



2026
Indiana Arborist Association
Annual Conference
January 20-22, 2026





CONFERENCE AGENDA AT-A-GLANCE

2026 INDIANA ARBORIST ASSOCIATION
79TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Tuesday, January 20, 2026

All sessions are in Waters A/B

Urban Forestry Program
Sponsored by Indiana Department of Natural Resources

| 7:30 am | Registration Open |
|---------------------|--|
| 8:15 am – 8:45 am | Welcome and Introductions <i>Lindsey Purcell, Director and Rick Carter, President</i> |
| 8:45 am – 9:30 am | Community & Urban Forestry in Indiana - Jacob Roos, IDNR, CUF Program Coordinator IAA Annual Awards Program, Richard Karber, Awards Chairperson |
| 9:30 am – 10:30 am | Nursery Panel Discussion <i>Kyle Daniel Moderator</i> |
| 10:30 am – 11:00 am | Break for Networking |
| 11:00 am – Noon | Soundscapes from Around the World and at Home: Why What We Hear Matters <i>Bryan C Pijanowski, Purdue University</i> |
| Noon – 1:00 pm | Networking Lunch in the Main Lobby Dining Area |
| 1:00 – 2:00 pm | Fruit Tree Pruning <i>Miranda Purcell, Purdue University</i> |
| 2:00 – 3:00 pm | The Economics of Maintaining Cemetery Trees and Landscapes <i>RJ Laverne, Davey Tree Expert Company</i> |
| 3:00 – 3:30 pm | Break for Networking |
| 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm | Beyond the Numbers: Transforming Tree Inventory Data into Results <i>Steve Lane, Response Growth Collective</i> |
| 4:30 pm – 5:00 pm | IAA Business Meeting; open to all members <i>Conner Board Room</i> |

WEDNESDAY, January 21

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--|
| 7:00 am – 4:00 pm | Registration Open | |
| 7:00 am – 8:00 am | Breakfast in Main Lobby Dining Area | |
| 8:00 am – 9:00 am | Healthy Soils for Healthy Trees – A Review of Expert Remediation Techniques & Engineering Solutions <i>Michelle Catania, The Morton Arboretum</i> | |
| 9:00 am - 10:00 am | What's Killing Our Trees? <i>Lindsey Purcell, Lp Consulting Group</i> | |
| 10:00 am – 11:00 am | Break with Exhibitors | |
| 11:00 am – 12:00 pm | IDNR Nursery and Compliance Updates* <i>Eric Biddinger, IDNR</i> | |
| | New President Welcome and Past President Recognition | |
| 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm | Networking Lunch in the Main Lobby Dining Area | |
| Track Selection | Program Topics Waters A/B | Program Topics Ditslear A/B/C |
| 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm | Factors & Forces: Tree Risk Assessment for Tree Workers <i>RJ Laverne, Davey Tree Expert Company</i> | Cabling and Bracing Trees: How Can We Provide Supplemental Support Systems? <i>Marco Vargas, Bartlett Tree Experts</i> |
| 2:30 pm – 3:00 pm | Break with Exhibitors on Tradeshow Floor | |
| 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm | Beyond the Target: The Science Behind Herbicide Injury and Plant Prognosis* <i>Kyle Daniel, Purdue University</i> | 7 Questions to Ask Before Buying Gear <i>Alex Julius, Davey Tree Experts</i> |
| 4:00pm – 5:00 pm | Perception versus Reality: Which Tree Pests Matter? * <i>Joe Boggs, Ohio State University</i> | Chainsaws: The Not So Silent Killer <i>Jamie Chambrelli, SavATree</i> |

Wednesday and Thursday will include Climbers Corner flash talks on various topics from special guests.

