



AMTOPP News

**AMTOPP Moving Forward in 2021
Hosting Educational And Work Day Opportunities**



Summer- July 2021

The Station Foundation Benefits from AMTOPP's Spring Field Day

**By: Tom Molitor
Secretary/Treasurer**

It was a typical Montana cold spring morning as AMTOPP members converged on "The Station Foundation," located between Gallatin Gateway and Big Sky. This year, the Field Day was going to happen as this was the site chosen for the 2020 annual Summer Field Day; however, it had to be canceled as with everything last year. On April 17, 2021, AMTOPP members had the honor of providing equipment, material, and labor to help enhance the grounds and remove potentially hazardous trees for the 2021 annual Field Day at The Station Foundation in Gallatin Gateway. The yearly Summer Field Day became the Spring Field Day to fall into better timing for tree spraying, fertilizing, and forest pest control.

For those who are not familiar with The Station Foundation, it is an organization set up and staffed by members who served in the Special Operations Forces (SOF). These warriors and families are fully dedicated to the SOF community and assist with helping participants navigate the rough terrain of transition and reintegration back to civilian life; by offering experience, strength, and hope to individuals as they identify and translate strengths to new arenas.

The location for this facility offers a beautiful compound nestled



inside a mature Douglas Fir forest with large cliffs hovering over and along the Gallatin River. The site has approximately two acres of turf and 100 ornamental trees. There is always something to do there for AMTOPP professionals, and what more deserving group of individuals could we help?

See Spring page 6

Aerial Rescue Class

On May 16th AMTOPP and Ascension Group Northwest put on an Aerial Rescue Training in Missoula. AMTOPP members and other greens industry professionals gathered in the late spring heat to participate in the training that is designed to assist aerial workers in the rescue of compromised co-workers at height. In addition to the actual climbing rescue portion of the class, participants were also able to receive some basic first aid and trauma care instruction.



Dave Stice, with Ascension Group Northwest, was the lead instructor for the course; many of you may know Dave by his mon-

iker 'Nice Guy Dave', and despite the obvious sarcasm of such a nickname, Dave put on a great training (as usual). Ascension Group Northwest, in conjunction with Wesspur Tree Equipment, have been great sponsors for us the last few years, and their donation of both money and time to our organization has been of great benefit to our membership. At the conference this January, make sure to stop by and say thanks!

In conjunction with the Electrical Hazards Awareness Program (EHAP) that was put on this last winter, this training forms 2/3's of the required trainings to earn the EHAP certification that is required by many tree care companies, municipalities, and utility companies for employment.

Arborists came from Missoula, Bozeman, Kalispell, and many other surrounding communities to participate in the training. There were approximately 12 openings for climbing participants, all of which were filled. There were also several participants that were not participating in the climbing portion. All those attending were also able to earn continuing education credits from the International Society of Arboriculture.

While COVID restrictions have certainly put a damper on our

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Quarterly Board Meeting to be held, Friday April 15, 2021, at 39 A Goldmine Lane, Belgrade. If you are interested in attending please notify the AMTOPP office. amtopp@amtopp.org or (406) 204-0100.

Happy Summertime AMTOPP!



While summertime always seems to be a mixed blessing for me – I certainly enjoy the sunshine, but not necessarily the heat! – I am glad that we have finally come back around to the warm part of the year. Of course after a week or two I'm sure I will be ready for the cooler temperatures of fall and the change of pace that winter brings, but I suppose the grass is always greener on the other side!

I am also thankful that we seem to be heading out of the darkness as far as COVID is concerned; not only for the sake of my own sanity but also because we can finally begin to plan our events for the year! This coming conference that we are planning for the membership should prove to be one of our best yet – we have many returning speakers as well as some new faces that will prove to be enlightening as well as entertaining. As always, we welcome any feedback from the member-

ship in regards to the content, so if you have any thoughts or ideas for topics or speakers, please let us know and we will see what we can do!

I also wanted to remind everyone about Saluting Branches this year; last year we were unable to hold the event due to COVID restrictions, but this year we should be able to hold the volunteer day. As some of you may know, Saluting Branches is looking for volunteers to help put on the event, so if you would like to come out and lend a hand with the planning and execution please let me know and we will get you into the right hands!

Finally I would like to thank all the membership, sponsors, and my fellow board members for your patience and understanding during this last year. COVID really sent everyone into a tail spin and I am proud that with your support we have been able to keep things going and keep everyone afloat while so many others have been struggling. Thank you so much, and I look forward to the day when we can all get together again!

Cooper Elwood

Beetle Questions Anyone?

Hello, I am Frank Etzler, the new Natural Resource Section Manager and State Survey Coordinator for the Montana Department of Agriculture.

