

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES



As part of ISA's effort to reach out to an ever-broadening readership, we are pleased to present the Global Perspectives column. Learning about arboriculture in other parts of the world helps build our personal and professional knowledge-base for all things tree care.

An Interview with Paulo Moura

By Janet Huber

Paulo Moura is an arborist and owner of *Paulo Moura – Gestão de Espaços Verdes Unipessoal Lda.* (Green Spaces Management Ltd.), with its main office in Godomar in the Porto district of Portugal. Paulo's company provides arboricultural and landscaping services related to construction and maintenance of gardens, tree maintenance, and arboriculture and environmental consulting. Currently, the company offers services in continental Portugal and on the islands of Madeira and Açores, to municipalities, institutions, and private clients who may require consultation for specific tree problems or may wish to improve the overall health of their trees. The arboricultural work, from simple reports to practical execution, is completed by Paulo and by other well-equipped technicians who are contracted to conduct pruning services when it is justified. A landscape architect and a gardener are also a part of this company's team. The company works to ensure that the most current, best practices are implemented with state-of-the-art equipment.

How did you get involved/interested in arboriculture?

Since I was young, my fascination and constant contact with trees led me to further my knowledge of these living beings. To contribute to the preservation of the tree heritage that surrounds us, I began a technical course in environmental management in 1997. In 1999, after completing the course with honors, I was invited to work for a company that was created to practice arboriculture, and I started to learn methods and practices for the correct and sustainable care of trees. My enormous determination to live among these grandiose beings was the primary inspiration that erased any doubts about my career choice. I worked to improve my knowledge



of each species and to continually improve my skills. Since then, I've been to many international events related to arboriculture and have acquired literature for the sake of learning and improving every day in the services I provide.

How do you see the field of arboriculture in Portugal in relation to research, public awareness, and government awareness?

We are still behind if we compare Portugal to the evolution of arboriculture in the majority of European countries. In Portugal, arboriculture is still a topic that is not often discussed. Still, there are some companies and associations that educate the public through the services they render. The government has not given much priority to arboriculture, and there is generally a lack of knowledge about the industry at this level. It is a challenge for arborists in Portugal to try to reverse this situation.

What makes you proud about the arboriculture in Portugal?

Honestly, I take pride in my daily battle against the constant assaults on Portugal's tree heritage. I have an unstoppable will to foster the correct and efficient management of our trees. Currently, I'm very happy to have had the opportunity to found an association that will efficiently act in this effort.

What are some of the advances made in the field of arboriculture in Portugal in recent years?

In the 1950s, researchers in the fields of silviculture and landscape architecture published articles somewhat related to arboriculture, focusing on the harmful pruning methods incorporated by municipalities. In

1987, an Englishman named John Boddington introduced himself as "tree surgeon" to the *Casa de Serralves*, the early Serralves Foundation, which is an art foundation in the Porto district. He was hired for tree maintenance services in Serralves Park and to develop training and development initiatives throughout the country, which served to introduce arboriculture to Portugal.

The Portuguese Arboriculture Society (SPA is the acronym in Portuguese), was founded in the mid-1990s, but the association actually went public in the Biology Park of Gaia in 2000. Essentially, the goal of SPA was to educate the public, and to foster participation in solving the problems related to fundamental questions of tree management in the urban and forest environments. Therefore, SPA opened a new door and a new challenge. The vision and merit of its founders must be recognized. It was motivating to see so many people united with the same goal in mind, and it reinforced my own resolve. The expectations were many. SPA courageously delineated objectives and began a new path, developing diverse activities to foster modern arboriculture that set a notable example.

However, there is still much more to be done. At the moment, there are companies that practice modern arboriculture, but they limit themselves only to providing services and are not concerned with outreach and supporting the creation of conferences. Because I have a strong will to continue living among these important and grandiose beings—trees—I founded an association that is intended to open doors to other countries and to take this topic to the level of importance it deserves. The objectives of the Portuguese Association of Modern Arboriculture (APAM is the acronym in Portuguese) can be viewed online (<http://arboriculturamoderna.blogspot.com/2009/01/apam-associao-portuguesa-de.html>).

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