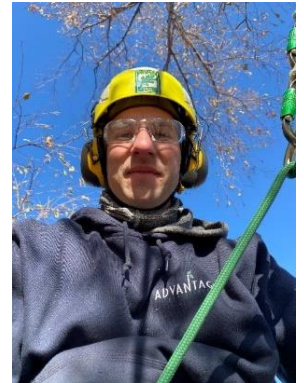
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"I highly recommend Scott Carlson's I.S.A. certified arborist course to anybody involved in tree care. Aside from helping me immensely in test prep, the class has given me a wealth of knowledge that I will keep forever. Scott's love for trees and tree care is contagious! You will not find another arborist more passionate."

Dave Miller, ISA Certified Arborist, Advantage Tree Service, Davenport



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# MW-0501B



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## ID That Tree

### Black Maple

*Acer nigrum,*

*OR Acer saccharum subsp. nigrum* (depending  
on which school to which you subscribe)

A pretty tree displaying similar characteristics of a sugar maple- dense, rounded crown with dark furrowed bark and “brilliant” fall color. This particular specimen is a street tree and not yet “brilliantly” colored.

Identification can be challenging. The leaves of this tree are distinctly three-lobed, heavily pubescent below, and present a drooping appearance throughout the canopy.

Black maple can attain a height of 60-75’ and 40-50’ wide when located in their native bottomland sites.

Fun facts: Black maple grows rapidly in its early life, then slows and may live 200 years.

It is cut and sold with sugar maple as hard maple lumber. Can be tapped for sap to make maple syrup. Occasionally used as an ornamental tree. Was once found (natively growing) in Delaware but is now extinct there.

A pretty neat tree once a positive ID has been made!