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# OUT ON A LIMB

SPRING 2023, VOLUME 43, ISSUE 1



Winter Tree ID on page 3.

## 2023 GREAT PLAINS WINTER CONFERENCE

By Samantha Rozic, NAA Board Member & Education  
Committee Chair

Planning for the NAA Winter Conference starts to take several months, if not years, before the actual conference. Between picking a venue location and signing contracts to finding vendors, it takes many hours to cultivate a group of speakers you think others might want to listen to and learn from.



We seek input from our board and the association members to help create a successful conference that will keep everyone wanting to return year after year.



I always enjoy attending the NAA winter conference to see familiar faces and meet new colleagues. I have had the opportunity to participate in several conferences with NAA and enjoy seeing how they all change. The last few years have been different for me since I have been on the board and helped to plan the conferences. The first year I joined the board, the conference had already been planned. Then in 2019, we started to plan the 2020 conference. We all know how the 2020 conference turned out. In 2021, we hosted the conference, but much of the planning was already completed with the speakers and content that was set up in 2020. For the 2022 and 2023 conferences, I was finally able to see the conference get planned and executed from start to finish like it had been done in the past.



Attending a conference is always one thing, but helping plan and run a conference is a whole different point of view. From my point of view, we had a very successful NAA Winter Conference. *Continued on page 3...*

## A QUARTERLY UPDATE OF THE NEBRASKA ARBORISTS ASSOCIATION

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### SUBMIT ARTICLES:

If you have anything you would like to submit for inclusion in the Quarterly Update, please contact [staff@nearborists.org](mailto:staff@nearborists.org)



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

As some of you may know, I have written a couple of articles for the NAA newsletter. This however, will be my first as the new president of the NAA. I am very proud to be part of such a strong organization and I hope I serve all of you in the capacity that you deserve. The reason this association is so strong is because we have such a strong membership. All of you are the reason that we (the NAA) are successful. And it is ultimately our mission to make sure you are successful in return. Let's continue to keep this cycle of success going for future arborist generations to enjoy.

Dustin Nelson, NAA President



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **GREAT PLAINS Field Day**

Thursday & Friday, August 10-11, 2023  
Carol Joy Holling in Ashland, NE

### **2023 Arborist School**

Tree ID, Evaluation & Selection, Planting & Establishment Seminar  
Wednesday & Thursday, September 6-7, 2023  
\*Please note date change  
at VFW Hall & Wayne Park in Waverly, NE

### **Pruning, Climbing & Safety Seminar**

Thursday & Friday, October 12-13, 2023  
at Carol Joy Holling in Ashland, NE

### **Plant Health & Tree Biology Seminar**

Thursday & Friday, November 16-17, 2023  
at Carol Joy Holling in Ashland, NE

### **Nebraska GREAT PLAINS Conference**

January 16-17, 2024  
At Embassy Suites in Lincoln, NE





*Continued from page 1...*

We had a great lineup of speakers from all over the country to provide new information or a refresher of information to our members. Attendees were able to sit in and listen to topics about Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Tree Risk Assessment, issues related to diseases, invasive species, and many other topics. Our attendance on the first day of the conference was excellent, and even with the impending snow/ice storm, we had a great turnout on the second day. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank

those who attended, provided feedback, and assisted in helping make the conference successful. We can't wait to see you at the next Nebraska Arborists Association event!

## 2023 WINTER TREE ID: SEEING DOUBLE!

*By Samantha Rozic, NAA Board Member & Education Committee Chair*

The Nebraska Arborist Association hosted two back-to-back Advanced Winter Tree ID classes this year in an effort to allow more students to participate. The brilliant Justin Evertson led the classes. Phill Pierce also gave us a surprise visit on Thursday as an assistant instructor. Although we had chilly temperatures over the two days of classes, it warmed up just the slightest Friday afternoon for students to wander through Wayne Park and look at the collection of trees. Justin showed a variety of trees in their winter form and instructed the class on alternative ways to identify trees without their leaves.



A few key notes Justin had for the group on winter identification were leaf scar patterns, characteristics of buds, the persistence of leaves or fruit or twigs, overall tree shape and size, and other notable characteristics. The students reviewed these characteristics in class and then put what they learned to the test. On Thursday, they examined many different limb samples indoors due to the cold. On Friday, attendees had the opportunity to walk around Wayne Park in the afternoon to apply their knowledge toward a live specimen. In both classes, Justin offered an identification quiz from the material he taught to really work the attendees' minds.