THURSDAY, January 22

| | | |
|------------------------|--|---|
| 7:30 am – 4:00 pm | Registration Open | |
| 7:00 am – 8:30 am | Breakfast | |
| <i>Track Selection</i> | Program Topics Waters A/B | Program Topics Ditslear A/B/C |
| 8:00 am – 9:00 am | Branch Pruning Research <i>Kelby Fite, Bartlett Tree Experts</i> | Getting to know all the pretty weeds in the ROW* <i>Andrew Mertz, Duke Energy</i> |
| 9:00 am - 10:00 am | Invasive Pest Management* <i>Joe Boggs, Ohio State University</i> | Team Building and Ethical Practice <i>Matt Hogarth and Lindsey Purcell</i> |
| 10:00 am – 10:30 am | Break with Exhibitors on Tradeshow Floor | |
| 10:30 am – 11:30 am | Urban soil challenges and strategies to remediate* <i>Kelby Fite, Bartlett Tree Experts</i> | Rigging to Compression on Vacation and Why it Matters <i>Wes Tregligas, Wright Tree Service</i> |
| 11:30 am – 12:00 pm | ISA Update, Randall Miller, ISA Board of Directors Raffle Wrap-Up Waters A/B room | |
| 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm | Networking Lunch in the Main Lobby Dining Area Final Break with Exhibitors | |
| 1:30 – 2:30 pm | This Might Shock You <i>Randy Miller, Eocene</i> | Utility Storm Work – Unloading Wires Under Tension a Teaspoon at a Time <i>Wes Tregligas, Wright Tree Service</i> |
| 2:30 – 3:30 pm | What Does OISC Do?* <i>Aaron Kreider, OISC</i> | How Efficient is Your Operation? <i>Sarah Cummings, SavaTree</i> |
| Travel safely! | Conference Closed, Thank you for attending! | |

Wednesday and Thursday will include Climbers Corner flash talks on various topics from special guests.

Professional credentialing note: Every session qualifies as an ISA continuing education unit. Those sessions note with * qualify for OISC Pesticide CCH's.

Tuesday 8:15 AM – 8:45 AM

Welcome, Introductions and Updates

Lindsey Purcell, Executive Director, IAA

Rick Carter— President, IAA

Tuesday 8:45 AM – 9:45 AM

IDNR, Community and Urban Forestry Update

Information on Community & Urban Forestry around the state, new educational materials and upcoming opportunities.

Speaker: Jacob Roos, IDNR, CUF Program Coordinator

IAA Annual Awards

Recognition of efforts in our chapter and state.

Richard Karber, AEP, Awards Chairperson

Tuesday 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM

Nursery Panel Discussion

Speakers: Kyle Daniel, Nursery and Landscape Specialist, Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, Purdue University

Tuesday 10:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Break for Networking in Veterans Hall

Tuesday 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Soundscapes from Around the World and at Home: Why What We Hear Matters

Soundscapes from around the world and at home: why what we hear matters.- Dr. Pijanowski will discuss what soundscapes are, how to study them and why thinking about sound might help scholars to think more deeply about animals and their environments.

Speaker: Bryan Pijanowski, Purdue University

Tuesday 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Lunch service in Main Lobby Dining Area

Tuesday 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Fruit Tree Pruning

The basics of fruit tree pruning, including the best time of year, tools needed, types of pruning cuts, types of training systems and more. The focus will be on apples but other fruit trees will be mentioned.

Speaker: Miranda Purcell, Viticulture Extension Specialist, Purdue University

Tuesday 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

The Economics of Maintaining Cemetery Trees and Landscapes

Cemeteries are important greenspaces in urban forests that provide essential tree canopy. Many cemeteries struggle to keep up with tree maintenance and plantings. This presentation offers creative ideas for cemetery managers to build partnerships and generate funding for landscape maintenance,

Speaker: Robert Laverne, Manager of Education and Training, Davey Tree Expert Company

Tuesday 3:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Break for Networking in Veterans Hall



Tuesday 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Beyond the Numbers: Transforming Tree Inventory Data into Results

Join Steve as we discuss the practical applications of a tree inventory, the relative importance of various information in that inventory, and how to turn that data into results.

Speaker: Steve Lane, Lead Consultant, Response Growth Collective

Wednesday 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Healthy Soils for Healthy Trees – A Review of Expert Remediation Techniques & Engineering Solutions

Many trees in urban and suburban environments struggle to reach maturity. Some of this is caused by poor below-ground environmental conditions, such as degraded soils from construction and infrastructure conflicts. This talk will aim at providing a variety of peer-reviewed techniques that can be effectively incorporated into site preparation prior to planting, offer improvements to plant health care programs to remediate soil-induced tree stress, or introduce science-based engineering solutions that should be considered during site planning for large-scale construction projects.

Speaker: Michelle Catania, Green Industry Outreach Coordinator, The Morton Arboretum

Wednesday 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

What's Killing Our Trees?

Why aren't trees living longer in the built environment? Why are my trees dying? What's wrong with my tree? Too often it is the results of environmental extremes, poor planning, uninformed design, or just mismanagement. This presentation will discuss the top biotic and abiotic challenges considered most detrimental to sustainable landscapes and tree plantings along with solutions for longer-lived trees in the landscape and the urban forest.

