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New CNLPs and the Importance of Plant Identification

By Vinnie Drzewucki,
Horticulture & Urban Forestry Educator, CCE Nassau County
NYSNLA CNLP of the Year 2007

It pleases me to announce that the number of York State Nursery and Landscape Association Certified Nursery and Landscape Professionals (CNLPs) as of March 14 grew by 11. On March 14 13 CNLP candidates sat for the exams held at the Long Island Welcome Center, Dix Hills on the L.I.E. and was made up of professionals currently working in the green industry, current and recent graduates from Farmingdale State College's Urban Horticulture and Design Department programs. 11 candidates succeeded in passing both the written/question and plant identification parts of the examination required to achieve CNLP status. New CNLPs include (listed in alphabetical order by name) Larson Cairnie, Sean Callahan, Olivia Danz, Erika Graham, Ariel Howell, Timothy Langone, Maggie Muzante, Marion Sossi, Maria Whitmore and Christopher Zea. New CNLPs join the ranks of more than 600 CNLPs throughout New York State, with more than 170 CNLPs here in The Professional Landscape & Nursery Trades Long Island Region #1

Congratulations and Best Wishes to the New CNLPs!



Vinnie Drzewucki
Cornell Cooperative Extension of
Nassau County
Senior CNLP & Certified
Arborist

Why Plant Identification is Important for all Horticulture, Nursery and Landscape Professionals
One of the more challenging part of the CNLP exam for some is the plant identification section. A score of 68% is required to pass. An exam candidate must correctly identify 25 woody and herbaceous stemmed plants, trees, shrubs, vines, ornamental grasses, annual and perennial flowers/bulbs commonly grown and used in landscapes in New York State from a list of more than 160 plants in the CNLP Training Manual. Candidates are required to identify plants using twig and branch samples at a time when deciduous woody plants are dormant and leafless as

plants, trees, shrubs, vines, ornamental grasses, annual and perennial flowers/bulbs commonly grown and used in landscapes in New York State from a list of more than 160 plants in the CNLP Training Manual. Candidates are required to identify plants using twig and branch samples at a time when deciduous woody plants are dormant and leafless as

(continued on Page 6)

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New CNLPs and the Importance of Plant Identification

well as from photos of the entire plant, flowers, seed, bark or other identifying characteristic of the plant. The requirement to score a full credit is to provide the scientific binomial name and the common name, both with correct spelling for full credit.

Plant identification is important for individuals working in the nursery and landscape industry and most other areas of professional horticulture including public and

private botanic gardens, arboretums, parks and golf courses. Correct identification affects every aspect of how plants are grown, used and cared for in the nursery and landscape: time of planting, time and method of pruning, fertilization schedule, and especially pest management. The need for proper identifications extends not just to knowing genus, species and common name but to cultivar identification. Proper cultivar identification

is a critical issue to the horticulturist. Some integrated pest management (IPM) strategies rely on selecting proper plant cultivars for managing pests and disease to reduce or eliminate the need for expensive and toxic chemical applications.

Plants are not always distributed under the correct name, so horticulturalists must learn proper identification to assure proper care. Difficulties arise when cultivars of the same

species have similar appearances and characteristics. Although genus, species and cultivar keys are available, they are difficult to use, and take a long time to learn. And, although every day I see new computer programs, websites and apps being introduced, I don't believe, from the ones I've tried, that they can be depended on yet to be 100% or close to being a dependable tool yet for accuracy. However, I do like them as plant identification learning tools, which is where I consider them a welcome addition to books and print resources. But to me, nothing works as well and is time efficient for professionals wanting to learn plant identification as taking a good old fashion plant identification course at a college like Farmingdale SC or Botanic Garden classes at NYBG, Brooklyn, Queens and Planting Fields or Bayard Cutting arboretums, etc. Plant identification is a key building block in every horticulture class. A busy horticulturalist or landscape professional today rarely has time to key out a plant identification or a cultivar. All horticulture professionals must know plants by sight.



Thinking About Becoming a CNLP?