The park in Waverly has a great living library of about 200 shrubs and 500 trees that have been planted. Among the different varieties, there are groups of trees and shrubs that are unique to help people develop their identification skills on plants that you might not commonly see in Nebraska.

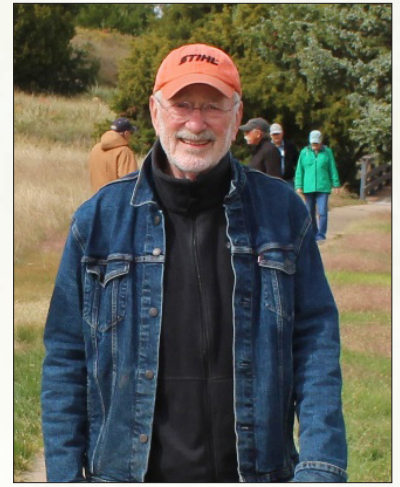
Overall, both groups were engaged in conversation with Justin and the other attendees. Input from the group members was valuable. On behalf of the NAA board, we look forward to seeing you at the next NAA event!

# ARBORIST SPOTLIGHT *By Alyssa Brodersen, Executive Director*

The Nebraska Arborists Association was pleased to announce John Bohrer as the recipient of the 2023 Arborist of the Year award. John was presented with this award at the Nebraska GREAT PLAINS Conference at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln, NE, on January 17, 2023.

John has accomplished much for his community throughout his career and is now playing an even larger role in its continued development.

He began working as the Director of Public Works in 2013, and at that time, he was a one-man show. His duties included: city snow removal, city street repair, management of the city parks and additional sports fields, lawn and tree care, equipment maintenance, and city building maintenance and repair. Over the years, he added on other duties and responsibilities and continues to dedicate his time and his talents to his community. He has embraced his role as an arborist like everything else he takes on... with enthusiasm, skill, and complete commitment.



*John Bohrer - Photo Provided by Jim Keepers*



*Mike & John Hunting*



*John & Cindi in Arizona*

In 2018, he became a Certified Nebraska Arborist and has utilized the knowledge he gained to expertly maintain and beautify the community that has been under his care for several years.

John Bohrer has served on the City of Bennington Tree Board since 2013, and during that time, he received the 2021 Community Enhancement Award and the Arbor Day Foundation Tree City USA Award. In 2022, under John's direction, the City of Bennington was also awarded the Tree City (Growth) Award. Each year, his continued efforts have allowed the City of Bennington, NE, to receive numerous NRD tree grants valued at \$2,500.00 each. He has also been working to have all the

parks, and sports complexes declared an Affiliated Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. In recent years, John developed an action plan to combat the Emerald Ash Borer infestation within the city limits, which included removing over 200 Ash trees. During his time as the Public Works Director, he saw a need for more trees in his community. He wrote numerous Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, Nebraska Forest, and Nebraska Resource District tree grants that enabled his community to receive hundreds of trees over the years. He also established a tree ID labeling program for trees in the city's parks.

John Bohrer worked as the Director of Public Works for the City of Bennington for many years. He recently transitioned into a "Special Assistant" to the mayor position as City Director. His new duties entail working on the new 50-acre park that is being developed, street projects, Department Manager Coordination, and assisting the Mayor in other responsibilities.

Bennington's Mayor, Zac Johns, shared that "John is a true visionary; he sees the potential in the natural beauty of our community and its unique landscape."

John is passionate about family, friends, and the great outdoors. While working in Bennington has always been rewarding, John is happiest spending time with his wife Cindi, their five children, and seven grandchildren. His many hobbies and his continuous quest for knowledge have resulted in a variety of careers and accomplishments. For example, early on, he spent many years in the investment industry as a broker and in senior level management positions.



*John & Jag Fishing*

*Continued...*



John & Cindi at 2023 Nebraska GREAT PLAINS Conference

Later, he and a close friend turned their love for hunting and interest in woodworking into opening a shop in Yutan where they manufactured, carved, and hand-painted wood decoys to be sold nationwide. His fondness for wine and desire to learn more about its many varieties and origins led him to sell boutique Italian wines. Over the course of 2 years, he studied for and completed the Level 1 Introductory Sommelier course. Through the years, John has farmed, run a cow/calf operation, and even played Santa in the town of Yutan during the time he had the decoy business. John and his wife now love to get away to their place in Arizona whenever they can, even though it's hard to find a shade tree there.

