

Organized for the Protection and Preservation of Trees • March 27, 1913 • Dr. George E. Stone, Founder

## WINTER CONFERENCE ISSUE

### White Pine Blister Rust: A New Strain Has Developed

by Nicholas Brazee, Ph.D.

Plant Pathologist, UMass Extension Plant Diagnostic Lab

White pine blister rust (WPBR), caused by the fungus *Cronartium ribicola*, is an aggressive and non-native pathogen that was introduced into eastern North America in 1909. Since its introduction into North America, the pathogen has killed millions of five-needle pines and has nearly eliminated western white pine throughout much of its native range. While New England has only one native five-needle pine, eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*), this species is abundant and widespread in forested and managed landscapes. While the environmental conditions required for disease development are not as easily satisfied here as they are in western North America, WPBR has killed countless white pines over the past century in New England.

All rust fungi require two botanically unrelated hosts to complete their life cycle. In New England, the WPBR fungus also infects species in the genus *Ribes*, commonly known as gooseberry and currant. *Ribes* are small, woody shrubs that are native to New England forests. However, the introduced European black currant (*R. nigrum*) was widely planted for berry production and is especially susceptible to the disease. As a result, the import, cultivation, sale and planting of black currant was outlawed under a federal quarantine and eradication ban enacted in the 1920s. After an intensive program of manual eradication lasting from the 1920s through the 1950s, the *Ribes* population was significantly reduced in New England. Consequently, the federal ban on *Ribes* cultivation and sale was lifted in the 1960s. Despite the relaxation of the federal ban, state quarantine and eradication laws still exist today in many eastern states, including Massachusetts.

In the early 2000s, the pressure to lift the ban on cultivation and sale of *Ribes* intensified, led by commercial berry growers. Numerous varieties of currants and gooseberries with immunity to WPBR had been developed and were marketed as safe for commercial berry production. As a result,

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### Get ready for the 101st!



It's hard to believe that it's almost January, again! Chair Bob LeBlanc and the conference committee have put together a great lineup of speakers, a program that promises to fill the two days of the 2014 conference with stimulating brain food for the dark winter days.

As always, conference brings the added benefits of continuing education credits. In addition to the usual credit offerings (ISA, MCA, SAF, and pesticide), this year we have also received MCLP credits and one CTSP credit, for the presentation *Driving Safety Performance Around Overhead Electrical Hazards* with Zeke Dumas of Western Massachusetts Electric Co. Our keynote speaker, Nina Bassuk from Cornell University, is a well-known teacher and author whose research and expertise in site assessments, soils, species, and planting methods are blazing trails in successful urban tree establishment.

It's going to be another great conference—register now and we'll see you there! 📍

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Karen Doherty, MTWFA Executive Director

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## MTWFA

### MASSACHUSETTS TREE WARDENS' AND FORESTERS' ASSOCIATION

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## From the President



What an exciting time for the association this year! In addition to our usual events, we celebrated our centennial with *two* galas and some exciting new endeavors:

**January** – We kicked off the year with great speakers and record attendance at the annual two-day conference in Sturbridge. Many also enjoyed the gala dinner on Tuesday. We are grateful to our special sponsors for that unique evening event.

**March** – We celebrated our March 1913 founding in Amherst with a homecoming of sorts: a gala dinner at the top of the UMass Campus Center. Among the evening's many highlights was the first distribution of the anniversary book, *The Centennial Year: 1913-2013*.

**April** – The executive board helped package and mail complimentary copies of the centennial book to all current active members and to all Massachusetts public libraries.

**May** – The annual Electrical Hazard Awareness Program (EHAP) continued our long-standing commitment to safety education.

**June** – Tom Brady, Town of Brookline, and Marc Welch, City of Newton, testified at the State House to advocate for changes to modernize M.G.L. Chapter 87.

**July** – We activated a newly redesigned website.

**September** – Rick Harper, UMass, and I taught a workshop in Wellesley on Proper Tree Planting. We will be introducing this latest in the Professional Development Series at varied geographic locations in months to come.

**October-November** – We launched the Tree Warden Exchange Program with an exchange between Boston's Greg Mosman and Chelsea's Andy DeSantis. Read their eyewitness accounts of their experiences beginning on page 5.