Here's how. Start now. Submit your application at: <https://nysnla.memberclicks.net/cnlp-program>, then click on CNLP Examination Application Upon application completion and payment, you will receive the CNLP Training Manual on a flash drive. Begin studying to prepare for the next CNLP Exam to be held on Long Island in March 2025. This will also prepare you to get the most benefit from (optional) CNLP Exam Review classes we will be offering. Contact us for questions about the CNLP Program on Long Island, CNLP Co-Coordinators Vinnie Drzewucki, CCE Nassau County, vad37@cornell.edu 516-832-2591 ext. 202 or Mina Vescera, CCE Suffolk County, mv365@cornell.edu

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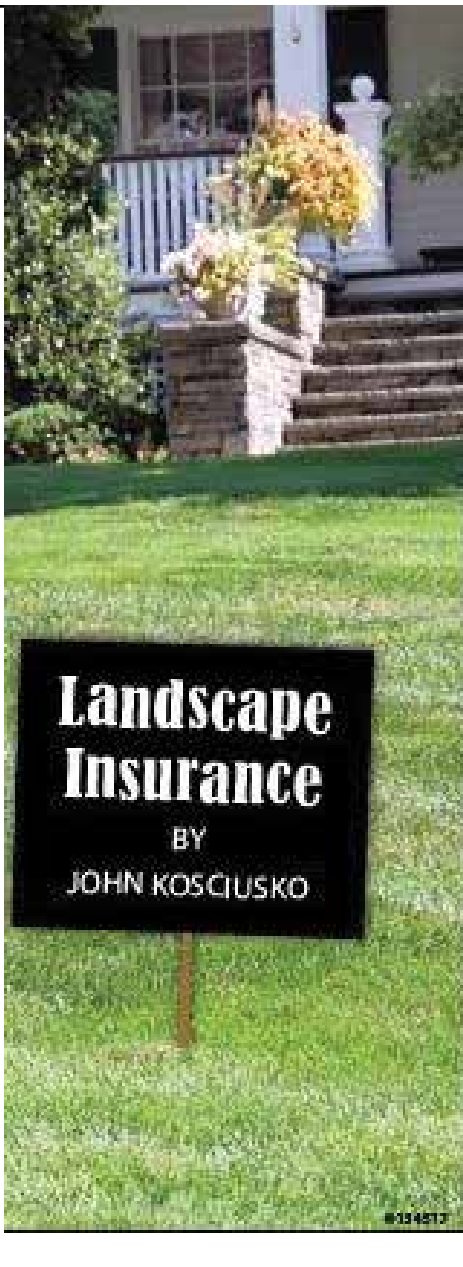
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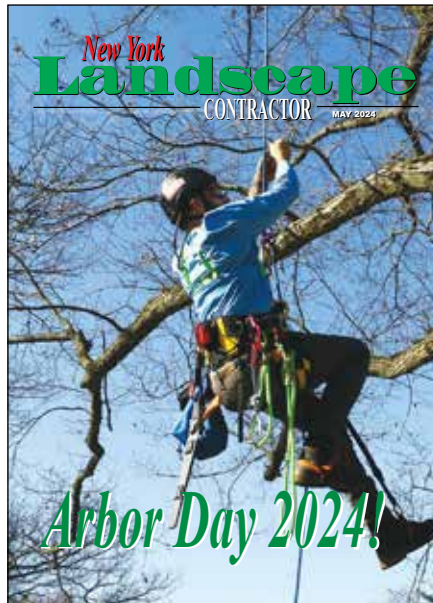
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From the Publisher's Desk....

Jerry Siani, Editor and Publisher

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About our writers...

Vinnie Drzewucki

of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County, is a Senior Certified Nursery and Landscape Professional (CNLP) and ISA Certified Arborist providing educational topics in integrated pest management (IPM) and best management practices in horticulture, urban and community forestry. For questions, diagnostic and soil testing services contact Vinnie at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County's Environmental Horticulture Office: 832 Merrick Avenue, East Meadow, NY 11554 Phone: 516-565-5265 ext. 10, email: vad37@cornell.edu or visit the website at: www.ccnassau.org



Paul Sachs

of North Country Organics will be answering reader's questions on soil and organic matters. Got a question? Write to Paul, c/o NY LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR, or call him at North Country Organics, (802) 222-4277 email pds@norganics.com



Evan Dackow

Evan Dackow Vice President Jolly Green Tree and Shrub Care, I.S.A. Board Certified Master Arborist NY5666-B, TRAQ certified. Nassau Suffolk Landscape and Grounds Association - Executive Board of Directors, LIAA - President



Nick Menchyk

graduated from Clemson University with a B.S. in turfgrass management and a Ph.D in Plant and Environmental Science in 2007 and 2012, respectively. While a graduate student at Clemson, Nick focused on improving foliar fertilization efficiency and turfgrass physiology. Nick began teaching at Farmingdale State College in the fall of 2014 where he continues to educate students about turfgrass best management practices. He can be reached at nicholas.menchyk@farmingdale.edu