Thank you, John, for your commitment to your community and for representing the Nebraska Arborists Association so well!

## 2023 NAA ELECTION RESULTS

Jorge Cardenas was elected NAA Treasurer.

Michael Seuferer was elected NAA Director.



Jorge Cardenas



Michael Seuferer

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CAREERS

# ZOO BROWSE

by Philip Pierce, Forester Phil Consulting

February 23rd was a frigid day with a high of 3 degrees. Justin Evertson was conducting a Winter Tree ID class at the Waverly VFW, and I had offered to help. I had collected twig samples the three days before when the weather was nice, 57 degrees.

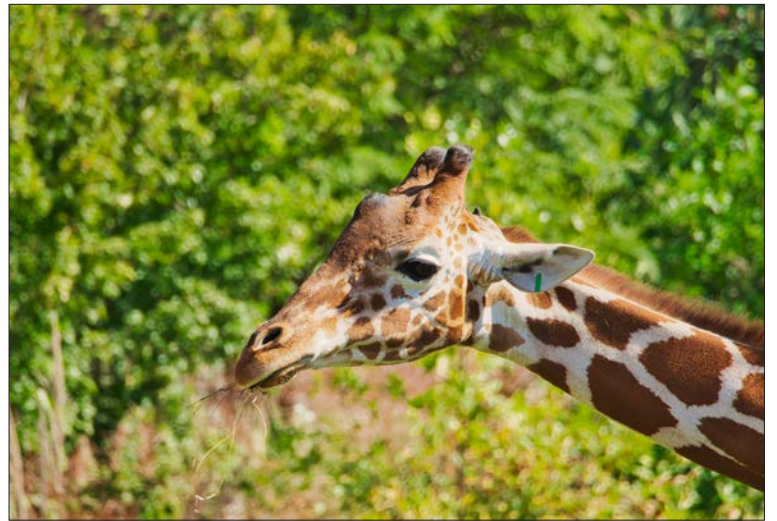
I had not expected to find the Henry Doorly Zoo Browse Team in attendance that day. Dakota and Kaley explained that some species, such as Cherry, are toxic to the animals. So, they needed all the plant ID skills they could get to ensure that what was fed to the zoo animals was good for them. They also requested that anyone who could donate fresh brush call 402-657-4846 or complete the online form at [omahazoo.com/browse](http://omahazoo.com/browse).

The class went well. It was small enough that everyone contributed to the discussion and sorted through branch specimens.

I asked Dakota if they would be interested in my neighbor's ten year old and younger Siberian Elms. Dakota said the elephants are big fans of Siberian Elm! The zoo has one bull elephant, five females, and three babies; two females are currently pregnant.

A week later, I had my neighbor's permission to remove the Elms that were competing heavily against three mature Ponderosa Pines and an Apple tree.

On March 2nd, Dakota and Kaley arrived and started the Elm harvest. It took three trips to complete. Who would have thought that Tree ID would have led to zoo elephants? Strange things happen at Nebraska Arborist Association's classes.





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# NEBRASKA TREE SPECIES RATINGS, 2023

Species is a major component of the plant appraisal process according to the “Guide for Plant Appraisal, 10th Edition”, published by the International Society of Arboriculture (pages 15-16, 23, 29, 34, 58, 64, all of the examples in chapter 5, and Appendix 1). This publication is the Nebraska Tree Species Rating List to be used as an aid when determining the value of existing trees in the Nebraska landscape. This is NOT a tree species recommendation list. There are many under represented species that need to be planted in order to diversify our urban tree populations that do not appear on this list.

## THE TREE SPECIES COMMITTEE OF THE NEBRASKA ARBORISTS ASSOCIATION

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Philip Pierce, Chair     | Forester Phil Consulting                                  |
| Justin Everson, Co-Chair | Nebraska Forest Service, Green Infrastructure Coordinator |
| Graham Herbst            | Nebraska Forest Service                                   |
| Pam Bergstrom            | Forester with the Nebraska Forest Service                 |
| Jason Severe             | Forest Management/Rural Forester, Nebraska Forest Service |
| Todd Filipi              | North Platte Natural Resource District                    |
| Barry Burrows            | Grand Island, Parks Superintendent                        |
| Lyle Minshull            | North Platte, Park/Cemetery Supervisor                    |

