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Arbor Notes

Spring/Summer 2018

Almstead Around Town



Arbor Day Celebrations 2018

Our founder, Richard Almstead, started the tradition of celebrating Arbor Day twenty-five years ago and we've been doing it as an annual event ever since (see *Gold Leaf Award* article inside).

New Jersey: Branch Manager, **Ryan Duff**, arborist **Oscar Winfrey**, and the Almstead team organized a junior tree climbing station and exhibited at the Ridgewood Earth Day Fair. Ryan also lead the first group of the Teaneck Creek Conservancy's Tree ID Series Hike, a nature-walk and tree discussion.

Connecticut: Arborist **Isaac Taylor** organized tree-plantings at Darien Nature Center (*Kousa dogwood*), New Canaan Nature Center (*Sugar Maple*), Waveny Park (*Swamp White Oak*) and Irwin Park (*White Oak*). Isaac and the Almstead crew were also the headliners at the Down On The Farm picnic event in New Canaan with their "Travel To The Treetops" junior arborist station. Branch Manager, **Gary Norman**, Office Manager, **Maria Amador** (wearing the *Treeture* character, *Sprig*, costume) and Vice President, **Michael Almstead**, joined students, teachers and elected officials for Earth Day celebrations and planted a Bloodgood London Planetree at Tracey Elementary School.

New York: For the 19th consecutive year, arborist **Michael Marks** and the Almstead crew helped Eastchester Girl Scouts Troop plant saplings at the Magic Treeture Forest Nursery. They were joined by Judith Blau, the creator of Treetures. Arborists **Erick Fields**, **Dan Dalton** and Almstead staff were at Wave Hill Public Garden in the Bronx to run



(1) New Jersey staff (L to R) Jim Hurley, Lljajyra Calvo, Ryan Duff (Branch Manager) with Treetures® character Sprig at Ridgewood Earth Day Fair. Almstead partners with Treetures to carry the message of tree planting and care to children. (2) Arborists Dan Dalton (L) and Erick Fields (R) at Wave Hill with Almstead's Junior Arborist Station (3) Connecticut staff: Maria Amador, Office Manager and Gary Norman (Branch Manager) with Michael Almstead (VP) at Tracey Elementary School.

the popular Junior Arborist Station, discuss trees, and hand out Quaking Aspen saplings.

Right Tree Right Place



Earlier this year, Almstead CEO, **Ken Almstead**, presented a well-attended lecture for gardeners, designers and commercial entities on planting the right tree in the right place at the First Congressional Church in Chappaqua, NY. It was part of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Home Gardener series.

Continued inside...

Tree Risk Assessment

An Ounce of Prevention...

Tree Risk Assessment (TRA) is one of the most valuable services we offer our clients. Our arborists receive ongoing in-house TRA training and it is part of their continuing education to maintain certifications and licenses. TRA helps identify potential issues with trees in order to best evaluate associated risk. Once properly assessed, an arborist can suggest decisive actions to best mitigate or eliminate the risk with the owner or manager of the property.

Almstead arborists usually inspect trees visually when they are on site for potential issues with the trunk, crown, surface root zone or trunk flares. In addition to TRA training, many of our arborists have also undergone the more extensive Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) program offered by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). In addition to basic data, such as species, diameter of the tree at breast height (DBH), tree height and crown spread, the TRAQ system also requires the arborist to record and evaluate other detailed information. This includes the location, conditions, defects in the tree's trunk, crown, and roots, as well as potential targets, usage frequency of those targets, and consequences of potential failure. Based on this information, additional testing using specialized tools such as a Resistograph or Tomography (to better detect the degree of internal decay) or an aerial inspection (with a seasoned and experienced field staff) to provide more data on crown structure, the arborist is able to create a comprehensive report that offers a complete analysis of each tree and its risk of failure.

Below are pictures of trees we were called on to remove after the April-May storms. Regular maintenance and inspection of your trees and shrubs, as well as advanced Tree Risk Assessment, where warranted, is the best way to mitigate high-risk situations and to preserve your valued assets. Please contact your Almstead arborist to schedule an inspection.