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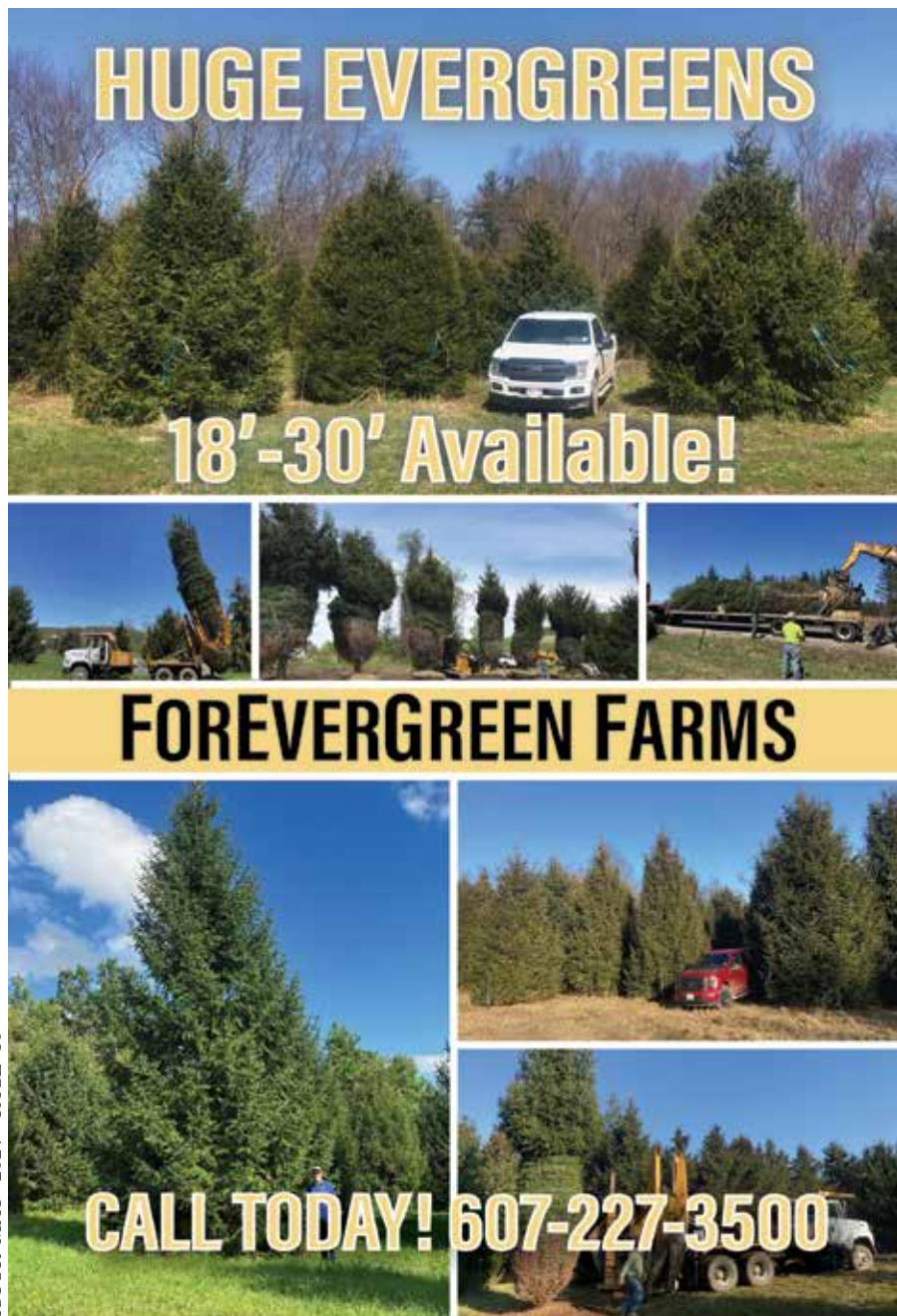
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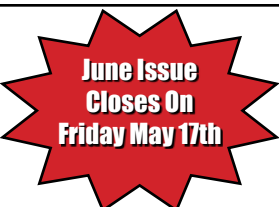


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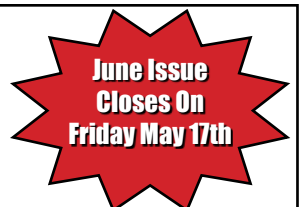


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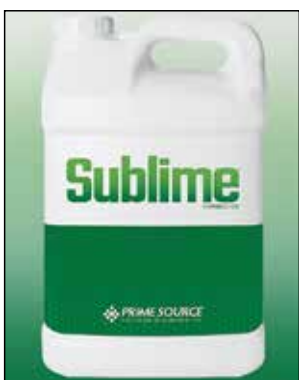


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by Evan Dackow, Jolly Green Tree & Shrub Care

Before the sun has completely passed the horizon on a chilly morning in March arborists all around the island load their chain saws, pole pruners, along with enough gas for a rigorous days work. They start warming up bucket trucks and making sure they have fuel in the chipper not unlike any other day.