Thank you to all the association members and others who contributed to the success of these events. Your hard work, support, and attendance at our events have made this a truly remarkable year.

On to the next century! Our Conference Chair and Vice President, Bob LeBlanc, Town of Walpole, has created a great lineup for the 101<sup>st</sup> annual conference in January. New and familiar faces will join keynote speaker Nina Bassuk from Cornell University in a strong program that promises to provide welcome stimulation in the dark days of winter.

Our annual meeting is always the first thing on the schedule at annual conference. This year a proposed bylaw amendment, a dissolution clause, requires a membership vote. It is printed below and will be distributed at the annual meeting. The topic arose when the U.S. Post Office required a dissolution clause as part of our recent application for non-profit bulk rate mailing privileges. The executive board approved the recommendation of this clause as a permanent addition to our bylaws. Hopefully it will never be needed!

As always, we are looking for new people to step up and help with the association. If you would like to get involved with the executive board, please contact Karen Doherty or myself.

Overall, it was a great year for the MTWFA. I have enjoyed my first year as president, and I look forward to the next one. See you all at the 101<sup>st</sup> conference!

Happy holidays to you and your families,  
David Lefcourt, City of Cambridge  
MTWFA President 2013-2014

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*The proposed amendment below will be presented to the membership for a vote at the annual meeting in Sturbridge at 8:30 a.m. on January 14, 2014. The entire Constitution/Bylaws are available online at [www.masstreewardens.org/constitution-bylaws/](http://www.masstreewardens.org/constitution-bylaws/).*

### Proposed Amendment to the Constitution/Bylaws

Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association

#### Article XIV

Upon dissolution of the organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more of the exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(5), or of the corresponding section of any future tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal, state or local government for a public purpose. 🌲



# ASSOCIATION NEWS AND NOTES



## Renew Your Membership Now

To stay connected, be sure to send in your 2014 membership dues. Pay now using the conference brochure, pay online with a credit card at [www.masstreewardens.org](http://www.masstreewardens.org), or wait for your reminder invoices in February.

## Gordon King: Phone Correction

In the last issue we relayed a report that Prof. King moved to his granddaughter's Castleton, NY home. He has his own private phone and loves to get calls.

Unfortunately we printed the wrong phone number. The correct one is below. Our thanks to George Markarian for pointing out the error.

**Professor Gordon King**  
4267 Rte. 20  
Castleton, NY 12033  
518-729-5108

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## MTWFA TREE WARDEN EXCHANGE:

### A DAY IN BOSTON WITH GREG MOSMAN

By Andrew DeSantis, MCA, City of Chelsea

Greg had told me that the day starts at 7 a.m., so I leave my house just before 6 a.m. in order to avoid the morning rush into Boston. On my journey I travel over the Tobin Bridge, along Storrow Drive to Park Drive, and then on to the parkways of Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace: the Riverway, Jamaica Way, and Arborway.

This was the way to Grandma's house. As I travel, I am thinking of half a life ago, of my father and grandmother. They both passed a little more than thirty years ago and I am now 61. My father's family moved to the corner of Hyde Park Avenue and Walk Hill Street in Forest Hills around 1920. The house was a short distance from what I think would have been then (and still are) the most heavily forested sections of the City of Boston, including Forest Hills Cemetery, the Arnold Arboretum, and Franklin Park. Dad would take my brother and me to Grandma's house, and sometimes he would take us to the arboretum to play. Several times, we went with him to White Stadium in Franklin Park to watch Thanksgiving Day football games between Boston English and Boston Latin.

My destination today is once again Franklin Park, now the location of the Parks Maintenance and Tree Divisions of the City of Boston Public Works Department. I am looking for Greg Mosman, Tree Warden for the City of Boston, Superintendent of its Tree Division, a Massachusetts Certified Arborist, and an experienced climber. He lives in the Brighton section of Boston, is married to a registered nurse, and has three children under the age of 5 including 4-year-old twins and a ten-month-old baby. He is also a triathlete.

