



AMTOPP News



Fall 2022

AMTOPP Members and Others Turn Out In Support of Saluting Branches

Submitted By: Phil Madewell In September 2015, **Big Twig TreeCare** over 1000 tree care professionals from 246 different

companies came together at 27 different state and national cemeteries located in 21 states. At the time it was one of the largest volunteer donations ever received by the Department of Veteran Affairs.

Spearheaded and founded by Rainbow Tree Care, out of Minnetonka, Minnesota, Saluting Branches has been a yearly event ever since that inaugural event. Except, things have grown a bit since then. By 2022, the gathering of volunteers and participating companies nearly **TRIPLED** in size.

Here in Montana alone, with over 1 million dollars in equipment and 50 Volunteers from tree services across the state, there was north of 75,000 dollars worth of much needed maintenance and removals done in an amazing effort to keep the historic property beautiful and safe. On site were 3 Grapple Trucks, 2 Spider Lifts, and a mini skid steer. Stihl and Husqvarna of Montana provided demo chainsaws and consumables and Bandit provided a 75HP stump grinder.

Headed up by AMTOPP Vice President Tom Molitor (Big Twig Tree Care of Belgrade), over 40 trees were pruned with 10+ removals and an astounding 350 yards of brush and wood hauled to an on site disposal area.

Saluting Branches is our best opportunity as tree care professionals to give even a little back to those who have sacrificed so much for our continuing freedom. AMTOPP is proud to be a part of such an amazing event.

If you are interested in participating or contributing in the 2023 Saluting branches event, it falls on the fourth Wednesday of September. Visit the website at www.salutingbranches.org to find out more on dates and locations.

See more photos page 9



**Lunch Sponsor
Thank You STIHL**



Danny Lamb

Rigging and Rescue in the Mission Mountains

By: Jason Stringer
Director

I would like to thank Dave Stice and all those who attended the advanced rigging

and aerial rescue class held at Inez Lake near Seeley Lake, Montana in July. As always, Dave brought the latest gear to demonstrate. The rigging class consisted of multiple approaches of rigging and lowering for different scenarios. Both the rigging and aerial rescue classes offered ISA credits and a chance to share knowledge and techniques with other arborists from all around the state. Following the long days of training, many attendees stayed to enjoy the beautiful scenery and network with others. In the end, attendees were able to earn a few credits, develop rigging skills, practice an aerial rescue, network and share

experiences, and play a few games of Hammerschlagen. I hope everyone who attended enjoyed it as much as I did and look forward to seeing everyone at the conference.



President's Message

RAH, RAH, Cis boom bah.



Another season is quickly moving into fall. Moving from Arizona to Montana twenty some odd years ago I was having trouble gauging the seasons. After all, summer in Arizona is nine months long with a month each for the other seasons. Finally, I figured out my gauge. Hay cutting. When the farmers make their first hay cutting, a third of the summer is done. The second is two thirds. They hope for a third cutting.

AMTOPP seasons revolve around the conference in January. This year's conference date inadvertently got moved on us due to scheduling difficulties. This has created a new and exciting scheduling challenge. We are moving the conference agenda around a bit which ought to add some zing. Speakers from far and wide will gather to lead our seminars. The keynote speaker is Dr. John Ball and I am very excited to hear what he has to say.

Lots and lots of CEU's are to be had with the blend of the various components of our green industry. These are the meat and potatoes of our industry which keep us ahead of the game professionally. And how about those side bar conversations in the hallways, breakfast table, the banquets, the auctions and of course the hot tubs. I have been in various aspects of this industry for a bunch of years and I am still

learning new stuff.

I tell the young people I work with that it is not what you know. It is the love of learning. Once you have that then it becomes a lifetime endeavor. I love planting trees, I hate digging holes. Guess what, if I want to plant a tree I have to dig that hole. I love pruning trees, I hate picking up brush. When you prune a tree, there is brush to pick up. Not everything in life is fun. But moving forward, meeting new people, doing new things, and learning makes for an interesting life.

This is why I am the current President of AMTOPP and proudly so. I am honored to be working with my fellow board members in this time. I am looking forward to seeing all of you at the conference in January. Enjoy the leaf changing time of fall and travel safely to Fairmont Hot Springs.

