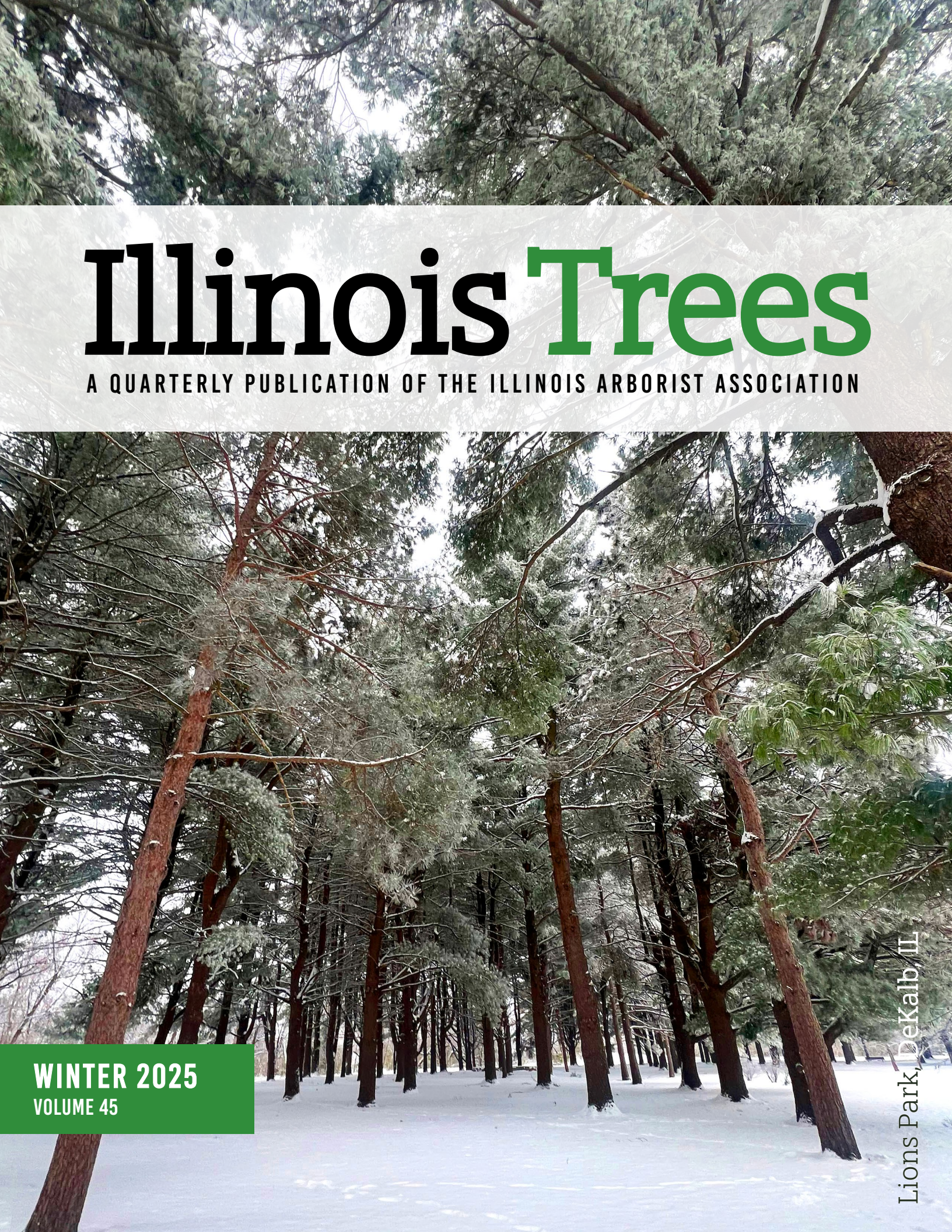




Illinois Trees

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE ILLINOIS ARBORIST ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2025
VOLUME 45