I pull in to the facility just as the operation is coming to life and inquire where I can find Greg. I am directed to the rear portion of the yard behind the horse corral where the forestry equipment is parked. I park next to the corral and, seeing a truck pull in, I get out and intro-

*Continued on next page*

## REPORTS FROM THE PIONEERS

### A DAY IN CHELSEA WITH ANDY DESANTIS

By Greg Mosman, MCA, City of Boston

Chelsea. Chelsea? This was my reaction when Dave Lefcourt told me that Andy DeSantis, Assistant DPW Director from the City of Chelsea, had elected to come to Boston as part of the Tree Warden Exchange Program. It's not that I had an opinion of Chelsea, or any preconceived notion of what it was like, it's just that it occurred to me I knew next to nothing about the small city that is sandwiched between two Boston neighborhoods, Charlestown and Eastie (East Boston for the non-initiated). What I did know is that to get from Charlestown to Eastie without using a tunnel you need to cut through Chelsea, and there is a large expanse of produce wholesalers on that road. Lucky for me the DPW maintenance yard is also on the same road!

I met Andy at the maintenance facility, where he handed me an itinerary of what we would be doing and seeing for the day. I'll take this opportunity to point out that Andy is an engineer and thus very well organized. He sent me detailed questions before our initial meeting, and he took notes and pictures throughout his day in Boston, so the Chelsea itinerary he set up was not a surprise. I only mention this because I am the polar opposite. My days are not very organized, I have a lot of balls in the air, and plans can change several times throughout the day. The best way to describe my typical workday would be 'controlled chaos.'

Our first stop would be City Hall. On the way he explained some of the history that had shaped the city, including two major fires. The first "Great Chelsea Fire" occurred in 1908 when half the city burned; the second in 1973 burned eighteen city blocks. My first impression was that the city with its old brick buildings and strange roadway patterns looked very familiar to me, not unlike many of the urban neighborhoods of Boston or the Waretown/Cambridge area where I grew up.

City Hall is a beautiful old building, nothing like the monstrosity that Boston calls "The Hall." We met with

*Continued on page 8*

Tree Warden  
Exchange  
Program



duce myself to the driver, Max Ford-Diamond, General Foreman of Greg's crew of four. We go to the office, where we meet a couple of other crewmembers just beginning the day. The office is located in a 114-year-old brick building with many of the original wood trims still in place, but fully functional for today with modern office equipment. Everyone is friendly and welcoming to a fellow tree worker.

Max tells me that the City of Boston will plant 1300 trees this year, including 475 starting right now. The City of Boston plants trees both in the sidewalk of public ways and on private front lawns as allowed in Section 7 of M.G.L. Chapter 87. Owners of private property where city trees are planted sign an agreement that gives the city the ownership of the tree for two years after it is planted. Max had just returned from a nursery in New Jersey where he tagged individual trees with Boston's own tags. Most of the planting work is contracted.

Greg comes in and we sit in his office and talk about budgets, constituent requests, call taking and their work order tracking system. Anyone can start a work order: one of the two office personnel in the Forestry office; any one of the ten call takers in City Hall; any resident or property owner; and anyone through a web-based service request using a graphical user interface on the City of Boston website. The Forestry Division typically receives a couple of requests every workday for immediate tree work and five hundred tree planting requests a year. The Forestry Division spent \$765,000 on contracted removals, pruning, trimming, stump grinding and other tree work in FY13, out of a \$1,500,000 division budget.

Our attention turns to the Massachusetts House of Representative's House Bill 1842, An Act to Update the Public Shade Tree Law, Chapter 87. I am a little surprised by it. I probably wasn't paying attention when it was brought up at the annual conference. I think the proposed revisions make the law more practicable.

We then start a tour of various locations to view some of today's work, ongoing work, and trees scheduled for removal with public hearings past and present. We drive by a large white ash tree that Greg thinks is the largest of the species in the city.

Our first stop is Howes Playground Park on Moreland Street. Northern Tree Service is performing clearance

trimming, pruning, and crown cleaning around the park. Greg converses with Northern's foreman about what he expects to be done today.



*Greg Mosman and property owner, Centerville Park*

We move on to a residential location on Centerville Park, Dorchester where a property owner has requested a tree removal in order to construct a new curb cut for a driveway. The homeowner is just about to get in his vehicle when Greg introduces himself and tells him why we are there. We measure the diameter of the tree, a 25" littleleaf linden. We inform the petitioner that there would be a \$7,500 replacement



*Elm tree, Thomas Park*

charge for the tree, but that he would not be charged the removal cost if removal is approved at the scheduled Chapter 87 public hearing.