## SPECIES CLASSES FOR NEBRASKA TREES

- 1) The tree species are rated on a percentage scale and assumes that their distribution approximates a normal distribution. Ratings are noted in increments of 5%.
- 2) Species class criteria include: hardiness, longevity, insect and disease resistance, maintenance requirements, form, invasiveness, soil and water requirements, flowering and fruiting characteristics. The species listed are common in the Nebraska’s urban landscapes.
- 3) Unique conditions may exist that justify giving a higher or lower species rating.
- 4) The species rating is not a recommendation for planting. For example, existing Siberian Elms (*Ulmus pumila*) have value but they are not recommended as a landscape tree. Also, a number of species are borderline in hardiness. This listing is for appraisal of existing trees in the landscape.

## NEBRASKA TREE SPECIES RATINGS

| <i>scientific name</i>           | <i>species</i>            | <i>% rating east</i> | <i>% rating west</i> | <i>irrigate</i> |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Thuja occidentalis</i>        | Arborvitae                | 60%                  | 35%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>    | Ash, Green                | 40%                  | 50%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Populus tremuloides</i>       | Aspen, Quaking            | 30%                  | 45%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Taxodium distichum</i>        | Baldcypress               | 80%                  | n/a                  |                 |
| <i>Betula nigra</i>              | Birch, River              | 55%                  | 40%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Aesculus glabra</i>           | Buckeye                   | 50%                  | 25%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Catalpa speciosa</i>          | Catalpa                   | 60%                  | 60%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Prunus virginiana</i>         | Cherry (Chokecherry)      | 25%                  | 55%                  |                 |
| <i>Prunus serotina</i>           | Cherry, Black             | 65%                  | 40%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Prunus x ‘Schubert’</i>       | Cherry, Canada Red        | 45%                  | 25%                  |                 |
| <i>Castanea mollissima</i>       | Chestnut, Chinese         | 50%                  | n/a                  |                 |
| <i>Populus deltoides</i>         | Cottonwood                | 50%                  | 60%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Populus delt. ‘Siouxland’</i> | Cottonwood, ‘Siouxland’   | 10%                  | 10%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Malus x sp.</i>               | Crabapple                 | 75%                  | 70%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>     | Douglas Fir               | 80%                  | 25%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Ulmus americana</i>           | Elm, American             | 50%                  | 60%                  |                 |
| <i>Ulmus pumila</i>              | Elm, Siberian             | 40%                  | 55%                  |                 |
| <i>Abies concolor</i>            | Fir, Concolor (White Fir) | 100%                 | 50%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Malus, Pyrus, Prunus</i>      | FRUITING TREES            | 55%                  | 70%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Ginkgo biloba</i>             | Ginkgo                    | 90%                  | 40%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Celtis occidentalis</i>       | Hackberry                 | 65%                  | 95%                  |                 |
| <i>Carya sp.</i>                 | Hickory                   | 60%                  | 75%                  |                 |
| <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>     | Honeylocust               | 60%                  | 60%                  |                 |
| <i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>    | Horsechestnut             | 55%                  | n/a                  |                 |
| <i>Juniperus virginiana</i>      | Juniper, Redcedar *       | 50%                  | 75%                  |                 |
| <i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>      | Juniper, Rocky Mountain   | 45%                  | 80%                  |                 |
| <i>Larix sp.</i>                 | Larch                     | 55%                  | 25%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Tilia americana</i>           | Linden, American          | 65%                  | 70%                  | irrigate        |
| <i>Tilia cordata</i>             | Linden, Littleleaf        | 45%                  | 20%                  | irrigate        |

\* See Eastern Redcedar on the Great Plains, *A Position of the Great Plains Society of American Foresters (GPSAF)*, August 1, 2020.

\*\* Russian Olive is a pioneer species similar to Eastern Redcedar but is not native.

Notes: The line between eastern and western Nebraska is left undefined.

When appraising other species and cultivars consider factors such as high temperatures, rainfall, soil, acclimation period, and seed source as discussed in “The Dilemma with Plant Hardiness Zones: Ball J. 2022, *Arborist-News*, April 22 p.

Continued...