This Saturday is different from all the other days in a given year. Today they aren't worried about their hourly rate of return, they know they aren't going to add to their financial bottom line. Their goal for that day is going out to improve the lives of their

Evan Dackow Vice President Jolly Green Tree and Shrub Care, I.S.A. Board Certified Master Arborist NY5666-B, TRAQ certified. Nassau Suffolk Landscape and Grounds Association - Executive Board of Directors, LIAA - President



neighbors all over Long Island. They are going to improve the safety of another public space here on Long Island. That day they are heading out to take part in the annual

Arbor Day project for the Long Island Arbicultural Association.

These Arbor Day projects have been a tradition since 1990. The first Arbor Day was to prune the Belmont pines located in the median of the southern state parkway adjacent to State Park headquarters.

The original arbor day was led by



Tom Golon of Wonderland Tree care out of Oyster Bay. Throughout this thirty-four-year tradition there have only been two years that were missed due to Covid restrictions. The annual Arbor Day event is one that has always been impressive by the sheer number of volunteers who show up religiously year after year. The only semblance of a payment that the participants received is a hot lunch and a t shirt.

(continued on Page 24)

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Question: I've heard that fertility can either increase or decrease insect pest activity. Can you explain why?

Answer: Plants that are growing in soils with optimum fertility and experiencing little or no stress generally have significantly lower incidences of (herbivorous) pest damage. The plant's natural resistance is typically higher and so is the incidence of predators. The reasons why increased predation occurs are not clear but trials have shown a notable difference in predator activity where fertility and biological activity are near optimum and stress is minimized. Fertility management, however, is not as easy as it may seem.

Luxury consumption of plant nutrients is rare in nature and can be as unhealthy to plants as it is to people. Available nutrient levels that are either long or short of optimum can cause stress to plants, and lower their resistance to pathogens and to insects. Insect bodies are almost 50 percent protein, the synthesis of which demands a good source of nitrogen. Herbivorous insects must be able to locate an abundance of relatively soluble nitrogen to survive. A 1983 study showed seventeen of twenty-three plots fertilized with soluble nitrogen resulted in an increase in insect damage. The fine line between too much and too little nourishment, however, is as important to understand for plant health as it is for human health.

Of all the essential plant nutrients, superfluous or insufficient levels

of nitrogen and potassium in the plant seem to have the greatest effect on insect activity. Excess nitrogen can accumulate in plant tissue as soluble amino acids and nitrates—two forms of nitrogen that not only induce insect feeding but also egg laying. On the other hand, inadequate nitrogen can arrest plant growth and slow the movement of protein and sugars through the plant. These compounds can then accumulate in the leaves and stems. Production of defense compounds can also be suppressed. The weakened plants is typically more susceptible to insect attack. Optimum levels of nitrogen are not necessarily those that promote the greatest amount of growth, however. Researchers have recently discovered that when maximum plant growth is achieved, the production of allelochemicals (toxic compounds produced by the plant for self-defense) is significantly diminished. Moderately stressed plants seem to produce the greatest amount of defense compounds. It's interesting that moderately stressed humans tend to be the healthiest, too.

Deficiencies or superfluities of



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(continued on Page 21)

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NEW YORK LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR MAY 2024 PAGE 19

Changing the Way You Think About Fertilizer Applications

A new way to work smarter, not harder.

Landscape contractors know that a beautiful thick, green carpet of lawn is the best business referral available. Curating a lawn like this is sure to bring in new customers eager to get comparable results. Of course, the new business is great, but it also puts more demand on your existing resources of time, labor, and route management. Adding another ten-plus thousand square feet of treatment area is fine for your bottom line, but how does it affect your efficiency?