The tree in question is blocking planned access for the driveway and it had lifted the sidewalk, creating a trip hazard.

Next stop is a large 150-year-old elm tree in the area of Thomas Park, South Boston. The elm has a substantial cavity near the base, it has lifted the adjacent brick sidewalk, and its trunk leans severely out into the roadway. A resident had requested its removal to make way for a new driveway. The tree warden had assessed the tree and scheduled a hearing for its removal. There were objections at the hearing, the decision was adjudicated, and the result was a permanent injunction against the City of Boston removing the tree.

This tree was the subject of a story in the *Boston Globe* of September 19, 2013.

We proceed to another stop on Summer Street in the Fort Point Channel area, where tree removal hearings are scheduled due to the city's plans to make roadway and sidewalk improvements. Some of the younger trees will be planted in new locations, and new plantings here are part of the street improvement project.

We stop next at the Olmsted-designed Copps Hill Terrace Park in the North End



*Norm and Chris Helie in front of elm bark beetle trap hung on a blue atlas cedar on the Boston Common*

of Boston. Barrett Tree Service East had completed some work here about a month ago, taking out some vine growth from the terraces of granite block in an area of difficult access due to the steep terraces. At the top level of the park we observe some linden trees needing work. We walk over to the Foster Street play area, where some trees had recently been removed. It doesn't look much like a play area, as it is all broken concrete pavement and used for resident parking.

On to another Olmsted jewel, Boston Common. We catch up with Norm and Chris Helie, who for the last two years have been working on an elm bark beetle trapping and monitoring program on the Common, in the Public Garden, and on the Commonwealth Avenue Mall. Elm trees comprise twenty percent of the tree population on the Boston Common, with substantial elm populations also in the Public Garden, on the Commonwealth Avenue Mall, and in other areas of the city.

From the Boston Common we travel a short distance over to the Beacon Hill area around the Massachusetts State House. Greg shows me a few locations of some bare root plantings and explains the details of working in a neighborhood where luminaries like Secretary of State John Kerry and his wife reside and there is a plethora of neighborhood advisory and regulatory groups for beautification and historic preservation.

Boston's 2008-2014 Open Space Plan divides the City

into 15 different neighborhood areas. (Each one of these areas could be bigger than the entire City of Chelsea!) Most of these neighborhoods have at least one citizen advocacy group; some have many. Greg and I discuss his interaction with the Beacon Hill Garden Club and his successful efforts to gain the club's support for more tree plantings on the area's historical streets. Some groups such as the Friends of Boston Garden provide funding for upkeep of the trees located in their area of interest.

We drive down the Commonwealth Avenue Mall to the Kenmore Square area and stop for some delicious barbeque near Fenway Park. Preparations are well under way for tonight's final World Series game. I remark to Greg how the foliage in the downtown areas is still mostly green and at Franklin Park it is at fall peak color. We wonder if the difference is due to the heat island effect of the city.

After lunch we make a quick trip through the Victory Garden area of the Fenway and continue our journey along the Emerald Necklace's Riverway and Jamai-caway. Not far from the historic residence of former Boston Mayor James Michael Curley, we stop to walk around a small kettle pond called Wards Pond, little known even though it is only a stone's throw from Ja-



*Wards Pond*

maica Pond. Both ponds served as part of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century drinking water supply for the City of Boston. Greg shows me one of the trees that were vandalized last year for their valuable wood burls.

We return to the park maintenance headquarters at Franklin Park and I bid my leave. Greg has some emails to answer and I want to make my way back across Boston before the streets get busy with World Series traffic.

*Continued on next page*

## **A rewarding experience**

I greatly enjoyed going around Boston with Greg. Boston is 25 times larger than the City of Chelsea (over 48 square miles vs. less than 2 square miles). Greg is responsible for over 37,000 trees on public property; I am responsible for about 2,000 trees on public ways. I expected that Greg would have a crew of a couple of dozen personnel; he has only four. Chelsea does not have a dedicated tree crew. We have a street crew of seventeen whose duties include tree activities as well as other typical duties of a Public Works Department, but not including sewer and water, solid waste collection, traffic signal and street light maintenance, fleet maintenance, or roadway or sidewalk reconstruction.

