



Hear from the ISA Gold Canopy Partners – Bartlett Tree Experts

The ISA Canopy Partners program is a collaborative initiative that brings together industry leaders to support ISA's mission to promote the professional practice of arboriculture, inform the public about tree benefits, and provide a global network of arborists, urban foresters, and people who care for trees.

We met with Jim Ingram, the President and COO of [Bartlett Tree Experts](#), an ISA Gold Canopy Partner, to discuss their views on the industry and how they see it changing in the coming years.

What industry trends has Bartlett noticed and is actively working towards?

Science, technology, safety, and business are the four legs of the chair Bartlett sits on to stay stable, and there is an equal balance among them. Regarding science, and you're asking about industry trends, we're constantly bombarded by a new insect or disease that affects entire tree cultures. For example, we had significant problems with Elm trees years ago; there was an invasive insect that decimated the hemlock population, we're still dealing with the emerald ash borer and how it decimated ash culture throughout North America, and now we're dealing with the Beech leaf disease which is a nematode. Our industry is relegated by what's happening with tree culture science and having to help sustain these beautiful trees that are being affected one species at a time. Then, you have technology that is used to support science with new tools and equipment.

How does Bartlett see the industry growing in the next few years?

The industry should grow exponentially because information technology for the layperson, the homeowner, has grown exponentially. Homeowners can go on the Internet and read about their favorite tree in their yard or their respective community. With more access to information comes questions and the opportunity for professional arborists in our field to step up and help at that higher level. It's excellent for homeowners to have a general understanding of the trees in their yard, and when we show up to interact with them, we're giving them finite information. What we're doing we're writing prescriptions for them to help care for their trees.

What does Bartlett want ISA's members and credential holders to know about their organization?

We stand for science and develop technologies to support science; safety is embedded in everything we do, and we know how to run a good business to help homeowners and every facet of commercial companies, from golf courses and cemeteries to hospitals and entire cities. We must be all on the same page regarding these environmental concerns and have a consolidated front for approaching these species-specific concerns. We have beautiful relationships with the United



States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the forestry service, and hundreds of communities with hundreds of thousands of clients that all share the common goal of helping care for our trees.

What is Bartlett planning to focus on or promote in the coming years?

Our basic tenants—science, technology, safety, and business—are still linked to our company and serve as umbrellas. Under those umbrellas, we will continue to create quite a sophisticated process in tandem with a greater understanding of what's happening to our species of woody plants at large, and that could also include the shrub realm. I also think that from a business standpoint, we have to be sensitive to our teammates' needs. So, it's one tree and one teammate at a time. We also have a mantra that the last person hired is the most important. If we don't take care of newly hired people or listen to them and take care of their needs, then we'll no longer grow. We continue to grow because we listen and address people's needs, whether they're fellow teammates or clients.

In the future, ISA will become more species-specific. For example, if you look at pruning standards as a general topic, we know how a tree responds to pruning from a biological standpoint, but how does a Beech tree respond to pruning? How does a holly respond, or a lilac? Every species responds to pruning differently than the others. I see where ISA will champion the cause of understanding the culture of one species.

What are some of the ways Bartlett is investing in the industry?

Well, for every major industry or organization where we're helping them financially at a very high level, we also go beyond that scope. Whether it's ISA, the Tree Care Industry Association, the American Society of Consulting Arborists, or many other green industry organizations that we sponsor. We help them see the profession grow even more and help the communities that we serve. We're passionate about that, and one thing I can say during the pandemic when others were retracting from giving, we gave just as much, and in some cases more, to those organizations because we realized they needed more help than ever to sustain themselves. We're very passionate about helping and going beyond the scope of monetary assistance to help organizations like ISA. We also give of ourselves. Most of the leadership at Bartlett are either currently serving on boards of directors or serving in some capacity to help enrich the process and knowledge.

We must continue to give in many ways. That's been a hallmark of the company since Dr. Bartlett started the company in 1907, and we still need those principles. We're still doing everything we used to, but at an even higher level because there are more green industry groups than ever. We're vigilant and passionate about helping the arboriculture industry.