Speaker: Lindsey Purcell, Principal, Lp Consulting Group

Wednesday 10:00 AM – 11:00 PM

Break with Exhibitors in Veterans Hall



Wednesday 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

IDNR Nursery and Compliance Updates*

Find out what is going on in the nursery and in urban landscapes as well as what to expect in 2026.

Speaker: Eric Bitner, IDNR



Wednesday 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Lunch service in Main Lobby Dining Area

Wednesday 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

Factors & Forces: Tree Risk Assessment for Tree Workers

Trees or tree parts frequently fail when a factor that leads to strength loss encounters an external force that exceeds the tree's capacity to resist breakage. The Factors and Forces tree risk protocol provides tree workers with insight on identifying potential weaknesses in a tree and guidance on how to develop safe work plans that direct forces away from structural defects.

Speaker: Robert Laverne, Manager of Education and Training, Davey Tree Expert Company

Cabling and Bracing Trees (static systems) How Can We Provide Supplemental Support Systems?

The main objective of this presentation is to make a general review of the current Industry Standards (ANSI® A300, C7) for the use of supplementary support systems. Focusing on the installation of static cabling systems and bracing. In this presentation we will review the basic principles that we need to understand in order to select the right tree parts, materials, and tools for proper installation according to the recommended goals. In the same way, we will mention some guidelines to perform this task efficiently and safely.

Speaker: Marco Vargas, Regional trainer, Bartlett Tree Experts

Wednesday 2:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Break with Exhibitors in Waters C,D,E



Wednesday 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Beyond the Target: The Science Behind Herbicide Injury and Plant Prognosis

This presentation will explore the unintended consequences of herbicide exposure on non-target plants. This session will delve into the physiological and biochemical responses triggered by herbicide injury, the diagnostic signs of damage, and the factors influencing plant recovery or decline. Attendees will gain insights into the science of herbicide interactions and learn how

to assess prognosis and manage affected plants effectively.

Speaker: Kyle Daniel, Nursery and Landscape Specialist, Department of Horticulture, Purdue University.

7 Questions to Ask Before Buying Gear

Do you buy or use climbing equipment? With so much equipment on the market these days, it's challenging to know what to buy and from where to buy it. And how can we be certain that what we ordered is what we think it is? How can we be responsible consumers? Learn how to interpret the nuances of climbing equipment and ensure that what you are buying is safe for use in tree care.

Speaker: Alex Julius, Project Manager, Health & Safety Department, The Davey Tree Expert Company.

Wednesday 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Perception versus Reality: Which Tree Pests Matter?

Separation of minor from major tree pests is no easy task. The wrong move can be costly to your reputation and bottom line. However, are your pest management decisions driven by enhancing tree health or just reducing customer complaints? This presentation uses case studies to illustrate realistic and effective pest management decisions to support tree health while meeting customer needs and expectations.

Speaker: Joe Boggs, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, Ohio State University

Chainsaws: The Not So Silent Killer

This session will include discussion on best practices for positioning yourself for success, as well as selecting the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) based on specific situations. Additionally, safer cutting techniques will be demonstrated aimed at helping you minimize the most common injury risks, ultimately enhancing both safety and productivity.

Speaker: Jamie Chambrelli, Eastern Region Safety Manager, SavATree

Thursday 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Getting to Know All the Pretty Weeds in the ROW

The premise is that if you are applying herbicide in right of ways, you should at least have some basic knowledge of the desirable, and compatible, vegetation that shares these spaces. We will review the different families of wildflowers that grow in right of ways with an emphasis on the sunflower family, dogbanes, mints, and legumes among others.

Speaker: Andrew Mertz, Distribution System Forester, Duke Energy

Branch Pruning Research

Codominant stems are considered conditions of concern due to their increase likelihood of failure. Understanding the impact of varying degrees of stem reduction can assist in making informed pruning decisions. This presentation will focus on the results of various intensities of reduction pruning in middle aged October Glory red maple.

Speaker: Kelby Fite, Director of Research, Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories

Thursday 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Perception versus Reality: Which Tree Pests Matter?

The Separating minor from major tree pests is no easy task. The wrong move can be costly to your reputation and bottom line. However, are your pest management decisions driven by enhancing tree health or just reducing customer complaints? From determining which pests matter to deciding when to pull the pesticide trigger, this presentation uses case studies to illustrate realistic and effective pest management decisions to support tree health while meeting customer needs and expectations.

