A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:
by Brett O’Brien, MW-ISA President

Our 74th Annual MW-ISA Conference and Trade Show is just around the corner, and now is a perfect time to highlight the value this conference can bring to you, a MW-ISA chapter member.

To start with, we have added to the schedule a TRAQ Renewal course for those Tree Risk Assessment Qualified (TRAQ) members interested in renewing their TRAQ credentials. This is an event which we are planning on building into our future conferences schedules. TRAQ must be renewed every 5 years, and we have heard from members of the necessity to have a reliable and convenient schedule for the renewal course so they can plan accordingly. We will still include renewal courses when we schedule TRAQ courses across our chapter when possible, however for planning purposes your best bet for TRAQ renewal will be at future conferences.

Keep in mind that current TRAQ holders can complete the abbreviated renewal course as early as 18 months prior to the expiration of their qualification. You might check your TRAQ expiration date as this upcoming conference renewal course could work very well for you.

I would also ask you to consider the value of what you can learn at the conference. An examination of the educational program presents a list of top-tier sessions that will enable attendees to manage better, work safer, and raise their arboriculture knowledge. You’ll get CEU’s too, but the value in education and the boost to your career will certainly pay off.

The conference includes a trade show as well, and you’ll find that the exhibitors can provide a welcomed source of useful information to you. We’ve allotted significant time, including an evening reception, for conference attendees to meet and visit with them to learn about the products or services they provide. In the exhibit hall there will also be a silent auction, proceeds to benefit the TREE Fund. The Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund (TREE Fund) is a charitable grant-making organization established to support urban and community forests, the utility rights of way that connect them, and the skilled professionals who plan, plant, manage and maintain them. Knowledge gained from TREE Fund research directly impacts tree care practices, arborist’s techniques and people’s lives every day. As a MWISA member you can help our chapter support the TREE Fund by donating or bidding on an item.

Attending the MW-ISA Conference & Trade Show will provide you learning opportunities and arboriculture connections to build your professional stature. It is well worth attending and I hope to see you there.
LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraskans will need to spend nearly $1 billion over the next few decades to remove ash trees killed by an invasive pest, but local governments probably won’t be able to afford the cost and it’s not clear how much help they’ll get from the state.

Lawmakers renewed their search last week for ways to fix the damage caused by the emerald ash borer, a major threat to the state’s ash trees. State officials have already confirmed the insect’s presence in Nebraska and acknowledged they have no way to stop it.

Sen. John Stinner, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, has introduced a legislative study to seek solutions, but he said he doesn’t know whether he’ll propose additional state funding in the upcoming session.

Lawmakers have faced several years of tight budgets, and many senators are focusing on lowering property taxes and other spending priorities. Stinner, of Gering, said it’s too early to tell whether senators will act in next year’s session.

“You almost have to wait for it to become a crisis,” he said after a hearing on the issue Friday.

The emerald ash borer has also killed trees in neighboring Iowa, Missouri, Kansas and Colorado. The insects are native to Asia and kill ash by feeding on inner bark and blocking trees’ ability to obtain water and nutrients. The insects were first spotted in the U.S. in 2002, when they showed up in the Detroit area. Infected trees typically die within five years.

Nebraska communities will end up spending an estimated $270 million to remove, dispose and replant all of the public ash trees killed by the disease, said Nebraska State Forester John Erixson. Replacing trees on private land will cost homeowners an additional $686 million, bringing the total expense to nearly $1 billion.

Erixson said the Nebraska Forest Service helps distribute grants to communities from the federal government and private foundations, but those sources offer limited money and impose restrictions on how it’s used. Some grants only allow for replanting new trees but not removing old ones.
IN SEARCH OF AN ENDANGERED SPECIES: QUERCUS ACERIFOLIA
Ryan Russell | Horticulturist

The maple-leaf oak (Q. acerifolia) is considered an endangered species according to the IUCN Red List, extant in only 4 known locales in Arkansas. Originally described in 1926 by renowned botanist Ernest Palmer as Q. shumardii var. acerifolia, it was promoted to species status in 1990 by authors Nick Stoynoff and Bill Hess. At that time, only one site (Mt. Magazine) was known to science. Intrigued by rarity of this species and the desire to help conserve it, I decided to grow a grove of maple-leaf oaks (3-5 seedlings and 3-5 grafts) comprised of individuals from each site. Given the nature of each site and the relatively few individuals in existence, preservation is a concern. In time, the trees we propagate will be planted at Stephens Lake Park Arboretum in Columbia, Missouri and will become an important ex situ germplasm repository for the species.

