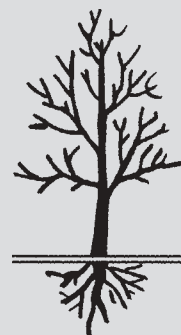


# RPG Times

Summer 1998

A Publication of the Roots Plus Field-Growers Association of Florida



## Why Don't All Growers Modernize Their Harvesting Methods?

by Jack Siebenthaler, Registered Landscape Architect #220

These remarks ask a rather obvious question about tree harvesting. The answer(s) don't come easily, though. But let's take a chance and explore the possibilities.

The question: Why don't all growers modernize their harvesting methods?

Some possible answers heard from all over:

*I'm the third generation in this business and this is always the way we've done it!*

*I don't want to get too good at this. It would mean too much work.*

*I've tried them all, but very few of those new methods work for me.*

*To change my methods would mean new equipment and more expense.*

*I only lose \_\_\_\_% (you fill in the blank) with my old method and that ain't bad!*

*And on and on .....*

The point is not that many of the older methods work to one degree of success or another. It is simply that the more we work in any industry, the more efficient we should try to become. After all, doesn't efficiency usually result in more profit?



Roots Plus Grown Southern Magnolia with new root growth.

While the Roots Plus system is not the only "newer" method of harvesting trees, it does represent one of the more successful methods in today's market. By allowing a properly grown and

preconditioned tree to transplant with practically no shock when handled properly, this tree harvesting system guarantees better results. More profit is the goal - along with customer satisfaction. Together, these are the most important realizations in a tree growing and landscape usage business.

The advantages are many for both grower and user of Roots Plus trees:

- ✓ Elimination of the transplant risks is a major factor.
- ✓ Uniformity of appearance on the job.
- ✓ Controlled harvesting time schedules can be effectively managed.

Year round harvesting times are available.

Now is not too soon to investigate the cumulative advantages of the Roots Plus growing system. Let's not allow it to become too

late!

# Did somebody say Grades and Standards?

by Michael Marshall

Wow! What a response there has been to the newly released grades and standards. The topic seems to be showing up in just about every conference and trade show, not to mention most conversations with customers. At our nursery, a substantial number of customers are now asking for

*The newest edition of the grades and standards was written by a committee comprised of growers, landscapers, landscape architects, brokers, and educators.*

dominant leader trees.

So is all this response good or bad? Like most things in life it depends on how you look at the situation. The "good side" is that the awareness of what makes a quality tree has increased. This means as growers learn and start applying the new knowledge, the quality of trees should be on the rise **over the next several years**. There are nurseries in the state of Florida that have a supply of dominant leader trees this year. However, that supply is limited. Many of the tree nurseries will not have dominant leader trees for two or more years. This brings us to the "bad side" of the new grades and standards. Landscapers, buyers and landscape

architects are learning and getting excited about planting a higher quality tree at the same time that many growers are learning about the new grades and standards. This means that not all growers have been growing trees this way and the supply is nowhere near enough to meet the demand. It is important for tree buyers to remember this fact and adjust for it over the next several years.

## Learning about the Grades and Standards

The best way to learn more about the grades and standards is to simply buy a copy and read it. I have had many conversations with people regarding the grades and standards and surprisingly many have admitted at some point in the conversation that they hadn't

actually had time to read it yet. After reading the new grades and standards (tree section), you'll probably agree it's really not all that different from the old version which was written in 1965. Some might say that the main difference is that people are actually planning to use the new version. The newest revision of the grades and standards was written by a committee of people in the tree industry from around the state. This committee was comprised of growers, landscapers, landscape architects, brokers, and educators. They took the old version of the grades and standards and improved on it, making it more usable and understandable.

The new grades and standards for trees incorporates a 10 step grading process. These 10 steps walk you through the grading of a tree. New drawings and pictures are included that make grading a tree easier. It is important to note that the 10 step grading process, when used by someone who is familiar with the grades and standards, takes a matter of seconds to complete for each tree. The intention of the 10 step process is to encourage a logical flow when grading trees, not to make grading each tree a slow and cumbersome process. The Roots Plus Growers Association has taken the initiative to make this 10 step process even



easier by creating the "Tree Grading Cue Card" (more information on page 3).

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The new grades and standards is also a much better defined document. In the glossary there are updated definitions on proper tree terminology such as caliper, included bark, temporary branches, and many other important terms. In addition to the glossary is the shade tree appendix. The appendix includes photos that illustrate concepts in the grades and standards as well as photos of different grades of trees.

One issue with the new grades and standards that is causing a problem for some people is the requirement of a dominant leader in many trees. The original version of the grades and standards said that a tree had to have a single trunk. The new version really only further specifies that the single trunk should be continuous through the canopy of the tree (dominant leader). The facts are clear from surveys of failed trees that trees with codominant stems and included bark are more likely to fail than trees with a dominant

leader. A tree failing means that a significant portion of the tree has broken out of the tree causing substantial damage to the overall health and quality of the tree. This leaves you with an undesirable or dead tree. More importantly, if the tree happens to fail in populated areas it could damage homes, businesses, and even injure people.

