

AMTOPP News



Fall 2023

Aerial Rescue Training

By: Jason Stringer Director

On Thursday, July 27, AMTOPP, DNRC, and Dave Stice of WesSpur Tree Equipment provided an aerial rescue training in Clinton, MT.

The training was initially scheduled at Lake Inez, near Seeley, but was changed at the last minute. Due to the Colt Mountain fire, just days before the event was to take place, a venue change had to be arranged. Rob Dillon, a fellow arborist and AMTOP-Per, owner of Robert Dillion Tree Service, provided the perfect location in Clinton. I want to thank Rob for his continued support of AMTOPP and for coming through with a place for the training class. Rob had plenty on his plate but set it aside to ensure the site

was ready for the training, given there were only about three days to rearrange his schedule crew and put them on the task of preparing the training site. As always, he came through when

AMTOPP needed him the most.

In addition to Rob's contribution, the DNRC and Dave Stice were contributors. Thanks to Jamie Kirby with DNRC for providing the resources needed to cover most of the expenses for the training.

Finally, Dave Stice, your continued dedication to making arboriculture as safe as possible has helped many. Thanks, Dave; you are an unbelievable asset to AMTOPP and the arboriculture industry.

I would also like to thank those who participated in the training. I encourage all of you to continue to participate in future events. I hope to see you all at the conference in late January 2024.

Be safe.



Saluting Branches - Big Timber

By: Tom Molitor President

Another year of Saluting Branches has come to an end. Not enough thank you's can be said to everyone involved

for their hard work, dedication, and support. Volunteers across the country gather for this event to donate their time to give back to veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms.

The following companies deserve recognition for donating their time and equipment in Big Timber, Montana:

- •Sapphire Forestry
- •SavATREE
- •Big Twig Tree and Forestry
- •ArborCare
- •Heser Tree Service
- ·City of Whitefish
- AMTOPP
- •American Legion Post 19
- •Sweet Grass County
- •Tamarack Insurance Agency
- •TruGreen Billings & Helena
- •All Things Green
- •Mountain Tree Co
- •Young's Tree & Forestry
- Oxen Tree Service
- Tree Amigos
- •WesSpur



See Saluting Branches page 9

President's Message



Now that we have seen the first snow of the year, we can prepare ourselves for the most dreaded question of the fall. "Can you get this done before winter!?"

We will often say yes, knowing full well that it already is winter, continuing our work until the phone stops ringing. And then what?

One of the most difficult things of our industry is balancing the slow times after the season's chaos. If we were only this much

busier in the winter, then we could keep a bigger staff all year. Keeping the lights on when money is slow is no easy task.

A good plan going into the winter can soften the blow.

It is time to weigh out the breakdowns and repairs that we have been fighting all year.

Do we send our frustrating equipment down the road? And if so, do we buy new or used?

Spoiler alert: There are no good deals on new or used, and the interest rates are higher than we have seen for a long time. It could pencil out to put \$20,000+ into an old truck because the cost of a new outfitted rig is so high. Of course, planning your large purchases as they intersect with your goals is something that one should speak about with their accountant.

Budgeting and timing our repairs for a winter shut down can be helpful to keep our staff rolling.

Estimating the repairs and comparing our payroll costs keeps the money in house compared to hiring a repair shop. However, it is important to know one's limitations, and everyone remain safe during shop time. Hiring a repair shop for diagnostics and an inspection gives us the knowledge to pick and choose what we are capable of fixing. If a tree/lawn company does not have their own shop, then perchance they could rent for a few months.

It's time to run through every saw on the shelf, and maybe fix up the

one that hasn't run for several years. It might only be a \$100 piston that took you an hour to replace. Have a pro saw beyond repair? Be honest with what you have and fire sale it on eBay, marketplace, or a saw forum.

Starting 2024 with fresh saws, no dull chains or knives, and no reason to sharpen a chain for the first quarter or even half of the year would prevent significant lost time on the job site.

Budgeting hours or even a day to inspect all climbing gear, ropes, and PPE is crucial. Speaking for myself, I never want to question my gear when I am at height, I have enough on my mind.