Lions Park, DeKalb, IL

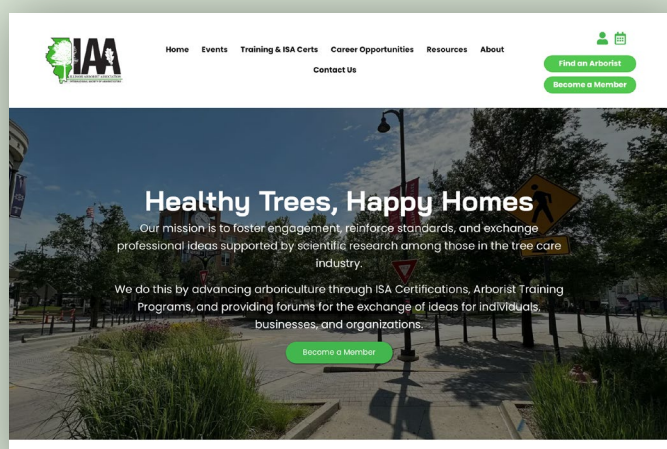
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Mission Statement

"Foster engagement, reinforce standards and exchange professional ideas supported by scientific research among those in the tree care industry."



Visit the IAA Website

for updates on events, certification classes, and important issues impacting our industry.

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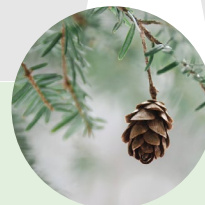
Editor's Note

Winter is here. Most of the leaves have fallen and many tree workers have been tasked with snow removal the first part of winter. Snow has blanketed the branches and tested the strength of the unions that may have been compromised by injury or rot during the growing season. Now is the time for pruning and shaping the frame of the tree when its structure is revealed.

Enjoy the beauty of winter, whether you are out wandering in the forest or at home admiring the trees in your backyard. The simplicity found in a time of rest and renewal for spring and new growth.

"What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness." - John Steinbeck

We would love your input as members. Contributions, questions or comments about this publication can be made by contacting me, Amy Martin, [at this link](#).



P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E



DEAR Illinois Arborists,

It is truly an honor to serve as President of the Illinois Arborist Association and to be writing this today. The IAA has given me so much personally and professionally, and I am genuinely proud to play even a small role in the continued growth of our profession and industry. Being an active IAA member has connected me with a wide network of professionals, many of whom have become close friends. When I have questions, which is often, I know my peers are there with insight and support. That sense of community is one of the strongest reasons to stay engaged in our shared mission to “foster engagement, reinforce standards, and exchange professional ideas supported by scientific research among those in the tree care industry.”

Physicist John Archibald Wheeler said, “As our island of knowledge grows, so does the shore of our ignorance.” For arborists, this is a reminder that staying engaged is essential - not just to earn CEUs, but to ensure we are well-equipped to serve our clients, our communities, and each other. Personally, I find the most value in professional social settings like the Urban & Community Forestry Forum or the Tree Biz Social. These events offer opportunities to reconnect with colleagues, learn something new, and earn CEUs along the way. Any IAA training or event though provides the same opportunities before and after! Another excellent way to get involved is by

volunteering for an IAA committee. Committee work directly supports IAA’s statewide goals and provides a chance to build relationships, expand your network, and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing our profession. Committee members also work closely with the IAA Board of Directors, an experience that often inspires people to consider running for the Board themselves.



“With 1,320 members, the IAA is the second-largest, single-state ISA chapter, and your voice matters.”

Even if you are not currently participating in these or the many other IAA events - which, by the way, few ISA chapters can match in both frequency and quality (60+ per year!) - we still want to hear from you. With 1,320 members, the IAA is the second-largest single-state ISA chapter, and your voice matters. Together, our collective efforts help shape the national and international direction of professional arboriculture.

Stay safe and enjoy the winter season!