Overall, the new edition of the grades and standards is a well written document that should lead to improvements in quality throughout the industry. The Florida Grades and Standards Manual for Nursery Plants is being viewed nationally as a commitment to a higher standard in the state of Florida.

To order a copy of the Florida Grades and Standards Manual for Nursery Plants:



Send a note stating the number of manuals you would like, your return address and a check or money order payable to:

Division of Plant Industry  
P.O. Box 147100

## Tree Grading Cue Card


The Tree Grading Cue Card was developed and printed by RPG. It is a 3" x 7" laminated card with an abbreviated version of the 10 step grading process on the front and back. To get your copy come visit us at any of the upcoming shows or contact a RPG member.

### Tree Grading Cue Card provided by Roots Plus Growers

- 1 Look inside the crown of the tree at the trunk form.
 
- 2 Check branch arrangement.
 
- 3 Choose appropriate tree matrix type.
  - Type 1- spreading and rounded shapes, single leader.  
ex. live oak, dogwood, black olive, gumbo limbo
  - Type 2- pyramidal shapes, single leader.  
ex. river birch, bald cypress, cedar, pine
  - Type 3- columnar / upright shapes, single leader.  
ex. 'East Palatka' holly, schefflera, Italian cypress
  - Type 4- vase shapes, can have multiple trunks.  
ex. crape-myrtle, buttonwood, ligustrum, redbud
  - Type 5- oval shapes, single leader.  
ex. red maple, podocarpus, tabebuia, dahoon holly

Refer to the matrix tables in the Grades and Standards when necessary to determine proper root ball size, container size, crown spread, and height.
- 4 Measure the caliper of the trunk.
 

Trunk caliper is measured 6 inches from the ground on trees up to and including 4 inches in caliper; and 12 inches above the ground for larger trees. Diameter at 4 1/2 feet (DBH) is not considered an appropriate measurement for nursery trees.
- 5 Grade the tree based on crown spread.
 

If the crown spread does not look proportional to the tree, use the matrix table you selected above along with the trunk caliper measurement to determine the crown spread for the tree. For this step select a grade based on crown spread only.
- 6 Grade the tree according to structural uniformity.
 
- 7 Make note of the lowest grade determined in steps 1, 2, 5, and 6.

## Transplanting Tips - Establishment

Establishment is a period of time after transplanting (in state) during which root growth is occurring and shoot and trunk growth are decreased. A tree is considered established when the growth rates from year to year become consistent.

The establishment period is a critical time for a newly transplanted tree. During this time the tree is expanding it's root system into the surrounding soils. It must be properly irrigated, planted, and have proper climatic conditions to successfully establish.

Manuals are \$30.00 each (in state) or \$35.00 each (out of state). How long until a tree is established?

Without adequate irrigation a tree in Florida should take 3 months per caliper inch to establish. For example a 3" caliper tree, watered optimally, would take 9 months to establish in Florida. Without adequate irrigation, establishment could take up to 12 months per caliper inch or 3 years on a 3" caliper tree.

Establishment can take up to 4 times longer in colder climates than warmer climates.

# Roots Plus Growers Availability

## Summer 1998

### *Acer rubrum*

#### Red Maple

Marshall Tree Farm	2" 8-10'
Marshall Tree Farm	2 ½" 10-12'

### *Cycas revoluta*

#### King Sago

Arborgate Farms	30x30"
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### *Ilex x attenuata* 'East Palatka'

#### East Palatka Holly

Marshall Tree Farm	8-10'
Marshall Tree Farm	10-12'
Marshall Tree Farm	12-14'

### *Juniperus silicicola*

#### Southern Red Cedar

Stewart's Tree Service	10-25'
Tree Control	10'
Tree Control	12'

### *Lagerstroemia indica*

#### Crape Myrtles

Marshall Tree Farm	8-10'
'Muskogee', 'Sioux', 'Tuscarora'	
Marshall Tree Farm	10-12'
'Muskogee'	

### *Magnolia grandiflora*

#### Southern Magnolia

Marshall Tree Farm	10-12'
Marshall Tree Farm	12-14'
Marshall Tree Farm	14-16'
Marshall Tree Farm	16-28'
Stewart's Tree Service	10-18'
Tiger Lake Nursery	
W.E. Jones Tree Farm	10-12'
W.E. Jones Tree Farm	12-14'
W.E. Jones Tree Farm	14-16'

### *Myrica cerifera*

#### Wax Myrtle

Arborgate Farms	6-8'
Tiger Lake Nursery	

### *Pinus elliottii*

#### Slash Pine

Marshall Tree Farm	8-10'
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### *Taxodium distichum*