Places to Visit: Montgomery Pinetum, CT

Montgomery Pinetum is a 91-acre park in the Cos Cob section of Greenwich, CT. The property, formerly known as "Wild Acres" became the home of Colonel Robert and Nell Montgomery in 1922. Over three decades, the Montgomery's collected hundreds of conifers from all over the world for their estate, about 80 of which can still be seen at the Pinetum. A dwarf blue spruce, *Picea pungens* 'R.H. Montgomery' was developed there and over 200 specimen trees were donated to the New York Botanic Gardens.

Over the years, the town has made many improvements to Montgomery Pinetum. The property has been modernized to make it more suitable as a park. Visitors today can pick up a map and tree guide from the Garden Center office and begin exploring the Pinetum starting with the flagstone terrace outside leading to manicured lawns, flower beds and a beautiful reflecting pond. The rest of the Pinetum contains woods, streams, forests, groves, trails, picnic areas, ponds, wildlife sanctuaries, and other natural delights.

The Park is open daily throughout the year from 8:00 am to sunset except on Sundays from November 15 to March 15. Dogs are permitted on a leash.

Montgomery Pinetum does not have a dedicated website, but information can be found on the town's website www.greenwichct.org.



Invasive Pests Update

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) continues to spread across our region and the country wiping out ash trees. It is a metallic green insect that feeds on the layer of the tree just under the bark and prevents the movement of life-sustaining sugar, water and nutrients through the tree. Most trees die within 2-4 years after being infested with EAB.

The first New York infestation of EAB was discovered in 2009 and has since spread to more than 30 counties. According to the The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), identifying current infestations is critical to stopping its spread. If you see these small, metallic-green insects on your property, contact your arborist.

Almstead is currently inoculating hundreds of ash trees against EAB for city, state, and private customers. *If you haven't yet identified and qualified ash trees that are worthy of preservation with your arborist, do not delay any longer!*



Spotted Lanternfly is another invasive pest that has been spotted in our region. Originally from Asia, it primarily feeds on tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) but can also feed on a wide variety of plants such as grapevine, hops, maple, walnut, fruit trees and others. The DEC has announced the

start of an outreach campaign encouraging New Yorkers to look for and report sightings of the Spotted Lanternfly. Nymphs are black with white spots that turn red as adults, which are approximately 1 inch long and 1/2 inch wide at rest, with eye-catching wings.

If you spot a Spotted Lanternfly on your property take a picture and send it to your arborist or report it to nyimainvasives.org.

A Letter from the CEO



I will keep my remarks brief because we have a lot of news and information to share in this issue. It's been a very busy and eventful year for us so far. An unusually long winter and a delayed spring, coupled with a series of storms on top of the normal seasonal rush, have provided challenges in caring for landscapes in our region.

Our community outreach schedule has been very busy as well with our Arbor Day and other events (as detailed in the *Almstead Around Town* section). I presented a well-received lecture on planting the right tree at the right place in Chappaqua, NY (part of *Cornell Cooperative Extension Home Gardener series*) that was attended by mainly landscape architects, designers and home-gardeners (see page 1).

We were awarded several contracts to treat hundreds of ash and elm trees throughout our region against Emerald Ash Borer and Dutch Elm Disease. We are proud to do our part in helping save these magnificent trees (see photos on right).

This year, the CDC has predicted an increase in diseases caused by ticks and mosquitoes. Please call your arborist if you don't have our tick and mosquito control services.

I hope you have a wonderful summer and on behalf of the entire Almstead team, thank you!

Sincerely,

Ken Almstead, CEO
International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist



Almstead PHC technicians, Leo Ibarra, and Luis Torres inoculating ash trees in Howard Park (Jamaica, N.Y.)



The state-of-the-art QUIK-jet AIR system that we use for injecting.



PHC technician Freddy Martinez injects elm trees against Dutch Elm Disease in Central Park, NY

Lawn Care: Keeping your grass looking greener for longer...