Joe Hansen





**Lots of ISA Exams
in the months to come!**

IAA Winter Event Calendar		
JAN	Event	Location
21	ISA Exam	Lombard
23	'26 Strategic Planning, IAA Board	Gurnee
27	ISA Exam	Zion
FEB	Event	Location
5-MAR. 26	Certification Prep Classes	Homewood
26	ISA Exam	Zion
MAR	Event	Location
10	ISA Exam	Zion
26	ISA Exam	Lombard

Get the links to sign up at IAA's website here



OUTSTANDING SUPPORT BRINGS

Top Donations TO THE Scholarship Fund

At the recent IAA Annual Conference, we held our yearly TREE Fund Raffle—and what a night it was! This year, the focus was The Norm Hall Scholarship Fund. All funds raised up to \$3,000 were matched by the IAA to help grow this important scholarship. Norm Hall was a monumental figure in our industry and within the IAA. Established in 2024, the scholarship continues his legacy providing funds for training in various fields of arboriculture.

The response was overwhelming with an incredible lineup of donated prizes: gear bags, ropes and rope bags, a Milwaukee M18 Fuel battery saw, a Greenworks battery saw, a Stihl MS462, two STIHL bar stools, an ALTEC toy truck, a Yeti cooler, two beautiful pieces of art donated by Iron Wolf, and more. Master of Ceremonies Tony Dati brought the energy and enthusiasm that set the tone for the entire night. Tony even kicked things off by donating back an Arbsession throw-line kit, which went on to raise an additional \$500—a fantastic gesture.

And the generosity didn't stop there. With beer, snacks, and a room full of great people, the excitement kept building. When the STIHL bar stools went to auction, the winning bid came in at \$500. Then, something amazing happened. Stihl approached the winner, offered two more stools matching the bid, donating an additional \$1,000 to the fund.

The night was full of laughs, camaraderie, and heartfelt moments. It was inspiring to see everyone come together for a great cause and in honor of a great man. The IAA community truly helped push that legacy forward. Thanks to the amazing generosity, **the fund raised \$6,193—before the IAA match!** We look forward to working with you, continuing these important efforts. I'm sure Norm is smiling down on all of us.



"I'm sure
Norm is
smiling
down on
all of us."





Annual Conference '25



The 2025 Illinois Arborist Association (IAA) Annual Conference was an unequivocal success, drawing close to 800 attendees and underscoring the vibrant health and commitment of our state's arboriculture community. The energy was palpable, reflecting a shared passion for advancing tree care, safety, and industry best practices.

The education sessions provided engaging content to every segment of the profession—from veteran municipal arborists to emerging private consultants. While the entire schedule was packed with valuable content, a few sessions stood out for their timeliness, depth, and practical takeaways.



Key Session Highlights

Among the many excellent presentations, attendees consistently referenced the profound insights gained from sessions like:

Advanced Diagnostics for Tree Health: This session provided a deep dive into the latest technologies and methodologies for accurately identifying complex tree diseases and structural issues. The focus on integrating visual assessment with cutting-edge tools offered immediate, actionable value for field arborists.

Safety First: Mitigating High-Risk Removals: In an industry where safety is paramount, this session offered a critical review of accident prevention strategies and best practices for the most challenging tree removals. The case studies and interactive discussions emphasized procedural rigor and teamwork as non-negotiables.

Continued on the next page >>





Annual Conference '25



The Future of Urban Forestry: Climate Change Adaptation: Addressing one of the most pressing challenges facing our urban canopy, this presentation explored which tree species are proving most resilient in fluctuating Midwestern climates and how municipalities can strategically plan for a changing environment.

Business Acumen for Arborists: Scaling Your Operation: This session provided practical, hands-on advice for small-to-medium-sized businesses looking to improve efficiency, manage finances, and navigate the current labor market. It was a clear favorite for owner-operators aiming for sustainable growth.

The diverse program ensured that whether attendees were looking for CEUs, networking opportunities, or exposure to the newest equipment and techniques showcased in the expansive exhibition hall, they found the resources they needed. The IAA extends its sincere gratitude to all speakers, sponsors, exhibitors, and volunteers who made the 2025 conference a benchmark event. We look forward to seeing everyone next year as we continue to grow and strengthen the Illinois arboriculture community.