Before joining the Department of Agriculture, I did my graduate studies and taught courses at Montana State University in Bozeman. My background is as an Entomologist, and I specialize in beetles, particularly those commonly known as click-beetles. I spent 2020 at Clemson University working on a post-doc project examining high altitude arthropods in the southern Appalachians. I joined the department this past December. I have been fortunate to have been able to visit all 56 Montana counties and look forward to being of service to the great people of Montana.



Aug 6 - Quarterly Board Meeting - Eureka Chamber of Commerce - 11 Dewey Ave, Eureka - 10AM

Nov 5 - Quarterly Board Meeting - Fairmont Hot Springs Resort - 1500 Fairmont Rd, Fairmont - 10 AM

Jan.26, 2022 - Pre Conference Board Meeting - Fairmont Hot Springs Resort - 1500 Fairmont Rd, Fairmont - 5PM

January 28, 2022 - Post Conference Board Meeting - Fairmont Hot Springs Resort - 1500 Fairmont Rd., Fairmont - 3PM - (this time subject to change (early or later) due to conference wrap up.)

All are welcome to attend.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the AMTOPP office or one of the Board members.



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AMTOPP Continues to Fund Scholarships for 2021

As most of you know, funding for the Scholarship Program comes from the proceeds of raffle tickets sold leading up to and during the conference. Each year 300 tickets are put out for sale at \$10 each for a chance to win three different prizes. All the proceeds go into the Fund and are used to purchase the raffle prizes, payout the Scholarships, and have a little cushion for an "off" year.

While we did not have a conference this year, and no raffle tickets were sold, the money set aside for an "off" year proved to be a good thing. This year AMTOPP was still able to pay out the regular Scholarships, two \$250 to a 4-H club that plans to use it in ways related to our industry. The other Scholarship, \$500, goes to an FFA member whose plans are to enter the field of either horticulture or arboriculture.

This year it was decided, based on the applications received, that both of the \$250 scholarships for 4-H would go to the same person/club. She was the only one whose project lined up with our industry. This year's recipient for 4-H is Elsa Waite of Billings/Yellowstone County. Her project is to plan and plant a pollinator garden in the Amend Park Community Garden.

Elsa has partnered with the Billings Parks Department to help achieve the raised beds part, as they would provide the material for the construction of the beds if someone would provide the soil and plants,

which is where Elsa comes in with her Scholarship money from AMTOPP. (Photos to come later.)

The FFA Scholarship winner is from Kalispell, a high school senior, Makenna Hartle. She will be attending Flathead Vally Community College this fall and plans on studying Horticulture.

Thank you to everyone who purchased raffle tickets and supported this Scholarship Fund.

Look for raffle tickets coming again.



**Makenna Hartle -
FFA Scholarship Winner**

Aerial continued from page 1

education schedule and events over the last year or so, this spring things have really begun to open up and we are able to put on more of these events. The board of directors would like to thank all those who were able to come out to enjoy the weather and training, as well as everyone who volunteered their time and effort to help put on this event!

Please continue to participate in the events put on by the greens industry in our state; after such a lengthy period of restrictions this year will be critical to our continuing educational efforts, and we are counting on each and every one of our members to come out and earn some CEU's, fellowship with other industry professionals, and maybe even enjoy a beer together when we are all done.

Thanks to everyone who came out, and we will see you at the next training!



From Our Affiliates

Clarifications on Montana's Quarantine Order for the Invasive Emerald Ash Borer

By: Frank E. Etzler
Natural Resource Section Mgr & State Survey Coordinator
MT Dept of Ag

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), *Agrilus planipennis* (Fairmaire) (Fig. 1) is a wood-boring beetle in the family Buprestidae. Native to eastern Asia, EAB was first discovered in the United States in 2002 in Michigan. Since then, it has become established in 35 states and several adjacent Canadian Provinces.



Figure 1
Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) adult (USDA)

On January 15, 2021, the Montana Department of Agriculture's (MDA) former Director, Mike Foster, issued a quarantine order for EAB. This quarantine order affects all ash nursery stock, including all species of the genus *Fraxinus*, as well as any untreated part of an ash tree that come into the state of Montana. Areas that are subject to the quarantine are 33 states, 6 Canadian provinces, and parts of South Dakota and Colorado. Areas where new infestations are discovered are also subject to quarantine. Regulated articles are prohibited from entry into Montana unless accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate or other document attesting to Quarantine compliance. The full quarantine order can be found at: <https://agr.mt.gov/News/emergency-quarantine-order-issued-for-invasive-emerald-ash-borer>.