Tree care is only a small portion of my duties as Assistant Director of Public Works, and I am sure that my work load generated by tree care duties is minimal compared to Greg's work load. An example of this would become vividly clear on the two days after my visit, Halloween and the day after. Winds picked up to such an extent that Chelsea received several storm warnings from our contracted weather service provider, and I received alerts from National Grid on my smart phone. Chelsea received a handful of calls concerning tree fall. I am sure Boston received many dozens of service requests.

I depend a lot on web resources like the Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association newly updated website and the websites of the Arbor Day Foundation and the Tree Care Alliance; Len Phillip's Urban Forestry Group on LinkedIn; and subscriptions to online newsletters such as [About.com/Forestry](http://About.com/Forestry). I never thought to look to the City of Boston. Chelsea's infrastructure is similar to Boston's: the water distribution and sewer collection system dating back 150 years, cobblestone roadway paving underlying a lot of the bituminous concrete street paving, etc. In researching this article, I found many useful things on Boston's urban forestry webpage that I plan to emulate on the Chelsea website. The Boston department's web address is [www.cityofboston.gov/parks/streettrees/](http://www.cityofboston.gov/parks/streettrees/).

Working with and learning about trees is an enjoyable part of my workload. Perhaps if I had started in the practice of forestry at the beginning of my career rather than near the end of it, I could see myself in a position like Greg's in a big city. 🌳

several of Andy's co-workers and supervisors including Joe Foti, the DPW Director, and Jay Ash, the City Manager. I found it interesting that we could visit most of the city government under one roof, in under an hour, whereas the system I am used to dealing with is spread out over multiple buildings and agencies.

Next on our itinerary was a ride to see the various neighborhoods of the city. If you're not "from here," it may be hard to understand how a city like Chelsea, with an area of only 2 square miles, can have so many neighborhoods! I counted at least five and I'm sure I missed a few. I would imagine that the boundaries of the different neighborhoods are not really concrete and can change to suit real estate and developer needs. At any rate, the neighborhoods of Chelsea range from brownstone row houses to old Victorians to housing developments. Even though it is one of America's most densely populated cities, it didn't really have the feel of being overpopulated. We discussed how urban centers are changing with more wealthy people moving back to cities, especially to neighborhoods that were traditionally working class, blue-collar places. We may have tossed around the word "yuppie" just a bit.

I was surprised to see so many large shade trees, many on private property, but also as street trees and in schoolyards. The highlight for me was a massive American elm on the street near Washington Park. We looked at several specimen trees throughout the day, and I took the opportunity to offer my opinion as to what I thought would be the best management strategies for each. It turns out Andy and I have both been using Barrett Tree Service East quite a bit. They are a medium sized company based in Somerville that does top quality work, in what I would call extreme urban environments, so it makes sense that we both found our way to them.

In my job, as I suspect for most city arborists, there is crossover between public works sidewalk engineers, roadway engineers, architects, water and sewer infrastructure, street lighting, and anything or anyone else that could conflict with a tree. The interesting thing about Andy is that he wears many of those hats for his city. We talked at great length about ADA standards, storm water runoff, roadway reconstruction, cemetery management, all things about which I have a peripheral knowledge but Andy is an expert. I really tried to

*Continued on next page*





take advantage of his expertise in the short time we spent together.

I had an awesome experience with the Tree Warden Exchange Program, and I'm just going to throw it out there now, that I am all in if anyone is so inclined to visit me next year. I found it to be educational and enjoyable, mostly because I got to know Andy better; I think we had met in passing a few times prior to the exchange. We have many common interests including cycling and, of course, trees. He is a super nice guy with a wealth of knowledge, and I think it's awesome that I have another tree warden to add to the list of people I can call for sound advice in the municipal arena.

Thank you MTWFA, Andy DeSantis MCA, and the City of Chelsea for this opportunity.

P.S. Everyone should visit Chelsea at least once to eat steak tips at the New Bridge Café, seriously, thank me later. 🍴



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## Think you know it all? THINK AGAIN.