In order to collect the acorns and scion needed to build this collection, I had to apply for the proper permits and visit each site. Two sites are located in the Ouachita National Forest, one at Mt. Magazine State Park and another, the newest location, on private property. I met up with Amanda Wu, Ph.D. candidate from University of Missouri - St. Louis, staff from Missouri Botanic Garden, and Brent Baker, Botanist for the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, in June at one location in the Ouachita NF. Amanda and Brent were working on separate projects and I was there scouting for a return trip in the fall. The first location was a mile hike from the parking spot with an 800’ elevation increase. The maple-leaf oaks are growing in a narrow band along an exposed ridge top just over 1600’ elevation with around 30 individuals. I noted a few putative hybrids with Q. marilandica and Q. rubra as well as other noteworthy species such as Ilex vomitoria, Ilex opaca, and Fagus grandifolia. Interestingly, as the sides of the ridge fell off in any direction, the Q. acerifolia disappeared.

The following day, Brent and I continued to the second Ouachita NF site. This site proved a tougher hike than the day before, luckily Brent had a key to the front gate, saving us an extra 2 miles of hiking. An hour later, little over a mile hike on a steep incline through poison ivy, catbrier and loose gravel, we finally arrived at the maple-leaf oaks. This ridge is a little wider than the first one, higher in elevation (up to 2,000’) and more individuals were found (~40). Typical of the species, both sites produce multi-stemmed, shrubby plants around 15-20’ tall by 10-15’ wide, a variable maple-like foliage. Associated species included Amorpha ouachitensis, Q. stellata, and Q. marilandica.

The next day I quickly hit Mt. Magazine State Park as well as the spot on private property near the Arkansas border. Magazine has around 20 individuals and I noted their locations and headed an hour or so west to the other location. After scouting the last location for only a few minutes, it became clear it had the highest population I had seen yet. I didn’t stop to count, but easily over 100 individuals were seen, with some very old, large specimens; one nearing 30’ tall with a stem diameter of over 12”.

I returned in September with permits in hand and collected from three sites. I had followed the direction of members of a 2017 collection trip which included folks from The Morton...
and Dawes Arboretums. They collected on September 11-12, so that’s when I went, but as temperatures hit 97°f, I wished I had waited. That 2017 group was not aware of the fourth location, so I collected extra for them as well. In October, Amanda and David Gunn from MOBOT returned, and were able to collect from the site I had missed, and David graciously shared a few spare acorns for my project.

I will return this winter to collect scion from each site in hopes to get a good number grafted this spring. The grove should be ready to be planted into the arboretum in 2021. Our future planting will be added to the wild collected maple-leaf oaks currently held at The National Arboretum, The Morton Arboretum, and The Dawes Arboretum, but will have the added grafted trees not found at those locations. I received a good deal of help from colleagues at The Morton Arboretum, the Ouachita National Forest, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, and a couple of private citizens. Without them, I couldn’t have even begun this project. I’m also grateful that I have support from my employer, the City of Columbia – Parks and Recreation, The Missouri Community Forestry Council, and the International Oak Society, all helping out in some way with this project. There are many other endangered species out there that could use ex situ conservation efforts like this, and it doesn’t take much work to begin. The Morton Arboretum has begun an ambitious oak conservation project focusing on the most endangered species. They are partnering with arboreta and municipalities with the capacities for this work across the country.

To see a list of threatened species and see if you can help the efforts visit:

https://www.iucnredlist.org/
http://www.oaknames.org/search/fullname.asp?id=3

UPCOMING EVENTS:

TRAQ Renewal Course
January 28, 2020
DoubleTree by Hilton, Overland Park, Kansas

ISA Certified Arborist Exam
January 29, 2020
DoubleTree by Hilton, Overland Park, Kansas

MW-ISA 74th Annual Conference & Trade Show
REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!
January 29 – 31, 2020
DoubleTree by Hilton Overland Park, Kansas

MW-ISA Tree Climbing Competition
June 5-7, 2020, Wichita, KS

NEWLY CERTIFIED MWISA ARBORISTS:

Joshua Beck
Matt Hilbert
Aaron Lafler

NEW MWISA MEMBERS:

Jacob Hamilton
Kylie Carnahan
Jason Hicks
Kyle Rieffer
Aiden Saegusa
Raymond Cloyd
Phylicia Poelma
Dylan McSwain
Parats Wolfe
Jordan Odem
Jake Flentge
Erik Laber
L Blayne Radford

Shade Tree Leaves || 5
For many arborists, the area of tree risk assessment creates a bit of sweat as they try employ all of their experience and do the best they can. Most of you are comfortable that you have the experience and knowledge about recognizing defects and how they might impact the tree itself. But the vast majority of arborists have told me that they simply lack confidence that they are performing tree risk assessment the right way.