Dudley Marburger



**YOUR TRUSTED TREE AND LAWN CARE
EQUIPMENT SUPPLIER SINCE 1947....**



CONFERENCE DATES

More Details Coming Very Soon!

**TUESDAY
JANUARY 31
FIRST AID**

**WEDNESDAY,
FEBRUARY 1
EAT AND
LANDSCAPE
IRRIGATION
TECHNICIAN CLASS**

**THURSDAY,
FEBRUARY 2 CONFERENCE
KICK OFF**

**FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 3,
CONFERENCE
CONTINUES
AND WRAPS UP**

Synopsis of Minutes 7-29-22

By: Lydia Heser
Secretary/Treasurer

The Board of Directors had their meeting at Lake Inez on the 29th of July, 2022.

Prior to the regular meeting the Executive Board met to review the proposed 2023 budget which was presented to the Directors during the regular meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 10:20 am. Those present were Cooper Elwood, Dudley Marburger, Tom Molitor, Lydia Heser, Chris Galanti, Steve Jonas, Matt Means, Owen Nickol, James Roberts, Jason Stringer, and Trudie Southwick. The main topic covered was the planning of the coming AMTOPP Conference. The

board will also be watching for legislation coming as the Montana legislative session starts up in January. Hopefully the board can set up meetings with our representatives to discuss issues facing our industry.

The committee working on a recognition opportunity for members will continue to work on the guidelines for recognition.

The board also discussed Saluting Branches. Tom Molitor is organizing the Montana site in Helena again; and the date will be September 28th. We hope that it has a good attendance this fall.

The meeting ended with everyone having their jobs assigned to work together to bring the Conference together.

Conference Announcement

By: Chris Galanti
Director

The Association of Montana Turf, Ornamental and Pest Professionals (AMTOPP) is pleased to announce its 2023 annual conference at luxurious Fairmont Hot Springs Jan 31st-Feb 3rd, 2023. Join us in advancing our knowledge and networking with industry professionals with some of the best and brightest educators in the green industry, in addition to a warm soaking in the refreshing hot springs during the cold winter months. Whether you're an irrigation technician, tree worker or groundskeeper, there are educational opportunities for everyone. Our Keynote speaker will be Dr. John

Ball, who will also be teaching a pre conference class and provide a educational session on Thursday morning. Trainings include Electrical Hazard and CPR classes, a full day of Irrigation troubleshooting (as well as certification testing for the Irrigation Association), tree and turf pests and disease, soils, tree gear, rangeland management and much more! For more information on this exciting conference and registration, please visit our website at AMTOPP.org. We hope to see all of you there and look forward to discussing the issues and advancements you've all had this season!



October 28 - Quarterly Board Meeting - Black Eagle, - Pit Stop Tavern and Raceway Cafe, 1600 25th Ave NE, - 10AM - 3PM

January 31, 2023 - First Aid/CPR - Fairmont Hot Springs - 12 - 6PM - Pre-registration required

February 1, 2023 - Pre Conference Classes - EHAT - Fairmont Hot Springs - 8AM to 4PM - Pre-registration required

Landscape Irrigation Technician Class - Fairmont Hot Springs - 8AM to 5PM - More information coming - Preregistration required

Quarterly Board Meeting - Fairmont Hot Springs - 5 - 6:30PM

February 2-3, 2023 - Conference and Trade Show - Fairmont Hot Springs Resort

February 3, 202 - Quarterly Board Meeting - Fairmont Hot Springs - 3 - 5:30PM



YOUR PREMIER PROVIDER

Contact your local Wilbur-Ellis Specialist today.