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# 2014 Conference Schedule

## TUESDAY, JANUARY 14

- 7:45-8:30 am Registration and Coffee
- 8:30-8:45 am Opening Session—Annual Meeting
- 8:45-9:15 am State DCR Updates: Urban Forestry, Forest Health, and ALB  
*Mollie Freilicher, Ken Gooch, and Julie Coop*, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.
- 9:15-10:00 am Urban Street Tree Selection  
*Andrew Hillman* of Davey Resource Group will share his experience in both the private and public sectors helping municipalities develop planting plans for maximum ecological benefits and sustainability.
- 10:00-10:15 am Updates on Chapter 87 Changes  
*Marc Welch*, City of Newton, and *Tom Brady*, Town of Brookline, will discuss advocacy efforts to modernize Chapter 87 to meet present-day realities.
- 10:15-11:00 am Break with Exhibitors
- 11:00-11:50 am Woody Plant Disease Update: Emerging and Interesting Pathogens (CEU)  
*Nicholas Brazee, Ph.D.*, UMass Extension Plant Diagnostic Lab, will present information and perspectives on current and future disease problems in the urban forest.
- 12:00-1:15 pm Lunch
- 1:30-3:00 pm KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
*Nina Bassuk, Ph.D.* — Creating Great Sites for Great Trees in our Cities  
Growing great urban trees requires quality site and soil conditions. Dr. Bassuk will discuss how to assess and understand site limitations and opportunities. Her talk will include highlights from research on tree species and soil modifications that will help practitioners implement best practices for site and soil assessments.
- 3:00-3:30 pm Break with Exhibitors
- 3:30-4:20 pm Climate Change and Its Implications for New England Forests  
*Bethany Bradley, Ph.D.*, UMass Department of Environmental Conservation, will discuss current and projected shifts in New England's climate and the implications for forests and natural areas. Topics will include general impacts of climate change on forest trees and insect populations, shifts in species' range and phenology, and non-native plant invasion.
- 4:20-4:30 pm Wrap-up—Door Prizes
- 4:30-6:00 pm Reception in Exhibit Hall Join us for a social get-together, graciously supported by our exhibitors.

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15

- 8:30-9:00 am Registration and Coffee
- 9:00-10:00 am Driving Safety Performance Around Overhead Electrical Hazards  
*Maurice (Zeke) Dumas*, Safety Professional, Western Massachusetts Electric Co., a division of Northeast Utilities. Recent accidents involving electricity and trees in Massachusetts remind us of the critical need for all in our industry to be educated and vigilant in driving a strong safety culture. This talk will review the components of the electric transmission & distribution system, how electricity behaves on its path to ground, and the connection of accountability.
- 10:00-11:00 am Break with Exhibitors
- 11:00-12:00 noon UMass Urban Forestry Program: Highlights and Headlines from 2013  
*Rick W. Harper*, UMass Department of Environmental Conservation, will discuss his ongoing project of surveying tree wardens to identify areas of challenge, hot topics, typical scenarios of the job, and the diversity of issues and subject matter that go with the territory of being a tree warden. Mr. Harper will also report on current UMass points of research and services pertaining to urban forest practices.
- 12:00-1:00pm Lunch
- 1:00-2:00 pm ReGreening Springfield: A Community Experience  
*David Bloniarz, Ph.D.*, ReGreen Springfield, and *Alex Sherman, M.S.*, City of Springfield, will present the challenges and successes of creating and executing a massive tree planting initiative following the tornado that decimated the city's urban forest in June 2011.
- 2:00-3:00 pm Preparing for Emerald Ash Borer: Pest Control Strategies (CEU)  
*Richard Cowles, Ph.D.*, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES), will discuss EAB research data and field trials and share his experience with teaching municipal managers about preserving ash trees with systemic insecticides and about managing the economic impact of EAB.
- 3:00 pm Door Prizes and Closing



# 2014 Conference Registration and Membership Form

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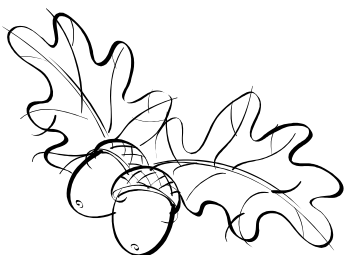
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**UMass Urban Forestry:  
Coming Soon to a Community Near You**  
*by Rick Harper*  
*Extension Assistant Professor*