## NEBRASKA TREE SPECIES RATINGS

| <i>scientific name</i>  | <i>species</i>              | <i>% rating east</i> | <i>% rating west</i> | <i>irrigate</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Robinia pseudoacacia    | Locust, Black               | 40%                  | 55%                  |                 |
| Acer neg undo           | Maple, Boxelder             | 35%                  | 55%                  |                 |
| Acer platanoides        | Maple, Norway               | 50%                  | 45%                  | irrigate        |
| Acer rubrum             | Maple, Red                  | 55%                  | 45%                  | irrigate        |
| Acer saccharinum        | Maple, Silver               | 50%                  | 45%                  | irrigate        |
| Acer saccharum          | Maple, Sugar                | 70%                  | 25%                  | irrigate        |
| Morus sp.               | Mulberry                    | 35%                  | 50%                  | irrigate        |
| Quercus macrocarpa      | Oak, Bur                    | 90%                  | 85%                  |                 |
| Quercus muehlenbergii   | Oak, Chinkapin              | 70%                  | 70%                  | irrigate        |
| Quercus robur           | Oak, English                | 70%                  | 55%                  | irrigate        |
| Quercus justin          | Oak, Gamble                 | 60%                  | 75%                  |                 |
| Quercus rubra           | Oak, Red                    | 65%                  | 45%                  | irrigate        |
| Quercus palustris       | Oak, Pin                    | 50%                  | 25%                  | irrigate        |
| Quercus imbricaria      | Oak, Shingle                | 55%                  | n/a                  |                 |
| Quercus shumardii       | Oak, Shumard                | 60%                  | 65%                  |                 |
| Quercus bicolor         | Oak, Swamp White            | 75%                  | 50%                  | irrigate        |
| Elaeagnus angustifolia  | Olive, Russian **           | 20%                  | 45%                  | irrigate        |
| Maclura pomifera        | Osage Orange                | 55%                  | 45%                  |                 |
| Pyrus calleryana        | Pear, Callery               | 45%                  | 25%                  | irrigate        |
| Carya illinoensis       | Pecan                       | 55%                  | 25%                  | irrigate        |
| Diospyros virginiana    | Persimmon                   | 55%                  | 20%                  | irrigate        |
| Pinus nigra             | Pine, Austrian              | 45%                  | 70%                  |                 |
| Pinus aristata          | Pine, Bristlecone           | 55%                  | 35%                  |                 |
| Pinus banksiana         | Pine, Jack 35%              | 45%                  |                      |                 |
| Pinus bungeana          | Pine, Lacebark              | 45%                  | 20%                  |                 |
| Pinus cembroides        | Pine, Pinyon                | 45%                  | 50%                  |                 |
| Pinus ponderosa         | Pine, Ponderosa             | 70%                  | 85%                  |                 |
| Pinus sylvestris        | Pine, Scotch                | 25%                  | 55%                  | irrigate        |
| Pinus strobus           | Pine, White                 | 85%                  | 15%                  |                 |
| Populus alba            | Poplar, White               | 35%                  | 40%                  |                 |
| Cercis canadensis       | Redbud                      | 65%                  | 25%                  | irrigate        |
| Picea pungens           | Spruce, Colorado            | 60%                  | 80%                  |                 |
| Picea abies             | Spruce, Norway              | 70%                  | 45%                  | irrigate        |
| Picea glauca            | Spruce, White (Black Hills) | 70%                  | 60%                  |                 |
| Platanus sp.            | Sycamore                    | 70%                  | 25%                  |                 |
| Ailanthus altissima     | Tree of Heaven              | 30%                  | 30%                  |                 |
| Liriodendron tulipifera | Tuliptree, (Yellow Poplar)  | 65%                  | n/a                  |                 |
| Juglans sp.             | Walnut                      | 55%                  | 60%                  |                 |
| Salix sp.               | Willow, Black               | 45%                  | 35%                  | irrigate        |
| Salix sp.               | Willow, Weeping             | 40%                  | 25%                  | irrigate        |

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# ROOT FLARE INJECTIONS

*Arborist News by Philip Pierce, Forester Phil Consulting*

The article “Administering Tree Injections” in the December 2022 issue of Arborist News does a good job of covering the tree injecting subject. However, my injection experience on how different Injection Locations affect treatment chemical distribution and speed of uptake suggests that location on the trunk/roots makes little difference. The article notes several good reasons for using different injection locations. For example, when the manufacturer requires lots of injection points (one injection for each inch of diameter or more), then moving to the root flare provides more space between injection sites.<sup>1</sup>

Another is that the longer the distance between the injection site and the nearest branch, the more likely the branch will not receive the treatment. My experience with tree injections started with Dr. Vanancio (Ben) Sing. He was Merck’s area representative in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1970. He did some trials for the labeling of Arbotect fungicide on Elm trees in Omaha parks using a gravity feed bucket system.