One product is revolutionizing professional lawn care in Nassau and Suffolk counties. At first glance, 20-0-0 fertilizer is a standard application delivering Nitrogen for green up and turf health and keeping applications within the local regulations for nutrient management. Yet, contractors know that

a healthy green lawn requires more than one simple fertility application. There are lime applications to manage soil pH, and pre- and post-emergent applications to control various pests. Each application takes time, labor, and money to execute.

An all-in-one tool is available to contractors to vastly improve efficiency. The product, 20-0-0 + Solu-Cal, delivers a 20% Nitrogen application of 30% XCU fertilizer, along with a 21% enhanced Calcium dose. The XCU releases the urea nitrogen slowly over time, so nutrition stays in place longer. A standard fertility application all Pros are familiar with.

The real magic happens with what is in the rest of the bag. Most fertilizer bags are more than half-filled with inert ingredients – crushed rock, sand, or other fillers that do nothing other than keep the bag upright. Solu-Cal innovated the concept of replacing this filler with an active and effective ingredient – enhanced Calcium. This is essentially a lime application right in the bag, a standard program staple but one requiring a separate pass over the lawn. With 20-0-0 + Solu-Cal,

lawn care operators can easily apply this standard fertility application, PLUS a lime treatment to support proper soil pH.

Another key feature of this product is the concentrated package of beneficial microbial life, right in the same application. INTENSIFY is a robust blend of food-grade, hand-selected bacteria and fungi that work as both a prebiotic and probiotic in the soil. This powerful blend delivers the probiotics – the “good bugs” as a viable, colony-forming unit ready to reproduce and revitalize the soil. The prebiotic action in this package means the “good bugs” come with a food source that sustains the population. These microbes go to work in the soil, digesting and recycling nutrients into a more plant-available form for uptake. With the addition of the Calcium in the bag, these big molecules open the soil pores and let the nutrient processing system work at maximum efficiency.

An application of 20-0-0 + Solu-Cal is a one-pass, multi-application tool that can also boost your business efficiency. Supporting soil pH in the proper range means the soil and grass can mine out soil-stored nutrients

and get the most out of newly applied fertility. Proper soil pH also ensures that microbial life is working at its most active level. The addition of Calcium will support the robust plant growth along with Nitrogen to ensure green up and a thriving turfgrass stand. All of this in one bag delivers exceptional results evident in vastly improved soil health, and a strong healthy, and vibrant turfgrass stand above the soil. Plus, when turf is healthy, it leaves little room for weeds and pests, thus potentially reducing or delaying the application of control products.

One distributor on the Island specializes in the 20-0-0 + Solu-Cal. “Solu-Cal is the gold standard for lime application and getting a 20-0-0 application in the same bag is a tremendous boost for any landscaping operation,” says Joseph Mitchell, Turf Sales Manager for Progressive Grower in Islandia and Riverhead. “We don’t carry standard lime any longer as the efficiency of Solu-Cal Lime makes regular lime a waste of time. Lawn care companies can save so much time and money with this line, why would they want to consider any alternative?”

He adds, “The 20-0-0 + Solu-Cal is a huge timesaver for them, and time is money. It’s truly a money-maker for any lawn care Pro who wants to succeed and give their customers fantastic results.”

Solu-Cal Enhanced Calcium products have been a mainstay on Long Island for decades. With Calcium in high demand from nearly every kind of growing crop from corn to berries to grass, it is essential for plant growth and nutrient absorption. This enhanced calcium miracle grew its roots originally as a soil amendment for the New England cranberry industry. The dramatic results in soil health improvement and nutrient uptake were so remarkable that applications expanded and crossed over markets, and Solu-Cal soon became a mainstay in the turf and ornamental market.

To further prove the results and application efficiencies, the team at Solu-Cal engaged Penn State and the University of Rhode Island to trial products and document the product efficiency. From these university trials, it was proven that Solu-Cal needs only one-quarter the rate of standard pelletized lime and raises soil pH in just six to eight weeks. This fast speed is due to the micro-fine grind of the limestone prior to pelletizing – think consistency of baby powder being pressed into a dust-free pellet. Since the size of the limestone grind directly correlates to the speed of reactivity in the soil – the smaller the grind, the faster it works, Solu-Cal Enhanced Lime has locked in the science behind rapid pH adjustment.

“In all of my years in the industry, I’ve never seen anything quite like Solu-Cal products,” says Joe Broyles, Progressive Grower’s sales representative in Riverhead. “Solu-Cal is especially suited for the sandy Long Island soils - it’s like giving plants the keys to unlock their full potential. With stronger roots and improved nutrient uptake, it’s a game-changer for any landscaper looking to maximize their results and work more efficiently. Who wants to move and apply four times as much product when one bag will work even better?”