Update ON Factors Responsible for Decline of Illinois Rural, Forest & Urban Oaks ♣ PART 2

PREPARED BY: FREDRIC MILLER, STEPHANIE ADAMS,
CASSIDY RAYFIELD, AND JENNIFER NORBUT

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The IDNR Statewide Oak Decline Study (Miller, Rayfield, and Norbut 2025): The objectives of this study are 1) obtain a broad picture of possible factors and their interactions contributing to oak decline, 2) conduct a statewide survey of rural and urban forests to better understand fine and feeder root-rots, and their role in oak decline, 3) create updated forest BMPs for rural landowners, natural resource managers, and urban foresters to assist in the management of existing oaks forests and future oak regeneration, 4) and conduct educational programs and workshops to assist residents of the natural resources and urban forest communities.

Northeast Illinois Oak Decline Study (Watson and Adams 2024): The objectives of this study were to conduct 1) a regional survey of rapidly declining oaks to assess the extent of the observed decline; 2) a more detailed assessment of soil conditions and pathogen presence on a large site that was well suited for it, with declining and healthy trees and

soils characteristic of sites with rapidly declining oaks throughout the region.

Site and Soil Characteristics Associated with White Decline in Northeast Illinois (Remsen 2024; Remsen et al. 2025): The objectives of this study were to (1) determine which site and soil characteristics are most strongly associated with declining *Q. alba*, *Q. macrocarpa*, and *Q. bicolor* in the Chicago region, and (2) conduct a preliminary investigation on the role of oomycetes in the oak decline spiral. Based on similar patterns in Europe, we hypothesized that (1) a combination of predisposing abiotic factors, fine soil textures, compaction, and poor drainage will have a significant relationship to white oak decline, and that (2) the oomycetes are a contributing factor associated with the decline spiral.

FIELD SAMPLING METHODS & LAB ANALYSIS FOR ALL STUDIES

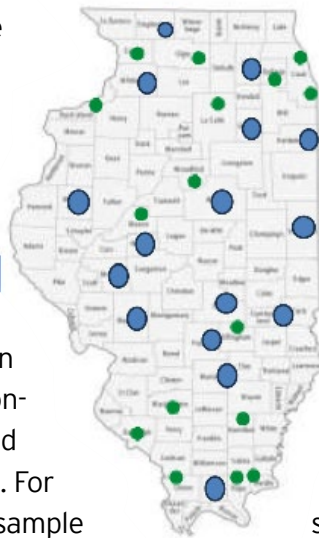
IDNR Statewide Oak Decline Study (Rural Oak Forests: 2023-2025) (Miller, Rayfield, and Norbut, 2025): Field survey areas were conducted on state and private lands with a history of oak decline. Depending on availability and accessibility, at each site, three to five white (*Quercus alba*), northern red (*Q. rubra*), bur (*Q. macrocarpa*), swamp white (*Q. bicolor*), shingle oak (*Q. imbricaria*), and black oaks (*Q. velutina*) each exhibiting no decline or evidence of the beginnings of decline (<20% dieback and/or stag-horning) were selected. For each oak sample tree, an approximately ♣ of a cup of fine root samples were excavated from with one to two feet of the trunk from all four cardinal directions.

For each sample tree, the tree species, DBH, site slope and aspect, rooting depth, depth to restricted layer, evidence of any biotic or abiotic factors were recorded along with a composite soil sample to determine soil OM, pH, cation exchange (CEC), and macro and micro-nutrient levels. Additional soil and site information (i.e. soil type, texture, soil horizon

characteristics, hydrology, and oak site indexes) was obtained by referencing USDA County Soil Survey Books for each respective sample site and soil type.

IDNR Oak Decline Study (Urban Oaks) (2023-2025) (Adams, Miller, Rayfield, and Norbut, 2025): The urban oak tree survey component is being conducted in a similar manner as described above with the following modifications. For each sample oak tree, a soil-root core sample was taken for the fine root sampling by using a cup-cutter (3 inches by 7 inches). All other tree condition, soil types, and site data was taken as previously described. On selected sites and based on ELISA testing results (positive or negative for Phytophthora), soil treatments of a fungicide, fungicide +growth regulator, and their combination are applied to determine if these treatments aid in control of Phytophthora, allowing for fine root and root hair regeneration and recovery, and an improvement in over oak tree health. Presently field and laboratory results are being evaluated and summarized.