On a visit with Ben in 1988 at Merck headquarters in Rahway, New Jersey, he told me that he was in charge of selling Avid insecticide for the control of cotton weevils in South America and Africa. I asked if he thought Avid insecticide could be injected into trees. He thought it could. <sup>2</sup> In 2016 I started injecting dye into living trees. In order to see how much injections located in a tree’s roots affected lateral spread, I injected a young Walnut’s roots. Three roots with red and three roots with green dye (picture 1). The red and green dyes display no significant lateral spread as it moves from the roots, through the root collar, and into the trunk.



1. Color injected into the roots of an eight year old Walnut

Compare these Walnut injections to the dye patterns of other trunk injections: Eastern Redcedar, Green Ash, and White Pine (picture 2). Green dye on the surface shows no noticeable lateral spread and circumvents three branches. Yet those branches show dye in the second annual ring.

My tree biology education never taught me to think that sap (free water) could move so readily in annual rings that are 6 to 14 years old, especially in a ring porous species like Ash. This Ash tree was injected on May 8, 2020, and cut down on May 11, 2020 (picture 3).

We have seen some of this in the past, such as with iron injections of iron in Pin Oaks (picture 4). These observations help our understanding, but there is still more to learn about tree injections. For example, since there is only 10% of free water movement between annual rings (and probably less of the chemicals dissolved in the water), how much insecticide or fungicide can move from 2-year-old wood to the current annual ring?



2. Eastern Red Cedar injected with green and blue dye.



3. Large Green Ash injected near the base with blue dye. Some vessels connected directly to a small branch and turned the leaves blue. Some drill holes were 12 inches other holes were 4 inches deep. At 8 feet the dye has not spread much laterally, where as much higher, lateral spread in rings 6 through 14 and 7 through 12 is extensive. But not in the current annual ring.



4. A. Pin Oak, 48 inches in diameter, injected with iron MEDICAP FE’s. B. Cut surface 10 feet above injection point. C. Closeup of an iron stain at 10 ft.



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# NAA CONFERENCE AWARD WINNERS

by *Alyssa Brodersen, NAA Executive Director*

The Nebraska Arborists Association announced the 2023 Educator of the Year, Arborist of the Year, and Lifetime Achievement award winners during the Nebraska Great Plains Conference annual membership meeting on January 17th in Lincoln, NE.

The ceremony began with the Educator of the Year winner, Jerel Converse. This was Jerel's second time earning the Educator of the Year award, the first time being in 2010. For the past 13 years, Jerel has been a lead instructor for the NAA Arborist School's "Pruning, Climbing & Safety Class." As an instructor, he has shown a talent for teaching and dedication to the association and the education of new arborists. Many students who attend arborist school have little or no climbing experience; Jerel and the Pruning and Climbing team make every effort to make sure that the students feel comfortable and learn as much as possible in the two-day course. Jerel has also served on the board for the last nine years. From 2014-2016 he served as a Director; from 2017-2022, he served as Treasurer. Jerel's dedication to the association and its members has been unwavering during his many years of service.



*Jerel Converse - Educator of the Year*



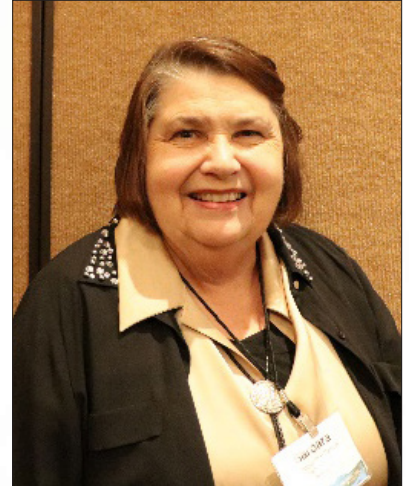
*John Bohrer, Arborist of the Year*

The next award presented was the Arborist of the Year award. John Bohrer was selected as this year's well-deserving recipient. John was previously the Director of Public Works for the City of Bennington; during his time in the position, he accomplished much for his community and is now playing an even larger role in its continued development. You can read more about John Bohrer in this issue's Arborist Spotlight.