Great Falls, MT | Rob Warehime | 406-788-4501 Billings, MT | Mike Doty | 406-670-4713

pro.wilburellis.com

1966 6th St NE, Great Falls, MT 59404 | 7175 Trade Center Ave, Billings, MT 59101



WILBUR-ELLIS
Ideas to Grow With



For information only. Not a label. Prior to use, always read and follow the product label directions. WILBUR-ELLIS logo and Ideas to Grow With are registered trademarks of Wilbur-Ellis Company LLC. © 2022

Fall Brings Some Eight-Legged Friends Around the Home

By: Laurie Kerzicnik, PhD
Associate Extension Specialist II;
Arthropod Diagnostician

Despite their negative reputation, spiders are present in all terrestrial habitats, except Antarctica, and thrive wherever insect prey and vegetation are present. Spiders are beneficial due to their predatory nature, feeding on a variety of insect and invertebrate prey.

During the fall in Montana, you may find a cat-faced spider on your porch (Fig. 1), which catches the pesky moths, flies, and mosquitoes that are attracted to the porch lights. It rarely, if ever, enters the home.



Figure 1. Cat-faced spider.
Photo by Ross Carlson.

The hobo spider is very common inside homes from August through November in western and central Montana (Fig. 2). There is no conclusive evidence that the hobo spider is of medical importance to humans. Their nickname, aggressive

house spider, comes from an errant translation of their scientific name, *Eratigena agrestis*. The Latin translation of *agrestis* is not aggressive, but rather “rural” or “in the fields”.



Figure 2 - Figure 2. Female hobo spider.
Photo by Laurie Kerzicnik.

See Spiders page 7



ROCKY MOUNTAIN
TREE AND TURF SUPPLY LLC

Recently founded in January of 2021, Rocky Mountain Tree and Turf Supply, LLC is the newest premier distributor of tree and turf supplies in the Northern Rockies area. We are dedicated to providing you the very best professional grade lawn fertilizers (including golf course blends), insect and disease control products, along with soil nutrients that are tried and tested in the Rocky Mountain soils. We also sell Arboriculture Equipment, offering Stump Grinders, Chippers and BEAST equipment. Check out our booth for more information!

307-620-9303

rmtreeandturf@gmail.com

rmттsupply.com



CERTIFIED
ISA
ARBORIST











On Friday, September 23, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing its withdrawal of all remaining portions of the interim registration review decision for glyphosate. Pesticide products containing glyphosate continue to remain on the market and be used according to the product label and are unaffected by this action.

Glyphosate is undergoing registration review, a periodic reevaluation of pesticide registrations to ensure that existing pesticide products continue to perform their intended function without unreasonable adverse effects on human health or the environment. Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), each pesticide must be reviewed every 15 years.

On Feb. 3, 2020, EPA published the Glyphosate Interim Registration Review Decision (ID). The ID did not identify any human health risks of concern from exposure to glyphosate but did identify potential ecological risks. The ID included interim risk mitigation measures in the form of la-

bel changes, including labeling to manage spray drift and herbicide resistance. It concluded that the benefits of glyphosate outweigh the potential ecological risks when glyphosate is used in accordance with the labels.

On March 20, 2020, the glyphosate ID was challenged in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Petitioners challenged EPA's analysis of human health and ecological risk, the weighing of such risks against the benefits of glyphosate and the interim risk mitigation measures and alleged that EPA violated the Endangered Species Act (ESA). On May 18, 2021, EPA sought partial voluntary remand without vacatur of the ecological portion of the ID so the Agency could revisit aspects of its analysis in light of EPA's November 2020 draft biological evaluation for glyphosate and recent court decisions for other herbicides, among other reasons.

On June 17, 2022, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit vacated the human health portion of the glyphosate ID and held that EPA's registration review decision under FIFRA was an 'action' that triggered ESA obligations. The court also granted EPA's request for voluntary remand, without vacatur, of the ecological portion of the ID but imposed an Oct. 1, 2022, deadline for EPA to issue a new ecological portion. EPA sought relief from this deadline, which the court denied on Aug. 5, 2022.

EPA has determined that withdrawal of the glyphosate ID is appropriate in consideration of the Ninth Circuit's June 17, 2022, decision. The Agency is unable to finalize a new ecological portion in a registration review decision for glyphosate by the court-imposed Oct. 1, 2022, deadline because of the time needed to address the issues for which EPA sought remand of the ecological portion and satisfy ESA requirements. EPA initiated formal ESA consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (the Services) for glyphosate in November 2021, and consultation is ongoing. Moreover, before issuing any decision, EPA must first prepare a proposed decision, publish for a

See Glyphosate page 9



Pricing/Ordering:
Toni Smith
720-484-1763
tsmith@rainbowecoscience.com

For More Info: 877-272-6747 www.RainbowEcoscience.com



Plan ahead

Lock down next year's contracts by developing customer relationships.