Speaker: Joe Boggs, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, Ohio State University

Thursday 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Team Building and Ethical Practice

Matt and Lindsey will discuss practical solutions for dealing with ethical situations in tree care, how to deal with difficult customers and employees, and how to motivate and grow average employees into great employees.

Speaker: Matt Hogarth, Owner, Higher Ground Tree Care

Thursday 10:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Break with Exhibitors in Waters C,D,E



Thursday 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Rigging to Compression on vacation and why it matters

This session will show you the perfect rigging to compression scenario in northern Canada to achieve epic fun. The session will dive into a case study of a near miss fatality where rigging to compression was missed and how complex the transverse forces can be on one jobsite and their detriment to the job plan.

Speaker: Wes Tregilgas, Safety, Education and Training Manager for Wright Tree Service

Urban Soil Challenges and Strategies to Remediate

Soils on developed sites face many challenges that impact landscape performance. This presentation will focus on the challenges on some of the remedial treatments that are used in the industry.

Speaker: Dr. Kelby Fite, Director of Research, Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories

Thursday 11:30 AM – 12:00 PM

International Society of Arboriculture Update

Randall Miller, ISA Board of Directors

Thursday 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Lunch service in Main Lobby Dining Area

Last chance to visit the tradeshow!



Thursday 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

Utility Storm Work – Unloading Wires Under Tension a Teaspoon at a Time

This session will show real video clips of the injury disaster potential and lack of control from approaching wires under tension in storm conditions the traditional way and why the practice of “tying the wires down” doesn’t exactly provide safety to the extent needed. New industry approaches to solving these hazards will be shown with methods that are much more predictable, controlled, and proven successful during Hurricane Helene along with sharing some case studies of jobs that went wrong and why.

Speaker: Wes Tregilgas, Safety, Education and Training Manager, Wright Tree Service

This Might Shock You

Electrocution is the third most common cause of work-place fatalities in arboriculture. Further, electrical contact with high voltage lines is a life-changing event, and never for the better. This presentation covers the importance of electric hazard incident prevention. How the electrical system works, the consequences of electrical contact and I provide information on how to guard against them.

Speaker: Randall Miller, Director of Research and Development Eocene Environmental Group

Thursday 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM

What Does OISC Do?

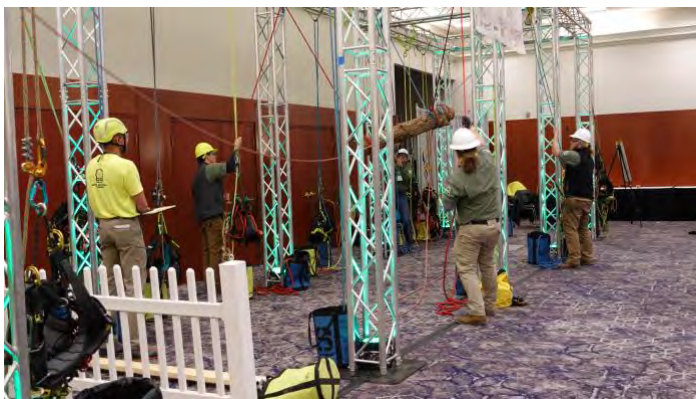
OISC has a lot of interaction with the public and regulated industries. We will discuss how OISC interacts with these entities through ways such as inspections & investigations.

Speakers: Aaron Kreider, Investigator, Office of the Indiana State Chemist

How Efficient is Your Operation?

Challenge your mindset on how efficiently your business is operating. An efficient operation pays off in profitability, safety, and growth; positively impacting your customers and employees. We will discuss simple Lean Six Sigma tools to take the first steps, and how to sustain those results.

Speaker: Sarah Cummings, Director of Continuous Improvement, SavATree



Climbers Corner and Rigging Competition

Check out the Demonstration Area in the Tradeshow Hall for guest speakers, demonstrations and a rigging contest!



Key items to remember after the conference:

- The IAA will submit your Pesticide Applicator CEU forms turned into the front table after the conference. Keep an image on your phone.
- Look out for the conference survey which you will receive by email to help us review and plan for the next year.
- Anyone who wants more information on getting involved with our chapter, please email lindsey@indiana-arborist.org for an informal chat.

Thank you for attending and supporting our annual conference. There is much planning and effort that goes into this event and we are hopeful it was a positive experience and enhanced you personally and professionally.

Be safe and make it a great 2026!

The IAA Board of Directors

Lindsey Purcell, Executive Director

Ashley Mulis, Associate Director

Save the Date!

January 19-21, 2027!

**Embassy Suites by Hilton Noblesville
Indianapolis Conference Center**



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