With more than one million street trees, Massachusetts currently features a relatively large proportion of canopy cover in its three largest cities (Boston 29%, Worcester 37%, and Springfield 33%) with plans to increase urban tree populations and existing canopy cover through various greening and urban tree-planting initiatives. The value of trees planted in residential settings has been well documented, and citizens are often passionate about maintaining urban trees and community green space. We are all familiar, however, with the reality that community trees frequently exist in challenging growing conditions. Thus, those who manage these trees – such as the community tree warden – frequently face challenging situations in their profession.

As we all know, a tree warden – “warden” being a common title for natural resource officials in the late 1800s – is someone in charge of the stewardship of shade trees on public town lands. Since 1899, and still today under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 41, Sec-

tion 1 and 106, Massachusetts has mandated that all cities and towns in the Commonwealth have a tree warden. My new position here at the University of Massachusetts – Urban & Community Forestry Extension Assistant Professor – was established primarily to work directly with the state’s tree wardens and help them in the management of their community forests.

Over the past several months, numerous community tree wardens have taken the time to meet with me one-on-one as I have started the process of visiting the “community forests” throughout Massachusetts. During these visits, I have taken tours with individual tree wardens and listened to their insights, ideas, challenges, and successes. These visits have given me a first-hand perspective on the day-to-day activities of a tree warden. They have also helped me understand the typical obstacles facing tree wardens and identify specific areas where the resources of UMass may best be used to assist them.

Here are some noteworthy insights and observations gleaned from having visited over a dozen communities this fall:

*Continued on next page*



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**Diversity** – This word can mean many things, but the position, scope, and expectations of a tree warden can vary tremendously from community to community. A tree warden may be elected or appointed; a volunteer; a part-time worker with a modest annual stipend; a full-time paid employee on a team of full-time staff caring for the community's trees and green spaces; or a full-time paid employee with other duties in addition to tree care.

**Balance** – A tree warden is required to interface with private residents, volunteer committee members, professional contractors, municipal officials, and elected politicians...sometimes all in the same conversation! A tree warden must often function as an "honest broker" between all of these parties *and* serve as the local, informed tree expert. Achieving this balance is no small task.



The majestic "Station Oak" (*Quercus rubra*) next to the Wellesley post office. Photo by Rick Harper

**Professionalism** – Tree wardens are dedicated professionals who genuinely care about the well-being of the trees in their communities. They work hard, put in long hours, and are often required to get the job done with limited resources. Many tree wardens share equipment and employee resources with other departments in their municipality in an effort to stretch their budgets and meet deadlines.

Looking back on these community visits, a pattern has begun to emerge regarding areas where tree wardens could use some support and assistance. Some of these include:

- Assistance either performing an urban forest inventory or updating an existing inventory.
- Help obtaining or maintaining professional accreditations (i.e. arborist certifications) with limited time and budgets.
- Further networking opportunities between less experienced tree wardens and their veteran counterparts in other communities.

- Learning more about dealing with different groups with diverse objectives and opinions.
- Resources to increase urban tree species diversity. Since nearly 50% of the urban tree populations in Massachusetts are maples (*Acer* spp.), this objective is all the more critical as pests such as Asian longhorned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*, a.k.a. ALB) threaten maples and other deciduous trees.

On behalf of the UMass Urban Forestry Extension Program, I look forward to continuing these community visits throughout the state in the coming year and to helping build an infrastructure that will assist with these and other specific needs. One of the best ways to support the health and well-being of our community forests in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is to support those professionals active on the front lines: the community tree wardens. 🌲



Red maple (*Acer rubrum*) tree scheduled for removal in Worcester due to ALB infestation. Photo by Rick Harper