As falling leaves begin to cover the grass and greenery that you've laboriously cared for throughout the spring and summer months, it may seem like the time has finally come to sit back, relax and recount the successes of the busy season. But it's actually time to connect with clients and have important conversations about budgets, wish lists and capital improvements so you can have signed contracts in-hand before the year ends, while building and strengthening valuable customer relationships.

"It all boils down to communication, so stay in front of customers on a regular basis, whether commercial clients, residential clients or public works clients," says Fred Haskett, principal of The Harvest Group, Wilton, Connecticut. "Stay in front of them in a positive way."

As property managers typically finalize their budgets for the following season between late summer and early fall, it is imperative that you're connecting with them to talk about the value and level of service you provide while putting proposals for next season's work on the table.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic may make face-to-face interactions challenging, using creativity to connect personally with clients is a critical step in maintaining and growing positive relationships. Whether via video call, phone call or in-person meeting, contractors

should be discussing the pros and cons of the service they provided in 2020 and touting the value-added bonuses they provided at no cost.

"We give our clients a lot of free things, but we never really tell them about it, so sit down and do your own PR for how it went this year," says Ken Thomas, principal of Envisor Consulting, Alpharetta, Georgia. "Tell your clients that you want to be a great provider in 2021 and ask them what they think you could have done better in 2020. We recommend this every year, a look back at the past and a look forward."

This time is also ideal for completing what Haskett calls the "wish list walk," a time to walk the property and develop a list of all the things that should or could be done.

"Evaluate the property from a needs standpoint," Haskett says. "Are there hazardous trees or irrigation issues? Then get the client to give you an idea of what they would like to do. You provide them with proposals for that work and help them prioritize it to get it in the budget for the next year. That's big in the commercial business."

On the residential side, Haskett says the "wish list walk" should include a discussion about a la carte services like seeding and aerating, leaf removal, dormant pruning, rejuvenation pruning, holiday light installation, and winterization and fertilization for trees and shrubs. This is also the time to dust off capital improvement ideas that got buried last year and discuss whether they might fit into next year's budget.

"What you're really doing is having continuity of relationships," Haskett says. "If you can maintain the relationship and find things you can do for the client in the off-season, it is revenue-enhancing, and you're still maintaining that relationship."

Staying in touch with customers through LinkedIn, by sending handwritten notes or by giving holiday gifts are other simple ways to solidify and grow client relationships.

"This is a relationship-based business," Thomas says. "It's all about goodwill."

Know your costs, know your customers

While being in-tune with clients is always important, it is especially vital in the age of COVID-19 and the uncertainty it has introduced to the economy.

Haskett says contractors with a long list of residential clients should

familiarize themselves with the main employers in town. If there is a large manufacturing plant that is planning layoffs, and a large population of residents work at the plant or ancillary support businesses, it is safe to assume that many clients will be looking to cut costs. Those with a large book of restaurant, retail mall or shopping center business can assume the same.

"Know your clients' businesses and project how the economic pressures are affecting them, then determine your strategies and your pricing," Haskett says. "Be aware of what is going on with your clients and businesses before you arbitrarily do a price increase. It's a partnership, and you're creating partnerships for the long term."

Contractors who plan to implement price increases across the board will undoubtedly turn clients away in today's market. A 95% retention



Distributing Professional Irrigation, Landscape and Turf Care products to the professionals since 1920

www.midlandimplement.com

Billings
800-677-6426

Bozeman
866-388-6166

Missoula
800-288-3448

Lawn, Tree & Pest Control Products & Spraying Equipment

Complete line of sprayers designed to meet your needs & budget!
Tanks, Pumps, Hoses, Handguns & Parts, Lots of Parts!