Montana's quarantine order is an extension of Federal quarantine orders that had been in place since EAB's discovery. However, starting January 14, 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will no longer enforce the quarantine or issue EAB kiln certificates (USDA 2020). Due to the widespread establishment of EAB in

the US, APHIS has chosen to direct resources towards biocontrol and other pest management efforts. After careful consideration, the MDA decided a state quarantine for EAB is the best method for protecting Montana's ash trees. Ash trees are the majority of trees in urban forests of Montanan communities east of the Divide, and green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica* Marshall) is an important native tree for livestock and wildlife shelter in eastern Montana.

As members of the Association of Montana Turf, Ornamental, and Pest Professionals (AMTOPP), you play an important role in protecting Montana's ash trees and other natural resources. Early detection is vital, as EABs are strong fliers, with laboratory studies suggesting mated females can fly more than 20 km (~12.5 miles) (Taylor et al. 2006). A sign of EAB infestation is canopy stress or dieback (Fig. 2). Since Montana's often harsh and unexpected winter weather can also cause canopy damage, like we saw this past May, other signs to look for are epicormic shoots/suckering (Fig. 3) and D-shaped exit holes (Fig. 4). If you believe you have found signs of EAB damage, please do not hesitate to contact your local extension agent or the MDA



Figure 2. Canopy stress/ dieback (USDA)



Figure 3 Epicormic shoots/ suckering (USDA)



Figure 4 D-shaped exit holes (3-4 mm diameter) (USDA)

Questions and reports of potential sightings can be directed to:

Montana Department of Agriculture
Mail: P.O. Box 200201,
Helena, MT 59620-0201
Email: Ag@mt.gov

References Cited

USDA 2020. Emerald Ash Borer Program Manual: *Agrilus planipennis* (Fairmaire); 83 pp.

Taylor, R. A. J., T. M. Poland, L. S. Bauer, K. N. Windell, and J. L. Kautz. 2006. Emerald ash borer flight estimates revised. In: Emerald ash borer research and technology development meeting, Compiled by: V. Mastro, D. Lance, R. Reardon, and G. Parra..

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From Our Affiliates

By: Dr. Laurie Kerzicnik
Associate Extension Specialist II
MSU Extension

Dying Tips in Pines in Montana

This year, we have had several reports statewide about dying tips in pines. The damage has included flagging and dieback in the terminal and surrounding lateral branches on Austrian, lodgepole, and ponderosa pines. This trend has also been seen along the front range of Colorado. We have had to look at the samples individually and in person to determine the cause. Most of the cases have been "suspected environmental" followed by some secondary beetle invasions hitting these stressed pines. Twig beetles of the genera *Pityophthorus* or *Pityogenes* were found in several of the samples. We see these beetles yearly and they often help to prune out branches that are weakened or broken. We have also seen pine sawyer beetles and flat-headed borers in some of these pines. In Great Falls and Cascade, however, several Austrian and lodgepole pines had infestations of a bark beetle, *Orthotomicus latidens* (which used to be an *Ips* species and has since been renamed-see photo). This beetle can kill trees, especially those that are weakened or of small diameter. Preventive treatments for *O. latidens* infestations may be warranted in areas where the beetle has been confirmed and where there are surrounding pines that are vulnerable to attack. Otherwise, pruning is the best option for these flagged areas.



Figure 1. Bark beetle, *Orthotomicus latidens*.

Photo by Laurie Kerzicnik



Figure 1. Dying tips of an Austrian pine.

Photo by Steve McConnell

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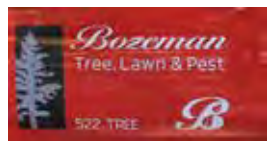
Spring, continued from page 1

Some highlights of the day:

- Bozeman Arborcare provided both a bucket truck and chip truck and rigged and removed hazard trees over structures, and provided White Pine Weevil applications.



- Bozeman Tree Service provided a spider lift, removed deadwood on several large Douglas Fir around structures, and provided corrective Weevil pruning.



- Dillon Distributors provided MCH Phomone packets for Spruce Beetle and Douglas Fir Beetle prevention.



- Jason Stringer, Tree Amigos Tree Care, and Craig Stensby, Nitro-Green Billings, installed the pheromone grid.



- Steve Jonas, of Jonas Sprinklers and Fertilizer, fertilized the lawn areas.



- Clint and Lydia Hesser of Hesser Tree Service, brought out their climbers and removed hazard trees in the playground area.



- Cooper, with Mountain Tree Company, forwarded all material and barked logs for firewood, and aided in the removal of small trees, as well as climbing and pruning.



- Big Twig Tree Care provided ground support and thinned a small patch of forest to create more defensible space and a better walking path between structures.



All in all, the day went smoothly, and we were able to run five teams and take a big dent out of a long list of projects that The Station had in mind.

I want to thank my local tree services for providing equipment and resources so that those traveling did not need to drag iron across the state to help. I also want to thank AMTOPP for the opportunity to support The Station.