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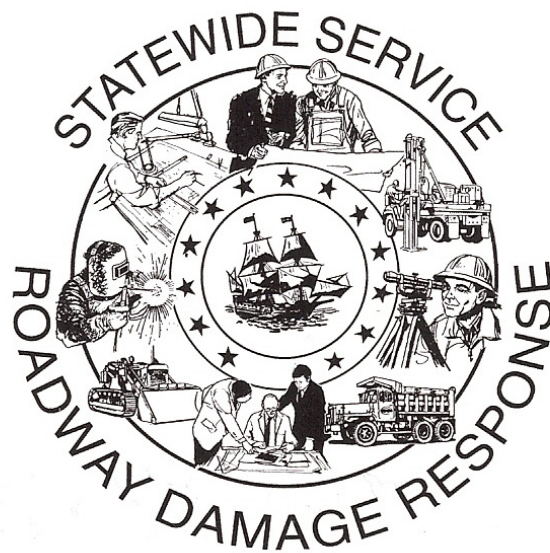
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### White Pine Blister Rust—continued from page 1

Massachusetts law was modified to allow the cultivation and sale of *Ribes* in certain towns after a formal permitting process. Currently, 144/351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts still prohibit planting of currants and gooseberries (1). Since the modification of the *Ribes* ban in Massachusetts, commercial production of currants and gooseberries continues to increase as berry growers expand into this niche market.

In 2008, researchers in Connecticut observed the WPBR pathogen on black currant bred for immunity to the disease (2). In light of this discovery, researchers in eastern Canada began surveying rust populations in New England and eastern Canada to determine if a new strain of the fungus had been introduced. The researchers determined that it wasn't a newly introduced strain, but a more troubling scenario; a new, virulent strain of the pathogen had naturally developed in northeastern North America. Through genetic mutation, the new strain of the pathogen is capable of infecting numerous cultivars of black currant that were bred for immunity to the disease. These previously immune *Ribes* cultivars have been widely planted by commercial berry growers. Survey results confirm the new strain has been detected in New York, New Hampshire, Quebec and New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, in addition to Connecticut.

Widespread concern now exists that WPBR will once again become a serious threat for the long-term health of eastern white pine in New England. Young white pines are more susceptible to the disease because the environmental conditions required for disease development occur most often closer to the ground (high humidity and shade with free moisture on plant surfaces). While the majority of our white pine population is mature and less susceptible, a considerable number of young white pines exist in our forests and managed landscapes. Symptoms of the disease include top dieback, browning needles and the presence of stem and trunk lesions accompanied by copious resin flow. The lesions may appear as numerous rupturing blisters with oozing and hardened resin. Insect infestation may often be visible near the lesions. The fungus invades the tree through the needles and slowly progresses downward to the twigs and branches before finally girdling the main trunk. No control measures exist for the pathogen on white pine and spores

have been documented to travel several miles. However, chemical control of the fungus on *Ribes* is possible if performed properly by commercial growers.


In light of these new findings, the state of New Hampshire imposed a new moratorium in 2012 banning the planting of currants and gooseberries until further surveying for the new strain can be completed (3). To date, the laws managing the cultivation and sale of *Ribes* in Massachusetts have not been changed to reflect the altered dynamics of WPBR. One of the con-



Photo of the guilty party. Courtesy Nicholas Brazee

ditions of legalized cultivation and sale of *Ribes* in Massachusetts and additional northeastern states was that all *Ribes* cultivars would be immune to WPBR. Now that disease immunity has been broken by the fungal pathogen, the law needs to be reexamined before WPBR becomes an epidemic once more.

### References:

- (1) Currants and Gooseberries: Prohibited Towns in Massachusetts. 2012. [[http://extension.umass.edu/landscape/sites/landscape/files/publications/currants\\_gooseberries\\_prohibited\\_towns.pdf](http://extension.umass.edu/landscape/sites/landscape/files/publications/currants_gooseberries_prohibited_towns.pdf)]
- (2) Frederick, ZA, et al. 2011. First Report of White Pine Blister Rust Caused by *Cronartium ribicola* on Immune Black Currant *Ribes nigrum* Cv. Titania in Preston, Connecticut. Plant Disease 95(12): 1589. [<http://apsjournals.apsnet.org/doi/abs/10.1094/PDIS-07-11-0609>]
- (3) Moratorium on Planting Currants and Gooseberries in New Hampshire. 2012. [<http://www.agriculture.nh.gov/documents/Ribes.pdf>] 

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**April 25** MAA Arbor Day of Service  
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