Professional Plant Health & Pest Control Products



2680 Commerce Rd, Rapid City SD 57702
800-658-5457—605-342-7644
Catalog online Warnechemical.com or mail

See Planning page 8

Wolf spiders occasionally enter the home (Fig. 3) and represent some of our largest spiders here in Montana. They are hunting spiders that don't build webs to catch prey. Unlike most spiders, they need good eyesight to hunt down their prey at night.



Figure 3. Carolina wolf spider. Photo by Salvador Vitanza.

The black widow is common in Montana and can occasionally enter the home (Fig. 4). In 2022, an unusually high number of black widows were reported throughout Montana (reason unknown). They can typically be found in darker places, such as crawl spaces, irrigation boxes, laundry rooms, and garages. Although their bites are rare, they require serious medical attention.



Figure 4. Female black widow. Photo by Laurie Kerzicnik

Even though it might seem like they are taking over homes this time of year, remember that spiders rarely bite unless threatened or if they get trapped in your shoes or clothing. Sticky traps and the vacuum are always a good way to remove spiders from the home. Also, keep window screens intact, caulk or foam any openings or cracks, and do the same for door areas.

RAIN & BIRD®



WesSpur 2022 Catalog

- NEW GEAR
- NEW SHOP
- SAME GREAT SERVICE!

QR CODE

(800) 268-2141
WesSpur.com
GET YOUR FREE COPY TODAY!

WesSpur
Tree Equipment, Inc.

**JENNISON TREE
SERVICES LLC**

Rick - Robert - Misty - Sackett

rate could quickly turn to 80% or less with the wrong pricing strategy. That's why Haskett encourages contractors to analyze jobs and know costs.

"If you know where you're at in profitability in the job, you can evaluate if you can go another year without a price increase," Haskett says. "Or, think about whether you can get the increase over a two-year period instead of a one-year period."

Realizing that there will be both commercial and residential clients who want to trim costs for next year and being prepared for that conversation is a solid strategy for approaching clients heading into 2021.

"We are talking to a lot of landscapers today and telling them they need to get proactive on ways they can value engineer the scope of work in 2021, because there is nothing we can do to cut prices without cutting scope," Thomas says. "Everything has gotten more expensive in landscaping and irrigation, from materials to labor. We need to come to customers armed to deal with those wanting to cut costs, without giving up margin."

Thomas suggests being prepared to present each client with two to three solid ideas for cutting costs. Offering one application of mulch instead of two, suggesting a half application of mulch instead of a full application and cutting back on flowers for commercial buildings that have seen a decrease in visitors are tangible suggestions that will save cost without sacrificing profitability.

While many customers will be looking to cut costs, Thomas still suggests having a list of suggested capital improvements on hand. As daily life has changed dramatically over the past seven months and people are spending more time at home, some clients will be motivated to explore and implement home improvements.

"I'm hearing that people think it is going to be a better year because people are more home-centric, and they may want to pull the trigger

on a project they've been putting off," Thomas says. "The residential side is a lot more emotional than the commercial side. Try to appeal to their sense of emotion and suggest ideas that make being home more fun for the kids and the family. Even though some people are pulling in the purse strings a little bit because they're not sure of job security, I would still have a list of capital improvements."

Provide incentives for contracts

As the busy season begins to wrap up, most green industry companies are submitting proposals to clients for the following season, and many times, customers sit on those proposals, waiting to sign until spring.

"There's no reason to sit on a proposal if you have a good relationship with your contractor," Thomas says. "Find a way to incentivize the customer to pull the trigger before Thanksgiving or Christmas."

Thomas suggests offering an enhancement credit, good for use on any added service, to customers who sign contracts before a set date, like November 25 or December 31. While a \$1,500 enhancement credit translates to \$1,500 of value to a customer, it represents about half that amount in actual cost to a contractor.

"The bigger the contract, the more sense that makes," Thomas says. "You can save the customer money without giving up margin."

Haskett says that according to research conducted by several of his previous employers, highly successful companies who studied their own business, contractors who are proactive in connecting with their clients and those who understand that the green industry is based on relationships will benefit from happier clients who make more referrals and purchase additional services more frequently.

