

From My Journal: Hibernial Gratitude



Every year I get to attend the annual conference of the American Society of Consulting Arborists. It happens at the same time every year; the first week of December. That's just about when many of us Memphians are subconsciously sliding into our winter "hunker down mentality."

I have attended this conference of consulting arborists for almost fifteen years now and it happens in different places all over the country. But this year it convened in a place that made my heart especially glad: Palm Springs, California. I got off the plane there after an extra long day of connecting through Minneapolis that also included more than an hour in the de-icing line there before taking off again. So when at last I walked down the steps into that wonderful outside California air (not one of those accordion-like Orwellian jetbridges, not here) my heart jumped for joy as I reveled in the caress of that warm balmy breeze on my face. From the very first moment the desert and the mountains were there all around

me as a romantic backdrop. There was color and flowers and people in short-sleeved shirts and shorts in December . . . and I loved it.

But now I'm back and have been for about a month. And things have settled in a bit. Now, while that memory still makes me smile, still

ence is held. It is (to borrow and hopefully not improperly purloin a term from the Marine Corps) the ever dependable esprit de corps and the networking with old friends from all over the country who share a common love of and professional interest in the trees that I know are going to refoliate again for us this spring. Every year I come back with at least two or three good ideas that merit implementation or further investigation. And every year I come back glad that I'm in this business. Glad that I do what I do. I have many friends here who have been and still are clients and suppliers and colleagues. Indeed, I expect that this letter will be read by many of them.

So then this becomes an opportunity for me to say how much I am now aware of that and how grateful I am for my profession and my friends. And oh yes! I'm also glad that there are still places like Palm Springs and Tortola in the wintertime.



makes me feel warm here in January, the real value of that trip for me is in what it always has been, year after year and no matter where the confer-

... And One More Oak Gall Reminder



In hopes that this newsletter gets into your hands sometime near the end of January, I am offering one final reminder for this year about the use of Merit (the Bayer trade name for *imidacloprid*) as a response to gall presence in oak trees. As a result of recent gall treatment conversations with Bayer reps, I have up-graded my education on this subject and learned even more about this fascinating phenomenon and its control.

Here are a few facts.

First, the gall you see is the tree's abnormal tissue encapsulation effort to wall off a foreign body, which is the injected egg of a tiny gall wasp. This is much like the festering pus formation around a splinter not removed from your finger.

Second, the egg hatches and the young insect vacates the premises but the aberrant tissue growth continues, partially impeding vascular function (water and nutrient flow) through the twig. In this way, extensive infestation can impede tree vitality and elevate susceptibility to a variety of other problems.

Third, the objective of treatment is to break the cycle and prevent new gall from forming. Old gall already formed must expand and fall away. Again, depending upon severity of infestation, the tree can then clean itself up over a period of 2-4 years.

Fourth, translocation time for the treatment material to get into the twig is a function of application method and tree size and vitality. Best application is with a surface soil drench immediately around the root collar (the base of the tree). Very large trees may take several months and up to half a year to move *imidacloprid* into position versus a few weeks for small trees.

Fifth, once in place, treatment will be effective for most of another year.