DOT and Aerial lift inspections are Ideal early in the year so there is no downtime mid-season.

The same goes for tires, brakes, steering and suspension components on vehicles. Don't forget to check your trailer safety equipment as well. The Montana CDL Exam study guide is a great resource checklist even if your truck is not over-CDL.

Of course, the most important winter plan will be joining us for our AMTOPP conference.

Tom Molitor 2023 President





JENNISON TREE SERVICES LLC Ríck - Robert - Misty - Sackett

Board Meetings and Events

Synopsis of Board Meeting 7/28/23

By: Owen Nickol Secretary/Treasurer

Hello to everyone in the AMTOPP community. It's hard to believe that we have already passed the half way point of 2023.

The third board meeting of the 2023 season occurred July 28 by Clinton Montana. This meeting was originally scheduled to be held at Jason's cabin next to Lake Inez, but with the advancing Colt fire, it was moved. Thanks to Rob Dillon for allowing us to use his shop, and going out of his way to accommodate us with such short notice.

The day before this board meeting there was an Ariel rescue class, so the board discussed about how to increase the role of AMTOPP providing training opportunities. The discussion talked about having more classes throughout the year and working with other agencies.

Also, at this meeting the board has re-

ally started to get all things for the next conference laid out. We all agreed that we needed to have the next board meeting at Fairmont so that we could get all the layout for the conference planned. We also agreed that we needed to cap the attendance for this year as we don't want to create any problems with overcrowding.

The board also discussed the plans this year for Saluting Branches. It was discussed how it would be in Big Timber and that we had plenty of work for everybody and all the equipment they could bring. A meeting was scheduled to preview the cemetery before the actual work day, so better planning could be made.

As always, if you have any questions or would like a copy of the meeting minutes, feel free to reach out to me (oxan@ ronan.net). Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your secretary/treasurer for the 2023 season.

What's Coming 21p?

All Events At Fairmont Hot Springs - Oct - January 2024

October 13 - Quarterly Board Meeting - 10AM - 3PM -**Executive Board Room**

Group Rates for lodging Thursday (13) & Friday (14)

January 23-24 - Landscape Irrigation Auditor Class (2 day class) Pre Conference Class - 8AM - 5PM -

Pre Registration Required

January 23 - First Aid/CPR Class - Pre Conference Class -12-6 PM - Pre Registratin Required

January 24 - Electrical Hazard Training - Dr. John Ball - Pre Conference Class - 8AM - 4PM - Pre Registration Required

January 24 - Quarterly Board Meeting - 5 - 6:30 PM - Room 108

January 25-26 - Annual Conference and Trade Show - Registration Open Now

January 26 - Board Meeting - 3 - 5:30 (times subject to change without notice) - Room 108







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From Our Affiliates

Reducing Winter-Related Injury in Landscape Trees

By: Abi Saeed **Extension Horticulture** Associate Specialist, Montana State University.

Montana can have harsh winter conditions that can sometimes challenge even our hardiest trees and shrubs, especially if steps aren't taken to set them up for the best success. Last winter was especially tough on many of our landscape trees and shrubs, and we saw significant amounts of winter injury across the state.

Follow these tips to set your trees and shrubs up for a more successful winter this year by allowing them to harden off and protecting them from common winter-related injuries.

Dieback in Deciduous Trees

Dieback can occur on sensitive shoots and buds during temperature extremes, and can especially be an issue in marginally hardy trees and shrubs. Floral buds are more susceptible to dieback than leaf or stem buds, which can result in a reduction or lack of flowering and fruiting in the following growing season. It can be difficult to completely prevent winter dieback, but a few steps can be taken to reduce the likelihood.

·Select regionally hardy trees, shrubs, and rootstock for your growing climate and make sure that they are well-taken care of and healthy going into winter.

•Marginally hardy plants should be placed in more sheltered locations and, if possible, planted in groups.

•Avoid fertilizing and pruning late summer and fall to reduce the amount of new tender growth going into the winter.

•Make sure trees are watered sufficiently throughout the growing season, and check soil moisture regularly. Watering should continue until the ground freezes. It is especially important to keep watering newly transplanted trees and shrubs because they experience the most water-stress due to their underdeveloped root systems.