"The better you are at understanding these things, the better you are able to achieve what we call highly satisfied clients," Haskett says. "If you take care of people and think of ways to take them from being happy and satisfied to having them say that your company is awesome, there is a stark difference in the actual financial ROI you can achieve."

The research Haskett references shows that 95% of highly satisfied customers are likely to renew contracts versus only 50% of satisfied customers. Also, highly satisfied customers are 70% more likely to buy additional services versus 30% of satisfied customers. Additionally, highly satisfied customers have a 98% chance of referring friends and colleagues while satisfied customers have a 40% chance of making referrals.

"The difference between 'these guys are good' and 'these guys are amazing' is huge, and you can track it financially," Haskett says.

Being prepared with suggestions to help customers go forward with a plan can help bridge that gap and leave both contractors and clients feeling ready to face the new year.

*This article originally appeared in
Irrigation & Green Industry magazine; October 19, 2020..*

*By Lauren Sable Freiman, a freelance writer
based in Cleveland*



Three Locations To Serve You

www.mountainsupply.com

MISSOULA
406-543-8255

BOZEMAN
406-587-0713

BILLINGS
406-259-2909

NorthWestern[®]
Energy
Delivering a Bright Future



Glyphosate continued from page 5

60-day public comment period, and consider any comments received. EPA cannot complete these processes by the court-imposed deadline.

EPA's underlying scientific findings regarding glyphosate, including its finding that glyphosate is not likely to be carcinogenic to humans, remain the same. In accordance with the court's decision, the Agency intends to revisit and

better explain its evaluation of the carcinogenic potential of glyphosate and to consider whether to do so for other aspects of its human health analysis. For the ecological portion, EPA intends to address the issues for which it sought remand, including: to consider whether additional or different risk mitigation may be necessary based on the outcome of ESA consultation for glyphosate, prepare an analysis

of in-field effects of glyphosate on monarch butterfly habitat, consider whether there are other aspects of its analysis of ecological risks and costs to revisit, and consider what risk mitigation measures may be necessary to reduce potential risk following completion of analyses left outstanding in the ID. EPA also intends to complete ESA consultation with the Services, make a determination under the Endocrine

Disruptor Screening Program, and respond to an administrative petition regarding glyphosate before issuing a final registration review decision.

A copy of the Withdrawal of the Glyphosate Interim Registration Review Decision is posted to the glyphosate registration review docket EPA-HQ-OPP-2009-0361 at <https://www.regulations.gov>. For more information about glyphosate, visit EPA's website.

2022 OFFICERS - Executive Board

President -Dudley Marburger, Dudley's Trees; 406-212-3391; dudleystrees@centurytel.net;

Term Expires: 2024

Vice President - Tom Molitor, Big Twig Tree Care; (406) 600-9365; tom@bigtwigtreecare.com;

Term Expires: 2025

Secretary/Treasurer -Lydia Hesel, Hesel Tree Service; (406) 740-0931; clheser@gmail.com: Term Expires 2026

Past President - Cooper Elwood, Mountain Tree Company; 406-529-0185; coopere@gmail.com;

Term Expires: 2023

DIRECTORS

James Roberts - TruGreen; 406-860-9443; @gmail.com: Term Expires 1/2025

Steve Jonas - Jonas Sprinklers and Fertilizer; 406-216-2281; stevejonas84@gmail.com: Term Expires 1/2025

Chris Galanti; Galanti Lawn & Landscape; (406) 212-4850; chris@galantilandscaping.com: Term Expires 2/2023

Owen Nickol; Oxen Tree Services (406) 270-1506; oxen@ronan.net: Term Expires 1/2025

Matt Means, NorMont Equipment Co; (406) 781-4734; mmeans@nmeqco.com: Term Expires 1/2024

Jason Stringer, Tree Amigos Tree Service; 406-268-8733; jcstringer12365@msm.com; Term Expires 1/2025

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Trudie Southwick - amtopp@amtopp.org - (406) 204-0100

amtopp@amtopp.org

AMTOPP

www.amtopp.org

173 Cottonwood Road,
Townsend, MT 59644
(406) 204-0100

Association of Montana
Turf, Ornamental, and Pest Professionals
173 Cottonwood Road
Townsend, MT 59644