Urban Oak Study (Watson and Adams, 2024): In this study, soil moisture was monitored throughout the spring of 2022 at 14 locations across the site in areas of good and poor drainage. The depth of the seasonal perched water table and percent soil moisture were measured. The water table was measured to a depth of 35 cm using a pipe installed vertically in the soil and measuring the depth to standing water in the pipe. Volumetric soil water content was measured in the upper 20 cm of soil. Measurements were taken at least 2 days after rainfall to allow time for the soil to drain to field capacity.



Oak Root Sampling Forest Sights

Green - 2023

Blue - 2024

“a combination of predisposing abiotic factors, fine soil textures, compaction, and poor drainage will have a significant relationship to white oak decline.”

Urban Oak Study (Remsen 2024; Remsen et al. 2025): Initial site visits focused on completing a soil profile description underneath each selected tree. A representative deep soil pedon core was extracted and assessed under each tree with a 7.62-cm diameter bucket auger. The location for deep soil sampling was selected for being representative of the plot and at a parallel position in the slope profile with the tree. A plot consisted of twice the diameter of the dripline of the tree. Depth to soil structure, roots, and coarse fragments were assessed in the field. A core sampler was used to collect a bulk density core at the location

to determine the degree of soil compaction for later analysis. Signs of compaction and human activity were recorded. Soil profile descriptions were assessed to correlate each tree’s representative soil profile to a soil series and to provide supplemental information for confirming drainage class. Soil respiration, organic matter, texture, and bulk density were also measured.

➤ **For further details on Materials and Methods for the Watson and Adams (2024), Remsen (2024), Miller et al. (2025), and Remsen et al. (2025) studies, [please refer to this link](#) for more information.**

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New fund through TREE Fund

Norm Hall Memorial Fund for Education and Training



Established by the Illinois Arborists Association, to honor the memory of Norm Hall. The purpose of this program is to provide financial support to provide an annual grant to reduce participant fees for a hand-on, experiential training session in Norm's name.

Thank you



to all that have donated to this fund so far!

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on TREE Fund's grant
and scholarship
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SCHAUMBURG

APRIL 1ST - APRIL 3RD

APRIL 1ST: 7:30AM-5PM
APRIL 2ND: 7:30AM-5PM
APRIL 3RD: 7:30AM-12PM

14.5 CEUS

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
MARCH 1ST

ZION

APRIL 29TH - MAY 1ST

APRIL 29TH: 8AM-5PM
APRIL 30TH: 8AM-5PM
MAY 1ST: 8AM-11:30AM

14.5 CEUS

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
MARCH 29TH

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS

JUNE 17 -19, 2026

JUNE 17TH: 8AM-5PM
JUNE 18TH: 8AM-5PM
JUNE 19TH: 8AM-11:30AM

14.5 CEUS

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
MAY 17TH



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ISA CERTIFIED ARBORIST PREP COURSE **HOMEWOOD**



DATES

FEBRUARY 5 - MARCH 26, 2026
(THURSDAY NIGHTS)

TIME

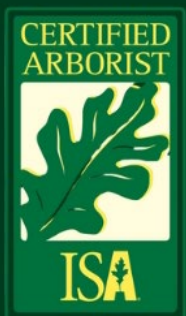
6:00PM - 8:30PM

LOCATION

HOMEWOOD LANDSCAPE BUILDING
18355 PIERCE AVE, HOMEWOOD, IL 60430

EXAM

APRIL 2, 2026 FROM 6PM-10PM
(CHECK IN 5:30PM)



ISA CERTIFIED ARBORIST PREP COURSE **LOMBARD**



DATES

FEBRUARY 25 - APRIL 22, 2026
(WEDNESDAY NIGHTS)

TIME

6:00PM - 8:30PM

LOCATION

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD - 255 E WILSON AVE.
LOMBARD, IL 60148

EXAM

APRIL 29, 2026 FROM 6PM-10PM
(CHECK IN 5:30PM)



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