Sunscald

Sunscald (also referred to as southwest injury) occurs when the sun heats up the bark of trees, which can begin stimulating cell activity in the winter. As temperatures drop after the sun disappears, these active cells can be killed, which results in cracking and splitting damage in the bark. This is especially likely in

younger and newly transplanted trees, heavily pruned trees, as well as dark and thin-barked (such as cherries, plums, crabapples, ash, linden, maples, and honey locust). This is also more common in the south and southwest direction, where sun intensity is highest.

• Protect susceptible trees by wrapping their bark in white tree wraps, plastic guards, or white latex paint to reflect the intense sunlight.

Remove wraps and plastic guards in the spring as active growth resumes, to prevent constriction and girdling.



Evergreen Winter Injury

Winter injury (also referred to as winter burn and desiccation) can be an issue for evergreen trees and shrubs, especially during long and dry winters. Unlike deciduous trees and shrubs, evergreens continue to lose moisture through transpiration in the winter. When the ground is frozen, and especially during periods of low humidity, low precipitation, and high winds, these evergreens can lose more moisture than they can replenish, which results in drying out and browning of needles and leaves. Damage is most often seen on the south, southwest, and windward sides of the plant, but can sometimes affect the entire plant. Although all evergreens are susceptible, this can be especially problematic on broadleaf evergreens due to their larger leaf surface area and subsequent potential moisture loss.

•Plant marginally hardy and highly susceptible evergreens in locations protected from high winds and intense winter sun.

•Avoid late summer and fall pruning and fertilizing (which encourages new growth), because new growth is more susceptible to winter injury.

•Make sure trees are watered sufficiently throughout the growing season, so they are not water-stressed going into the fall.

•After letting your trees harden off by slightly reducing watering in September, make sure they receive plenty of water in the fall (October) until hard freeze.

•On sunny winter days during periods of very limited or no snow cover, these evergreen trees may need occasional supple-

See Injury page 7



mental watering

Aspen Leaf Spots and Blight

By: Dr. Eva Grimme Associate Extension Specialist II; fallen leaves. In spring, Montana State University

While the much-needed precipitation this season benefited our state, the extra moisture also favored the development and spread of fungal diseases. Aspen trees were affected by several fungal pathogens including Marssonina spp., Venturia spp., and Melampsora spp. Although these fungal pathogens can result in some aesthetically unpleasing symptoms, there are a few strategies that can help minimize their presence and reduce the likelihood of heavy disease presence in the future.

Marssonina Leaf Spot

Marssonina leaf spot is a common disease found in aspen, cottonwood, and willow trees. The pathogen (Marssonina fungal

spp.) survives winter on warmer and wet weath-

er promotes spore development and dissemination to new leaves. Small dark-brown spots, often with yellow margins, develop on young leaves. If the weather stays favorable during late summer, secondary infections occur, and the spots may coalesce to form larger lesions on leaves. Infection may cause leaves to be stunted in growth and drop prematurely. Young shoots are also susceptible to infection and may show lesions. While not lethal on its own, reoccurring Marssonina leaf spot can weaken a tree and make it more susceptible to other diseases and disorders in the future.



Marssonina leaf blight on aspen leaves. Photo by Eva Grimme, Montana State University

Leaf and Shoot Blight

Early this season we observed an increased number of Venturia leaf and shoot blight affecting young aspen trees. The fungus (Venturia spp.) overwinters in infected leaves & shoots. During wet spring weather, spores are produced in infected plant tissues and dispersed by splashing rain and wind. New infections start

as black leaf spots or necrotic tissue at leaf margins which may be mistaken as frost damage. These necrotic areas increase in size quickly and may kill leaves and/ or shoots, resulting in drooping branch tips often referred to as a "shepherd's crook."



Shepherd's crook leaf and shoot blight (Venturia spp.) on aspen. Photo by William Jacobi, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org)

Melampsora Leaf Rust

Increased symptoms of leaf rust disease were also observed this

See Blight on page 9







Business Corner

A How-To Guide for Creating a Business Budget

Most business owners know how important a business budget is when it comes to managing expenses and planning for the future—but in a challenging economic environment like the one we've been experiencing, your business budget takes on even greater significance.