For more information about 20-0-0 + Solu-Cal, visit www.solu-cal.com or work with Progressive Grower in Riverhead at (631) 591-3540 or Islandia at (631) 778-6577.



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Sachs

potassium have an indirect effect on insect activity due to their relationship with nitrogen. Potassium acts in conjunction with nitrogen to accelerate the processing of soluble amino acids and nitrates into proteins by the plant. The less soluble nitrogen there is in the plant, the less attractive it is to herbivorous insects and plant pathogens as well.

Although no specific link has been made to other nutrient deficiencies and insect pest activity, it is reasonable to assume that all components of nutrition for both the plant and soil organisms are equally important. Micronutrients that are needed in only trace amounts, for example, play a major role in the creation of over 5,000 different enzymes necessary for life functions-many of these enzymes provide protection for the plant.

The soil's physical condition, which includes structure and density, can have a big impact on the diversity of soil organisms that regulate fertility. Heavy, wet soils with little porosity can inhibit the existence of many beneficial aerobic organisms. On the other hand, sandy soils often lack enough moisture to support significant populations of beneficial organisms.

The balance of organisms can affect the availability of nutrients to plants and increase efficiency. Biological activity often corresponds with plant growth and synchronizes availability with need. Biological nutrient management can ensure that plants receive optimal fertility but it cannot occur in environments that lack resources for soil organisms. The proteins, carbohydrates, and other organic compounds in plant residues, compost, and organic fertilizer are food for these valuable organisms.

Factors that we cannot control, such as extremes in precipitation and temperatures, also play a major role in the incidence of pest organisms. While the weather cannot be controlled, producing a strong, healthy plant in a rich and enlivened soil can increase the level of tolerance each plant has for extremes in the climate. Soils with adequate organic matter not only help accomplish this but also buffer extremely wet or dry climates, by increasing the soil's water and air holding capacity.



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Arbor Day 2024

Some people travel hours simply to partake in this event. During the tenure of this event the LIAA has done work at many varied venues. The sites that have hosted an Arbor Day are venues such as the Arboretums around Long Island; including, Planting Fields and Bayard cutting; county parks such as Eisenhower park and the Nassau county museum of art; schools such as Farmingdale state college (our only horticulture college on Long Island); national parks such as Sagamore Hill (the home of Theodore Roosevelt) and the national cemetery at Pinelawn.

While the sites are very different, they all share one common thread - they are all venues that are open to the public for use by the masses. Each of these sites receives the full force of the volunteers available that day who use the skills they have honed over a lifetime to address the safety concerns that hazardous trees can pose.



These arbor days involve tremendous amounts of planning that begins several years before the chilly march morning that we all know as Arbor Day.

This starts by receiving a request from the venue who needs assistance in their large-scale park maintenance. An Arbor Day Committee is put together to start assembling the logistics that go into each and every Arbor Day event. The venue is toured by this committee while they pay close attention to the hazards they observe during that tour. Each of these hazards is ranked based on priority levels. The necessary equipment is identified, then sourced from our members. The site is divided into zones and zone



people are Joe Patrone and David Jenkins, They have taken the foundation of an amazing volunteer event that is not common place anywhere else in the country and helped to strengthen the educational commitment the Long Island Arboricultural association was founded on. The arbor day events are a tradition that will live on for many years to



leaders are established who will coordinate all the work in their specific zones.

There are many people behind the scenes both leading up to the event and day of the event. All the



T-shirts have to be coordinated and ensure that each and every volunteer gets a t-shirt for their efforts.



The arbor days for the last several years have two major champions who have expanded upon the original arbor day event by incorporating an informal climbing seminar following the lunch at the same venue. Those two

come as we have been doing this so long it has been able to circle back around to the same venues help contribute to the safe enjoyment of Long islanders at these beautiful spaces.

(all photos included in this article are courtesy of Robert Dackow)

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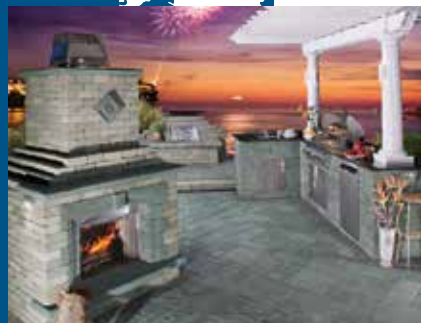
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