#### Bald Cypress

Arborgate Farms	8-10'
Tree Control	10'
Tree Control	12'

### *Quercus hemisphaerica*

#### Laurel Oak

Tiger Lake Nursery	3"	
Tiger Lake Nursery	3 ½"	
Tiger Lake Nursery	4"	
W.E. Jones Tree Farm		2"
W.E. Jones Tree Farm		2 ½"
W.E. Jones Tree Farm		3"

### *Quercus virginiana*

#### Live Oak

Arborgate Farms	3"	
Arborgate Farms	3 ½"	
Champions Tree Farm	12'	
Champions Tree Farm	13'	
Champions Tree Farm	14'	
Champions Tree Farm	15'	
Champions Tree Farm	16'	
Champions Tree Farm	18'	
Champions Tree Farm	20' +	
Marshall Tree Farm	2" 8-10'	
Marshall Tree Farm	2 ½" 10-12'	
Marshall Tree Farm	3" 12-14'	
Marshall Tree Farm	3 ½" 14-16'	
Stewart's Tree Service	10-12"	
Tiger Lake Nursery	4"	
Tree Control	3"	
Tree Control	3 ½"	
Tree Control	4"	
Tree Control	4 ½"	
Tree Control	5"	
Tree Control	5 ½"	
Tree Control	6-10"	
W.E. Jones Tree Farm		2"
W.E. Jones Tree Farm		2 ½"
W.E. Jones Tree Farm		3"
W.E. Jones Tree Farm		3 ½"
W.E. Jones Tree Farm		4"

Specifications expressed as inches, for example 2", refers to trunk diameter.  
Those expressed as feet, for example 8-10', apply to overall height.  
Specifications for King Sago apply to overall size in inches.

## MEMBERS

### Arborgate Farms

Odessa - 813-920-8325

### Champions Tree Farm

Gainesville - 352-375-6001

### Keystone Farms

Tampa - 813-920-0894

### Marshall Tree Farm

Morrison - 800-786-1422

### Stewart's Tree Service

Brooksville - 352-796-3426

### Tiger Lake Nursery

Lake Wales - 941-692-1009

### Tree Control

Brooksville - 352-796-5898

### W.E. Jones Tree Farm

Land O' Lakes - 813-996-2177

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

### Arbor Greene Land Development

### Braun Horticulture

### Cady Bag and Nursery Supply

### Caretree Systems

### Jack Siebenthaler

### Jenkins Landscape

### New River Naturals

### Seaworld

### Sunrise Landscape

### Treemart

The Roots Plus Field Growers

Association of Florida is a member

of the following professional organizations



## RPG Information

If you would like more information about the Roots Plus Field-Growers Association of Florida please complete the following and return it to:

Roots Plus Growers  
17350 SE 65th Street  
Morrison, FL 32668

☐ Please add me to your mailing list

Please send me information on the following:

☐ Tree Transplanting Research

☐ Tree Transplanting Tips

☐ RPG Membership

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

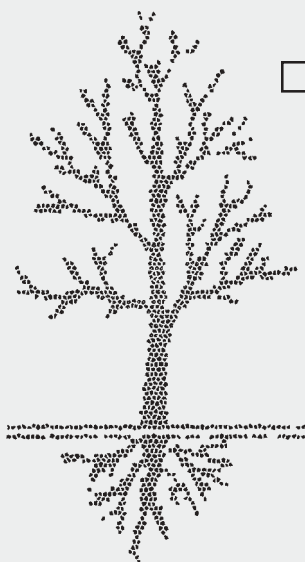
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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_



# RPG TIMESline

## FNATS

September 10-12th  
Orange County  
Convention Center

Come visit us at the Roots Plus  
Growers booth #705 and get your  
copy of the new Tree Grading  
Cue Card.

We will also have a booth at the  
ASLA, FUFC, and ISA  
conferences this fall.

The RPG Times is written and  
edited by Michael Marshall.

If you have any input, questions,  
or comments please feel free to  
call him at 352-528-3880.

July 22-26th

Defining the Future of Landscape Architecture  
Florida Chapter ASLA Conference, Brazilian Court, Palm Beach

August 7-9th

Southern Nurserymen's Association Trade Show  
World Congress Center, Atlanta

August 19-21st

Eco'98: EcoSystems, EcoTourism, EcoNomics  
Florida Urban Forestry Council Conference, Sundial Resort, Sanibel

September 2-4th

Florida Chapter International Society of Arboriculture  
Conference, Trade Show and Climbing Championship  
Sheraton World Resort, Orlando

September 10-12th

Florida Nursery and Allied Trades Show  
Orange County Convention Center, Orlando

November 18th

Florida Chapter ISA, Tree Grades and Standards Seminar  
Orange County Extension Office, Orlando



17350 SE 65th Street  
Morrison, FL 32668