With inflation running rampant and the possibility of a recession looming, business owners need to be able to forecast their cash flow, manage their expenses, and plan for the future. Creating a detailed business budget is the first step.

Whether you want to revamp your budgeting method, or you've never created a business budget before, this guide will walk you through the process.

What is a business budget?

A budget is a detailed plan that outlines where you'll spend your money monthly or annually.

You give every dollar a "job," based on what you think is the best use of your business funds, and then go back and compare your plan with reality to see how you did.

A budget will help you:

Forecast what money you expect to earn Plan where to spend that revenue

See the difference between your plan and reality

What makes a good budget?



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Billings 800-677-6426 Bozeman 866-388-6166 Missoula 800-288-3448 The best budgets are simple and flexible. If circumstances change (as they do), your budget can flex to give you a clear picture of where you stand at all times.

Every good budget should include seven components:

1. Your estimated revenue

This is the amount you expect to make from the sale of goods or services. It's all of the cash you bring in the door, regardless of what you spent to get there. This is the first line on your budget. It can be based on last year's numbers or (if you're a startup), based on industry averages.

2. Your fixed costs

These are all your regular, consistent costs that don't change according to how much you make—things like rent, insurance, utilities, bank fees, accounting and legal services, and equipment leasing.

3. Your variable costs

These change according to production or sales volume and are closely related to "costs of goods sold," i.e., anything related to the production or purchase of the product your business sells. Variable costs might include raw materials, inventory, production costs, packaging, or shipping. Other variable costs can include sales commission, credit card fees, and travel. A clear budget plan outlines what you expect to spend on all these costs.

The cost of salaries can fall under both fixed and variable costs. For example, your core in-house team is usually associated with fixed costs, while production or manufacturing teams—anything related to the production of goods—are treated as variable costs. Make sure you file your different salary costs in the correct area of your budget.

4. Your one-off costs

One-off costs fall outside the usual work your business does. These are startup costs like moving offices, equipment, furniture, and software, as well as other costs related to launch and research.

5. Your cash flow

Cash flow is all money traveling into and out of a business. You have positive cash flow if there is more money coming into your business over a set period of time than going out. This is most easily calculated by subtracting the amount of money available at the beginning of a set period of time and at the end.

Since cash flow is the oxygen of every business, make sure you monitor this weekly, or at least monthly. You could be raking it in and still not have enough money on hand to pay your suppliers.

Your profit

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2680 Commerce Rd, Rapid City SD 57702 800-658-5457—605-342-7644 Catalog online Warnechemical.com or mail Profit is what you take home after deducting your expenses from your revenue. Growing profits mean a growing business. Here you'll plan out how much profit you plan to make based on your projected revenue, expenses, and cost of goods sold. If the difference between revenue and expenses (aka "profit margins") aren't where you'd like them to be, you need to rethink your cost of goods sold and consider raising prices.

Or, if you think you can't squeeze any more profit margin out of your business, consider boosting the Advertising and Promotions line in your budget to increase total sales.

7. A budget calculator

A budget calculator can help you see exactly where you stand when it comes to your business budget planning. It might sound obvious, but getting all the numbers in your budget in one easy-

See Budget page 7

Injury continued from page 4

-Water trees mid-day when temperatures are above 40°F to replenish moisture lost through transpiration.

-Most tree roots are located in the top 6 to 24 inches of the soil and can extend 2-3 times past the circumference of the tree. Watering trees at the base/around the trunk is not very effective, as that water is not getting to where it is needed most in the roots. Apply water around the drip-line (the area underneath the circumference of the tree branches) which is also referred to as the critical root zone.

-Water slowly to encourage deeper water penetration into this root zone.

•Barriers such as burlap can be used to protect particularly sensitive trees and shrubs, especially if significant winter burn has been a problem in the past.

•Anti-desiccation and anti-transpiration sprays can have variable/limited success, and are not an effective replacement for properly watering your trees.

If you have additional questions about tree care, your local Extension Offices are a great resource!

