

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 for all things tree care.

An Interview with Naohiro Ujita

Please tell us about your current position/employment in the field of arboriculture, as well as anything about your background you would like to include.

I am Japan Tree Doctor No. 1379, a private owner with experience in forestry, landscaping, and park management. I was called Sakuramori when I was working in park management. Sakuramori means a technician specializing in cherry blossoms. I am currently a Certified Master



Trainer® with the Arborist Training Institute®, an ATI Certified Master Arborist®, a Tree Climbing Japan Instructor, an ISA Certified Tree Climber®, ISA Japan Liaison, and the 2012 and 2015 Japan Tree Climbing Championship Champion. I also competed in the International Tree Climbing Championship (ITCC). Recently, I participated in the 2023 Asia Pacific Tree Climbing Championship (APTCC) as a staff member and received an award. With each of these experiences, I travel around Japan teaching and working with trees for the coexistence and co-prosperity of trees and people.

How has ISA been a part of your career, or has it?

ISA disseminates various information and safety about tree workers. Recent championships are diverse. If I didn't have ISA, I think I would fall out of a tree and die! I heard that the championship was originally a competition for safety, but now it has become a sport. In fact, most people in Japan don't know about ISA. Neither public institutions nor national politicians know about it. Since there is no law in Japan yet, people around us refer to ANSI and other standards when working on trees.

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

In Japan, research institutes and public institutions are not able to collaborate. We see trees as structures, especially street trees. In Japan, there is a culture where gods reside in all things, and for that reason, they should be treated with care. That way of thinking is not reflected in the economy.

What makes you proud about arboriculture and urban forestry in your country?

Technology with a history. Bonsai is a technique that allows trees to grow into tall trees for many years in a container, a garden that maintains the same landscape for many years by maintaining trees in a small garden. I think it is a small part of the ultimate arboriculture. Japan has had a culture of "garden" for 1,400 years. It also uses perspective, so the mountains in the distance look like

part of the garden, and continues to maintain it. As expected, it is impossible to maintain a garden with trees that are over 1,000 years old. However, the Japanese way of enjoying gardens is to understand the physiology and ecology of trees, and to prune tall trees that are over 20 meters tall, to suppress the amount of photosynthesis each year and to minimize growth, so that you can enjoy the same landscape for a longer period of time.

What are some advances made in the field in your country during the past ten years?

My memories include the Tokyo Olympics. In order to attract as many people as possible, diagnostic medical charts were created on trees in Tokyo's streets and parks. In Japan, there is a qualification system called tree doctor. Many tree doctors were involved in Tokyo. The safety of trees has increased slightly due to the diagnosis of dangerous trees. In addition, Japan is experiencing global abnormal weather events, and many trees are being torn down due to winds and heavy rain. As incidents of people being killed by trees are occurring frequently, the demand for tree diagnostics is increasing. In addition, there are many infectious diseases of trees, and many forests of dead trees are seen.

What are some of the challenges in your country for the present and the future?

As the number of people working on trees has increased, people who don't know the basics are being asked to do a lot of work, leading to an increase in accidents. Although we are now able to do things that we could not do before, due to the lack of technology and knowledge, many trees are now in dire situations. The knowledge from public institutions that topplings is good is wrong. Let the people know that trees are living organisms that live on the same earth. Many people are not aware of this and therefore many construction companies do not think about growth.

Do you have an arboricultural mentor? What have you learned from that person?

John Gathright. Because of him, I was able to participate in the ITCCs in 2012 and 2015. Not only that, I also participated in the Giant Sequoia Project. I was first introduced to recreational tree climbing. He is the person I respect the most and is the most wonderful teacher.

John is the Director of the Arborist Training Institute in Japan and connects us with people from all over the world who are involved in ISA, trees, tree climbing, and more. I first met John in 2005. I was taking a recreational tree climbing course. I attended the APTCC in 2012, the first time for a Japanese person. He introduced me to APTCC at that time. I attended the Japan Tree Climbing Championship (JTCC) in 2012 and attended ITCC in Portland, Oregon, USA. They gave me special training so that I could get good results and climb safely at the competition. I also attended ITCC in Tampa, Florida, USA



in 2015. He also gave me special training at that time. In order to participate in the Giant Sequoia Project, you have to contact various American institutions and prepare documents. John did it alone. I created documents not only for me but also for my friends. I think it was an incredible effort, but he always told jokes to keep us entertained. The Giant Sequoia Project continues today.

If you were mentoring or supporting a newcomer to this field, what advice or knowledge would you share?

First of all, please get to know about trees, and please cherish the correct experience. Combining both knowledge and experience creates a beginner with great wisdom.

Please include anything else that is unique about you or your perspective of arboriculture in your country.

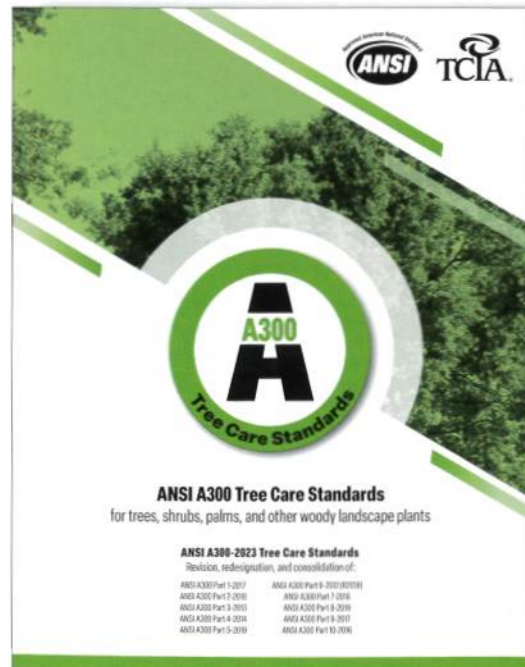
At APTCC last year, I received two awards despite being a staff member. I have experience in raising animals and in various fields such as forestry, landscaping, and park management. When I was in my twenties, I wondered if I could do something to help trees, animals, nature, people, culture, and civilization coexist and prosper. This goal cannot be achieved by just one person, so I hope I can play a part in it. Currently, in Japan, we are conducting activities to encourage people to think about the coexistence and co-prosperity of trees and people. A•N

ANSI A300 TREE CARE STANDARDS (2023)

The ANSI A300 Tree Care Standards are now available as one all-inclusive resource. Updated and revised based on extensive research and sound practices, the compiled standards provide the knowledge needed to ensure tree care jobs are executed at the highest industry standard.

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