Our lawn care programs are designed to keep lawns looking lush and beautiful while keeping pests and weeds in check. However, what happens to your lawn after we leave your property is also as important as the services we provide throughout the year. Here's an overview of our lawn care programs as well as some tips on what you can do in your weekly maintenance to keep it looking its best.

We offer three separate comprehensive lawn care programs:

- **Organic Base** builds up the strength and health of your lawn naturally by utilizing natural soil supplements and organic fertilizers. It works well as both a stand-alone program and as a gateway to Pure Organic lawn care.
- **Pure Organic** uses natural soil supplements and 100% organic fertilizers and treatments to help create biologically sound, hearty turf.
- We also offer a **Traditional** lawn care program that utilizes the highest quality conventional treatments available in the industry safely and effectively to achieve a flawless looking lawn.

Now here's what you can do:

Mowing:

Encourage your maintenance provider to do the following:

- Make sure the mower blade is sharp. A sharp blade cuts grass cleanly while a dull blade creates jagged, uneven edges that create openings for pests and diseases to enter.
- The best height to mow a lawn is 3" to 3.5" throughout spring and summer. Cutting it too short, known as "scalping," makes the lawn vulnerable to disease and weed infestations.



■ Some lawns can be mowed every other week during the summer months (July/August). Direct your provider to instead spend time on weeding beds or other care items as an alternative.

■ Mowing turf in the same direction or pattern each time can result in compacted soil and create ruts. Weeds thrive in compacted soil.

Watering/Irrigation:



■ The best time to water is in the morning when the air is cooler. Water evaporates too quickly in the afternoon and watering in the evening can cause it to stick to blades of grass overnight causing fungi.

■ Water until about 6 inches into the soil is moist.

■ Irrigation can truly vary based upon turf species and conditions, sun exposures, soil conditions and quality. Having various zones, drip versus pop-up or rotating heads makes irrigation all

Healthy Soil

Creating healthy soil is the first step to having a great lawn. Soil is composed of two parts: minerals and soil biota (living organisms that are together known as the soil food web). Some soil biota is beneficial to plants while others are considered pathogens because they cause many problems such as root rots, blights, molds, and mildews. The goal is to boost the growth of the beneficial biota and suppress as many pathogens as possible.

Our lawn care consultation usually starts with a soil test and site assessment. We analyze the soil for texture, pH level, organic matter content, and biological activity. The mineral content in the soil can be balanced through fertilizers and supplements, be it organic or traditional. The soil biota can be improved through aeration, organic teas, topsoil and compost.

Healthy, vigorous, well-maintained lawns out-compete weeds — pure and simple!

the more challenging. Requirements between trees, turf and shrubs (new vs. established) are added factors.

■ As arborists, we find that many installations don't take into consideration the different and varying irrigation requirements of a landscape. Irrigation designs can focus too much on the immediate need and coverage. Like anything else, things change and develop. Irrigation should be tweaked and adapted to meet these changes.

If you have any questions about your lawn or would like to schedule a complimentary consultation, please contact your Almstead arborist or your local branch office.

Kudos

Jonathan Peragine

Congratulations to Almstead climber, **Jonathan Peragine**, for participating in the 2018 Connecticut Tree Climbing Competition. The event showcases the camaraderie and skill that are a part of climbing trees professionally. Jon has been climbing for only a year and we are very proud of the fact that he placed in the competition.

Photo: Jonathan Peragine >



Nick Coons

Congratulations to **Nick Coons** from our Hawthorne, NY branch for successfully attaining his International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) certification. This credential ensures that arborists have demonstrated the proper knowledge and skills, and have a high level of dedication to their profession.

< Photo: Nick Coons

Tick & Mosquito Control



Ticks and mosquitoes are not just a nuisance. They also transmit deadly diseases such as Lyme Disease, West Nile Virus, Tularemia, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Heartland Virus, Ehrlichiosis, Babesiosis and Relapsing Fever.

The C.D.C. says that tick and mosquito infections are spreading rapidly (*The New York Times, May 1*). You can protect your family and pets with safe and effective tick and mosquito control from Almstead. We can custom-tailor a program and frequency based upon your situation and budget. We have organic options available as well.