A Much Need Lunch Break



Lawn Care Corner: Proper Tank Mixing Practices

As a lawn care operator, efficiency is key, especially as you add more customers and need to cover more properties in one day. One method for efficiency is to take advantage of tank mixing multiple products to treat several lawn issues in one visit.

“Tank mixing is needed for lawn care operators because oftentimes they’re dealing with different things on the lawn,” says Ben Hamza, Ph.D., product development associate director with FMC Professional Solutions. “They can be dealing with times where they need to fertilize. They need to put down weed control. They need to put down the pre-emergent. With those three activities, there’s no product that can do all three, so what they can do is combine all those three inputs into a tank in the liquid form and spray all three. It is the most efficient way to deliver all three on lawns that need them.”

Best Practices

While LCOs should take advantage of tank mixing to be more efficient when treating properties, it is also important to not add unnecessary products to a yard.

“When you’re tank mixing and applying weed control on an area that doesn’t have weeds, while this is not going to harm the grass, but you’re really putting down something that’s not necessary,” Hamza says. “It’s waste environmentally. It’s not a sound practice. Also, it has an economic impact. You’re applying something that’s costing you money as an operator, but your customer is not benefiting any from it.”

Because no lawn is the same, Hamza advises having different tank mixes formulated for newer clients that might need more weed control than more established customers with healthy lawns.

“You want to make sure you’re tank mixing products for the right grass type for the right time of year and for the right target,” Hamza says.

Hamza says it’s all about knowing your clients and what the lawn needs at the time. As the seasons change you want to change your mixture to meet the lawn needs and environmental conditions.

For example, if you mix an insecticide along with a fertilizer and weed control, but there are no insects that need to be controlled, it is environmentally and economically unsound as you are applying something that is not needed.

While the products are designed to be compatible so you can mix them, you should double-check the first time when creating a new tank mix.

“Generally speaking, they’re formulated in such a way that they are compatible, or can be compatible,” Hamza says. “However, never assume they’re compatible. It’s always good to do what’s known as a jar test.”

In a jar test, you combine the right proportions of the products in a glass jar and shake it to see what it looks like. In the jar, see if the materials clump or settle to the bottom. If the mixture is clear and looks uniform, then the formulations are compatible.

You can also take the contents of the jar and spray them somewhere inconspicuous to see



Photo: FMC Professional Solutions

what it does, to confirm its compatibility.

“Over time, with experience, you will know certain formulations mix well, certain formulations don’t mix well,” Hamza says.

It is best to conduct the jar test in advance of treating a property. If the products you’re using are new, it’s always good to do a jar test.

“However, if you’ve used those combinations in the past, and they were safe and you got good results, there’s no need to redo the jar test year after year,” Hamza says. “It’s only when you’re introducing something new that you need to evaluate that in advance.”

Also sometimes it can be as straightforward as reading the label to know what mixtures won’t work.

“There’s a section in the label about mixing products together,” Hamza says. “Some labels will tell you do not mix this with that formula. So, if the label tells you do not mix these products, do not mix them. You don’t need to

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do a jar test to find out." A critical practice for proper tank mixing is following the WALES method. The WALES method is as follows:



W: Wettable powders, water dispersible granules

Conduct a jar test allows you to see if a mixture can be used safely.

Photo: Ben Hamza

A: Agitate until uniformly dispersed

L: Liquid flowables (ex. SC formulations)

E: Emulsifiable concentrates

S: Soluble liquid products

"If you have multiple active ingredients, and you're tank mixing and you want to follow the WALES method because if you put an E in be-

fore A, there's a chance that that it would settle," Hamza says.

Common Mistakes

Some of the most common mistakes when it comes to tank mixing are not following the previously mentioned WALES method and not noting the active ingredients' formulation.

Hamza says differing formulations of the same active ingredient can cause it to react differently. He advises running a jar test if the active ingredient is the same but has different formulations.

Another mistake that can occur is mixing up the unit of measure for the mixture as some labels might say ounces per acre while others say active ingredient per acre. Reading milliliters and using ounces can also be a problem.

"You want to make sure you pay close attention to the unit of measure to be able to fill following the unit of measure that is on the label

in order to be compliant," Hamza says. "You want to apply the product at the right rate."

Another important factor LCOs need to keep in mind of the quality of the water they are using for the tank mixing. If the water is too alkaline or too acidic it will impact the tank mix. Water with a lot of sediments and other soluble salts in it can impact the quality of the mix.

Hamza advises taking a water sample to the county extension office to run a water analysis and seek their advice for its suitability for use in tank mixing.

Created in partnership with the experts at FMC True Champions

Taken from NALP 's April 22, 2021, issue of Landscape Professionals Blog: <https://blog.landscapeprofessionals.org>

Jill Odom is the content manager for NALP.

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