

The Care of Trees: Bringing a Passion for Trees to Arboriculture

by Viveka Neveln

TREES ADD more than aesthetic and monetary value to a landscape. They offer cooling shade, act as windbreaks, provide shelter for wildlife, and help to curb soil erosion. Research shows that trees have calming effects or even healing properties when they are viewed. Some trees have sentimental value; others have historical significance.

“There are often a lot of emotions tied to trees,” says **Scott Jamieson**, president of The Care of Trees (TCOT), an award-winning, national arboriculture firm. This powerful link between people and trees is the foundation of TCOT, as reflected in their slogan, “Our business is people and their love for trees.”

EMPHASIZING TREE EDUCATION

Headquartered in Wheeling, Illinois, TCOT was founded nearly 60 years ago. Over the years, they have acquired or merged with tree care companies in Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, New York, California, and several other states to become one of the largest employee-owned arboriculture companies in the country. TCOT’s highly trained and certified arborists provide service for residential, commercial, municipal, and institutional properties. These include tree preservation, pruning, tree and stump removal, tree value appraisal, lightning protection, and insect and disease management.

“Trees are not as tough as they appear,” says Jamieson. In addition to the natural

threats trees face, such as severe weather and pests, people sometimes inadvertently damage them. Construction activity often causes the greatest damage because



Above: The Care of Trees offers a wide range of tree care services. Right: A TCOT arborist prunes a Japanese apricot tree at River Farm.

the most sensitive part of a tree is its root system. Building a sidewalk, installing a sprinkler system, or even planting underneath a tree (see related article on page 38) can all affect a nearby tree’s health.

To best serve its clients, TCOT stays on “the cutting edge of technology and research,” says Jamieson, and emphasizes tree care education. The company’s staff members often speak at garden clubs and other meetings. “If we don’t connect with people and teach them about trees, they’ll keep unknowingly doing things that harm them,” says Jamieson.

A NATURAL PARTNERSHIP

Because of TCOT’s dedication to community education and involvement, partnering with the American Horticultural Society was a natural step. “The AHS’s vision has gotten us excited and we want to be part of it,” says Jamieson. As a corporate partner, the company proudly maintains the trees at River Farm, including historic specimens such as an Osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*) reputed to have

been grown from seeds brought back by Lewis and Clark.

“Working closely with the professional arborists at The Care of Trees, we are formulating a long-term tree management plan for River Farm that addresses aesthetic issues as well as the cultural needs of our collection,” says **Tom Underwood**, AHS director of horticulture programs. “Trees are the backbone of our gardens, and it is reassuring to know that they are in such expert hands.”

TCOT has won numerous awards for its work from such groups as the **National Arbor Day Foundation**, the **Chicago Flower and Garden Show**, and the **Tree**



Care Industry Association (TCIA). One project Jamieson remembers fondly is LeWa Farm in Lake Forest, Illinois, for which TCOT earned the Grand Award for Construction/Tree Preservation from the TCIA in 2001. Working with the city of Lake Forest and an organization called the Lake Forest Openlands, 130 acres of a 200-acre site were preserved, including many large, valuable oak trees. “The entire community benefited, which made it a really special, interesting project,” says Jamieson.

To learn more about The Care of Trees, visit www.thecareoftrees.com.

Viveka Neveln is assistant editor for The American Gardener.

To find out how your company can support the AHS’s mission through a corporate partnership, call Joe Lamoglia, AHS director of business operations, at (800) 777-7931, ext. 115.