Resources with more information on preventing winter-related tree and shrub injury: Protecting Trees and Shrubs in Winter:

https://extension.umn.edu/ planting-and-growing-guides/ protecting-trees-and-shrubs-winter

Fall and Winter Watering: https://extension.colostate. edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/ fall-and-winter-watering-7-211/

Budget continued from page 6

to-read summary is really helpful.

In your spreadsheet, create a summary page with a row for each of the budget categories above. This is the framework of your basic budget. Then, next to each category, list the total amount you've budgeted. Finally, create another column to the right—when the time period ends, use it to record the actual amounts spent in each category. This gives you a snapshot of your budget that's easy to find without diving into layers of crowded spreadsheets.

While every good budget has the same framework, you'll need to think about the unique budgeting quirks of your industry and business type.

Seasonal businesses

If your business has a busy season and a slow season, budgeting is doubly important.

Because your business isn't consistent each month, a budget gives you a good view of past and present data to predict future cash flow. Forecasting in this way helps you spot annual trends, see how much money you need to get you through the slow months, and look for opportunities to cut costs to offset the low season. You can use your slow season to plan for the next year, negotiate with vendors, and build customer loyalty through engagement.

Don't assume the same thing will happen every year, though. Just like any budget, forecasting is a process that evolves. So start with what you know, and if you don't know something—like what

kind of unexpected costs might pop up next quarter—just give it your best guess. Better to set aside money for an emergency that doesn't happen than to be blindsided.

> This article was taken from Bench (bookkeeping and tax filing online company) website: https://www.bench.co/blog/accounting/business-budget Written By Amanda Smith on September 23, 2022







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Contact Kevin Tierney at ktierney@arborwear.com or call 808.265.1125

Saluting Branches continued from page 1

A special thanks to our sponsors for supporting such a great team of volunteers.

- •Sweet Grass County Commissioners, American Legion Post 19, and Husqvarna for sponsoring lunch
 - American Legion Post 19 Auxiliary for sponsoring breakfast
 - •The Coffee Stop in Big Timber for donating coffee
 - ·Lehrkind's of Bozeman for donating water and sports drinks
 - Tamarack Insurance for donating snacks, water, and sports drinks
 - •AMTOPP for donating snacks and assisting with administration

There was over \$100,000 worth of work donated at Mountain View Cemetery in Big Timber. Several hazardous Green Ash, Silver Poplar, and Plains Cottonwood trees were removed throughout the cemetery. Roughly 10 Plains Cottonwood trees were pruned along the entrance and main road and six Plains Cottonwoods within the veteran's plot



Photo by Cooper Elwood's flying drone

were pruned. It was great to see so many companies come together for a common goal: helping others. Thanks again to all who participated. See you next year!

Blight continued from page 5

season. Like many rust diseases, Melampsora spp. requires two different plant hosts to complete its life cycle. The pathogen overwinters on fallen leaves. During wet spring weather, spores are produced in infected plant tissues and dispersed by splashing rain and wind, infecting the alternate

conifer host (Douglas-fir, larch). Spores produced on the conifer host are dispersed through the wind to poplar trees, causing leaf infections. Yellow to orange fungal structures appear on the top, bottom, or both surfaces of affected leaves. Heavy infection may cause defoliation and impact the

long-term health of the affected trees.



Rust spores (Melampsora sp.) on a cottonwood leaf. Photo by:: William Jacobi, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

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Disease Management

Sanitation and disease resistance are two essential tools for disease management. Remove infected, fallen leaves in the fall and prune out affected shoots to reduce the level of infection. Staying on top of these sanitation practices can help to reduce disease pressure in future years. Disinfect pruning

tools with 70% ethyl alcohol or a standard household disinfectant spray between cuts. Fungicides are usually not recommended unless the disease is a continuing problem. High value trees can be treated with a fungicide application in early spring when the buds start to swell. Applications may have to be repeated at 10- to 14day intervals in spring as long as wet weather conditions continue. Check with your local Montana State University Extension County Office for fungicide recommendations. Contact your local nursery and ask for disease-resistant tree varieties.



2023 OFFICERS - Executive Board

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