

Member profile: Fred Frey

FRED FREY GOT HIS START IN THE INDUSTRY helping his dad cut firewood when he was still a youngster. He spent most of his summers and weekends helping his father by dragging brush and carrying split wood, and later when he was a little older, he learned to file chainsaws. In the winter months, when he and his father weren't delivering firewood, Fred helped prune fruit trees. So it seemed only natural for him to take a job right out of high school dragging brush for a local tree service. He thought "how hard could it be?" Most arborists will recall asking themselves the same question when they were considering a job doing tree work.

That job opened his eyes to the prospect of a future in the tree care industry. At the time, he was largely unaware what was involved in the day-to-day basis of operation of a tree care business, and the term arboriculture was new to him. Needless to say, he was hooked, and was especially eager to learn as much as he could from his boss, who was Sam Noonan, an experienced and well-respected arborist. Several years later, Fred got an offer to work on a tree crew for the City of Santa Rosa. After nearly a decade of working for the city, Fred thought it time to start his own business.

For the last 13 years, Fred has owned and operated *Vintage Tree Care*, headquartered in Santa Rosa, CA. Initially the operation was small, just Fred and an assistant. Today, Vintage Tree Care has 20 full-time employees. Most days, he admits, require a lot of juggling, but he gets great satisfaction when everything goes well. Fred has learned that as a tree care professional he has to wear many hats, depending on circumstances or need. One day he's a consultant, the next a pest management specialist, or a mechanic, or tree climber, or negotiator. He's even filled in as marriage counselor for his clients. Anyone who does tree work, knows that there can be some tense moments when couples can't agree on what needs to be done.

Fred sees arboriculture as a profession that is still developing and growing in complexity, and he's proud to be a part of a profession that is vital to the trees and people in our communities. Fred appreciates the fact that being an arborist involves assessing problems, situations, developing a strategy or work plan based on the objective. As Fred puts it, "you're not shackled to one approach or required to follow industry standards verbatim. It's just not that straight forward. There are times you have to make exceptions. I like the independence and having the flexibility to be subjective when needed. This allows me to tailor the work to meet the client's needs or do what I think is best for a tree. I love that freedom."



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From our conversation, it was clear that Fred is committed to providing his clients with prudent advice and offering professional tree care services based on the latest industry standards, technological advancements, and research data. He's particularly interested in keeping up with the most advanced tree care practices and perspectives. Fred and the arborists he collaborates with share the goal of raising the standard for tree care within the community. He's planning on expanding his company and hopes to create both a profitable and enduring business that serves his community well.

Fred has set the bar high for himself, and he credits being an active member of the WCISA and other organizations for his success. To paraphrase him, WCISA membership provides ample opportunities to keep abreast of developments and advances in the industry, and fosters professional growth and development. When asked what he thinks is most unique about the chapter, he offered that "it's the large and diverse membership that has required the chapter to offer a wide range of services and a top-notch educational program. It's also the willingness

of the Board and Executive Director to tackle difficult issues and take action as needed.

When asked what advice he could offer those members aspiring to start their own businesses, to do something noteworthy, or just succeed in this industry, he replied that “you need to be ambitious, focused, and have a tangible goal in mind. But first, you have to consider just how involved you are in the process to lay the needed groundwork.” To paraphrase Fred, there are many opportunities in this chapter to get the necessary training, experience, know-how, and support you’ll need to reach your career goal. And, more importantly, it’s the people you meet and associate with along the way that can provide help, encouragement, and sound advice. He recommends that every budding entrepreneur attend as many educational workshops, conferences and seminars as practical. Another point he made was to read as many books and articles from multiple sources as time allows, and to concentrate on the topics that you find most useful. It’s important, he says, to engage people who have been successful in the industry to get their perspectives. One of the last points he suggested is to “and talk with the board members, officers, or the executive staff to find out how you can become more active and supportive. It will pay off in dividends.”

Regarding Fred’s favorite tree, he said “well, for me, that’s like picking your favorite star, but if I’m pressed on the matter, I’d have to say the California valley oak (*Quercus lobata*). “Why? Well it’s a native tree common to where I grew up. It’s a durable, long-lived tree, and with maturity develops a beautiful weeping habit and unique craggy appearance, and can grow to an impressive size.” His answer probably has a lot to do with the fact that it was one of predominant species he used for climbing practice. Many of the competitions he participated in and later organized, involved valley oaks. It just a reminder of his modest beginnings in the industry.

Member Profiles is a project developed by the WCISA’s Marketing Committee to profile selected arborists throughout the chapter so members will gain a greater awareness of the diversity of specialties, required experience, typical duties, and career paths for arborists within the profession. The committee asks candidates to answer 6 questions. The information from the questionnaire was compiled by Kathleen Mahoney.

Important Notice of Change in ISA BCMA Credential Holder Status

THE ISA CREDENTIALING COUNCIL IS THE GROUP that governs policies affecting fairness and impartiality of our credentialing programs. Policies that govern eligibility and maintenance of our credentials fall within their responsibility and authority. Recently, a decision was made to change the requirements for ISA Board Certified Master Arborists© (BCMAs) in the maintenance of their credential.

The requirement to have 20 CEUs in each subcategory (Science/Management/Practice) has now changed to 10 CEUs in each subcategory. Please note that the overall number of CEUs needed for recertification is still 60 total.

A targeted message to all BCMA credential holders will be sent shortly and we wanted you to be aware of this change should you receive any questions on this topic. ***Please help us communicate this change to any pertinent component delegates.*** If you would like to publish or send any information to your members and/or credential holders, please let me know and I can send you the exact verbiage to be used in these external communications.

We expect this to be a welcomed change, as it was made in response to BCMA credential holder feedback, the goal with the change was to acknowledge the fact that those who have reached the pinnacle in their profession may have to focus their professional development in certain areas. We hope that this change will give BCMA credential holders more flexibility in selecting continuing education opportunities that are a better fit in their career while still maintaining a broad and diverse level of knowledge.



If you have any questions in regards to this change, please reach out to me or Erin Dupree.

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