Our final award of the afternoon was the Lifetime Achievement award. Barbara Von Tersch was selected for this honor. Barbara began working as an arborist in 1962 for her father's tree company. Fifteen years later, in 1977, along with her father and two brothers, she became a Charter member of the Nebraska Arborists Association and was the first official woman designated by the NAA as an Arborist in the State of Nebraska.

Barbara and her husband Bill both worked in the Torpy family business, and after 17 years as an arborist, Barbara retired to raise her family. Barbara and Bill live on an acreage in Waterloo, Nebraska, and recently celebrated 62 years of marriage. She has an apple orchard, breeds Rhodesian ridgeback dogs, and enjoys riding her horses. Barbara and Bill have 6 children, 19 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

Barbara Von Tersch was a trailblazer for women in Arboriculture and helped pave the way for future female arborists. Barbara's hard work and dedication to the arborist field, like the women after her, has helped shape the Nebraska Arborists Association into what it is today.



*Barbara Von Tersch, Lifetime Achievement*

On behalf of the Nebraska Arborists Association board of directors and its members, we would like to thank all of the 2023 award winners for their dedication and contributions to the arboriculture profession.

## LIABILITY INSURANCE

With the New Year, all Certified NE Arborists must have your insurance company, your company, or yourself send in a "Certification of Liability Insurance" renewal to the NAA office if you have not done so already. Licensed City of Omaha Arborists must send an additional copy of your "Certification of Liability Insurance" to Kaylynn Collins, City of Omaha, Park Maintenance Dept., 1523 South 24th St., Omaha, Nebraska 68108. If you have an Arborist License with another Nebraska city, check with the city office issuing your city's Arborist License to ensure they receive your "Certification of Liability Insurance" renewal.

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# WINTER DAMAGE TO EVERGREENS

by Kathleen Cue, Nebraska Extension Horticulture Educator

Spring's welcome temperatures give us a chance to walk the landscape, checking to see how our trees and shrubs weathered the winter. Rabbit feeding damage on the burning bush, vole paths over the lawn, and browning of evergreen needles are some of the things you will notice.

Evergreens have the unique ability to photosynthesize when temperatures reach 45° F, which seems odd but can and does occur during our winters. Tree roots in frozen soil, as is often the case during our winters, means photosynthesis is using water that evergreens cannot replace. The result is brown needle tips that can encompass all the leaves on the south side of the tree. (The Northern Hemisphere's tilt away from the sun during the winter months makes this possible.) The drying effects of bitterly cold winter winds also dry out the foliage. Tree owners and tree services alike are reporting lots of tip browning of evergreen needles this spring, primarily of spruce trees.



Winter Desiccation in Evergreens

The time to prevent needle browning is in the fall of the year. Tree owners should take note, making sure the soil is evenly moist prior to the ground freeze. This ensures tree tissues are well-hydrated. The screwdriver test is the easiest way to check soil moisture levels when the ground is unfrozen. A screwdriver blade difficult to push in is indicative of dry soil, while a blade that pushes in smoothly indicates good soil moisture.

Newly planted trees are the most severely affected by winter's dryness, having less established roots to mine the water they need. Besides watering, newly planted trees benefit from the application of an anti-desiccant in late fall. Anti-desiccants are spray-on products that contain wax or plastic to thinly coat needles and broadleaf evergreens, reducing the amount of winter water

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loss from drying winds and warm days. Anti-desiccants should be applied twice, once in late fall and a second application in mid-winter, and only on days in the 40-50° F range. More information about anti-desiccants is found here: <https://ag.umass.edu/landscape/fact-sheets/protecting-evergreens-in-winter-qa>.

There is nothing that can be done to force evergreen needles to regain their green color. Evergreens shed needles when the leaves are not photosynthesizing efficiently. The best thing to do now is to practice vigilance and water trees when there has been more than a month of no precipitation (or use the screwdriver test to check soil moisture levels). Refrain from fertilizing trees as this can deepen the effects of winter injury and summer drought. Snow melt can skew our perception of just how dry things are, indicating the importance of checking soil moisture. The U.S. Drought Monitor has large portions of Nebraska in Abnormally Dry to Moderate Drought conditions: <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>.

Go to Dodge County Horticulture Web Page for more gardening information.

## **NEWLY CERTIFIED ARBORISTS**

**Andrew Duff**

**Seth Frame**

**Eric Freeman**

**Lexis Funk**

**Cody Grimm**

**Jeremy Milliman**

**Jake Niemi**

**Josh Seal**

**Chris Shirk**

**Jose Vasquez**

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