

Understanding Trees and Utilities



from the **TREE CITY USA®
BULLETIN**



It has been said that a tree worker in the utility business touches more trees than any urban forester and most arborists or even the most ardent tree lover. These hard-working men and women face extreme challenges and, in most cases, care about trees. They deserve respect and understanding.

Dilemma, irony, and paradox are no strangers in the fields of natural resource management. A classic is the challenge faced by the National Park Service to preserve the delicate beauty of our scenic jewels while at the same time finding ways to make them accessible to thousands of people every year. Another classic is found in utility arboriculture — the challenge of providing safe, dependable electric or gas while at the same time protecting a community's trees. Unfortunately, trees can cause power outages when they're allowed to grow into wires or if limbs fall and break them.

The purpose of this bulletin is to better acquaint our readers with the utility industry and the men and women who are charged with guaranteeing the uninterrupted delivery of our utilities.

THE CHALLENGES TO UTILITY ARBORISTS

- Delivering uninterrupted electric and gas service.
- Keeping workers safe in an industry said to have a risk factor 10 times higher than most.
- Keeping the public safe.
- Satisfying property owners whose trees are affected by pruning or corridor maintenance.
- Working compatibly with local officials, company employees, contractors, and others.
- Retaining employees whose work is outdoors in all kinds of weather, physically hard, and dangerous.
- Finding ways to dispose of pruning and removal debris.
- Avoiding the constant threat of litigation due to wildfire starts, personal injuries, and property damage.
- Operating economically to satisfy investors or member owners.

INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE

- ✓ Utility terminology and concepts
- ✓ Compromises to maintain trees and overhead wires
- ✓ Managing transmission corridors
- ✓ Example of a company that does it right
- ✓ Growth regulators