Now that ISA has over five years of experience with the Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) credential, there is a strong consensus that TRAQ is truly for everybody. In the first year of TRAQ, many felt that it was most appealing and useful for consulting types and arborists that specialized in diagnosing tree issues. But we now know that it appeals to all arborists!

Municipal arborists, utility arborists, residential and commercial arborists (including sales arborists), property managers, climbers, and on and on... have all found TRAQ to be one of the most valuable credentials in their pocket. In fact, it is now the second largest credential that ISA offers, behind only the flagship Certified Arborist credential.

More than anything else, TRAQ teaches a process or protocol for arborists to use when assessing trees for risk. Arborists tell me that they are afraid they will miss some critical step in performing a tree inspection, or that they lack skills in passing along this information to their client. Our industry recognized this need and has developed new standards that provide clear guidance for performing a tree risk assessment. The new standard is known as the “ANSI A300 (Part 9) Tree Risk Assessment”. A companion guide, “Best Management Practices – Tree Risk Assessment” has been published by the International Society of Arboriculture to provide a clear interpretation of the new standard.

Earning the TRAQ credential also provides assurance that you will assess tree risk using a process or protocol that other arborists in our industry employ. Using a practice that is commonly accepted in our industry may reduce your liability should issues ever arise.

The TRAQ credential is a way to learn and display your skill as a tree risk assessor. While similar to a “certification” like the Certified Arborist or Utility Specialist certifications, TRAQ is a “qualification” that requires learning a skill through programmed instruction and then testing that learned skill. There are no CEU’s with a qualification, just a renewal that is required after five years.

The single most important value of the TRAQ credential is that it provides a framework, or process, that is consistent with new standards. Learning this framework provides confidence that you are performing a tree risk in a fashion that is similar to the way other skilled arborists are performing them. It’s critical that arborists understand the process of making observations, recording those observations, and analyzing your data to assign risk ratings. Further, you will understand mitigation options that reduce risk to levels that are acceptable to your client.

Earning the TRAQ credential requires attending a class that is two and a half days long and passing a practical exam and a written exam. Classes are typically promoted on Chapter websites and at the main ISA website as well. There is an extensive list of pre-requisites prior to registration. Visit the ISA website https://www.isa-arbor.com/Credentials/ISA-Tree-Risk-Assessment-Qualification to learn more about TRAQ and the prerequisites to apply. To find a current list of available classes, visit https://www.isa-arbor.com/events/eventscalendar/index?category=ISA%20Qualifications

If you are an arborist comfortable with identifying tree defects and the potential of those defects, consider earning the TRAQ credential and gain the skills to perform tree risk assessment with confidence. It’s a big commitment, but is well worth it!
JOIN US IN KANSAS! REGISTER FOR THE MW-ISA 74TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW!

January 29 – 31, 2020
DoubleTree by Hilton
Overland Park, Kansas

The mission of the Midwestern Chapter of ISA is to advance the fields of arboriculture and urban forestry by facilitating the professional development of our membership. As a non-profit Arboriculture and Urban Forestry organization we are dedicated to serving our members, championing trees and promoting professional tree care. We strive to enhance the professional development of our membership through a variety of projects and programs encompassing the art, science, technology and ethics of professional tree care.

The MW-ISA membership and leadership invites you to play a role in furthering the mission of MW-ISA by participating in the 2020 Annual Convention.

The Conference will kick-off with our keynote speaker, Kathleen Wolf who will speak on Public Perceptions and Perceptions of the Urban Forest. To see the full program, visit our website at mwisa.org.

CEU CREDITS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR QUALIFYING SESSIONS!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE MW-ISA STAFF!

The MW-ISA staff and Board of Directors send best wishes to you and your families for the holidays. Thank you for your support and involvement in the MW-ISA Chapter! Wishing everyone a safe and happy New Year’s!

The office will be closed on Tuesday, December 31 and Wednesday, January 1 for the New Year’s holiday. Mail, emails, and voice messages will be checked during the last two weeks of December so that urgent matters can be handled, if necessary, even during the days the office is scheduled to be closed.
ID That Tree Answer:
Korean fir
Abies koreana

This Asian member of the pine family is hardy in zones 5 to 7, prefers full sun, and reaches a mature height of 15-30 ft. Yes the colors you see are real! The 3” long cones are uniquely held on the top of its branches and are a striking blue color.