Call your branch office for more information or visit almstead.com/tick-mosquito-control.



The Asian Tiger Mosquito (above) is large and spotted and active during the daytime in full sun -- while the native Northern House Mosquito (below) is much smaller and active in the shade and at dusk.



Almstead Around Town Continued from Front Page...



Green Jobs Training

Almstead volunteered its expertise, time and equipment to participate in two days of Green Jobs Training at the City of Hoboken, New Jersey. (1) Arborist Isaac Taylor and Ryan Duff (Branch Manager) demonstrate how to use chain saws safely. (2) L-R: Isaac Taylor, Ryan Duff, Jim Hurley (PHC Technician), Sergio Anguiano (Foreman), Michael Almstead (VP).

Cooperator Expo

Almstead exhibited at both the New York and New Jersey Spring Cooperator Expos. (3): Arborists Ryan Duff (L) & Oscar Winfrey (R) at the New Jersey Meadowlands Expo Center.



Community Outreach

Almstead donated a truck-load of compost and mulch as well as tree saplings to Kingsbridge Heights Community Center (KHCC) in the Bronx. Local students planted the saplings as part of their Arbor Day and Cinco de Mayo celebrations at the Center.

(4) Rich Almstead, Jr. (R) making the delivery to KHCC.

Career Fairs

HR Manager, **Cristina Johns** was at the Paul Smith College Career Day as well as the Plant-O-Rama Jobs Fair and the New York State Arborist Conference to promote job openings for arborists, field crew and interns at all our branch offices. Please contact Cristina at cjohns@almstead.com if you, or someone you know, is interested in an exciting career in our company.

(5): The Almstead table at Paul Smith College.



Awards Almstead Receives NYSA's Gold Leaf Award



Richard Almstead

The New York State Arborists (NYSA) International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Chapter, Inc. presented the 2017 Harry J. Banker Gold Leaf Award to Almstead Tree & Shrub Care Co. and its founder **Richard Almstead** at the NYSA Annual Conference in Suffern, New York on January 29th, 2018. The award recognizes individuals, organizations and communities for either outstanding Arbor Day activities or for outstanding landscape beautification activities.

"Almstead was selected for participating in several Arbor Day events in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut in April 2017. The company demonstrated a steadfast commitment in educating its communities on the critical role trees play in the health of our planet, promoted tree planting and care, and encouraged the development of sustainable communities for all New Yorkers," said Trevor Hall, President of the NYSA.

Ken Almstead, CEO of Almstead, and **Michael Almstead**, Vice President, accepted the award on behalf of their father, Richard Almstead, who could not attend the event. "My father started the tradition of participating in Arbor Day events over 25 years ago and we've been doing it as an annual event ever since," said Ken Almstead. "I would like to share this honor with the many Almstead arborists, technicians and staff that have organized and taken part in these events with such enthusiasm over the years."



Ken Almstead (L) and Michael Almstead (M) accepting the Gold Leaf Award from Trevor Hall (R), President of the NYSA, International Society of Arboriculture Chapter, Inc.



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Trees to Consider: Quaking Aspen

Quaking Aspen has the widest natural range of any tree in North America. It grows in an oval shape, provides stunning yellow fall color and adds movement and a soft, pleasant sound to the landscape due to the "quaking" leaves.

Latin Name: *Populus tremuloides*

Common Name(s): Aspen, Trembling Aspen, American Aspen, Mountain Aspen.

Tree Type: An oval shaped tree, both a shade tree and an ornamental tree.

Sun and Water Requirements: Full sun or partial shade.

Expected growth: A fast grower, its mature size reaches 40-50', spreading 20-30' wide. Quaking Aspens can grow sprouts from their roots, creating a beautiful stand.

Foliage: Rounded, triangular leaves with small teeth, arranged alternately on the branches.

Landscape Value: With its white trunks and brilliant yellow trembling leaves that famously murmur in the wind, the Quaking Aspen provides value to any landscape. Even a slight breeze will set the Aspen in motion, providing a delightfulness of sound, color and movement.

