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Two East Coast arborist trainers receive prestigious education award from ISA
Palmer and Tompkins of ArborMaster® Training, Inc. spend more than 22 years training tree care professionals

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. (August 7, 2018) – Ken Palmer of Willington, Connecticut, and Rip Tompkins, of Little Compton, Rhode Island, are the recipients of the 2018 [International Society of Arboriculture’s \(ISA\)](#) prestigious Alex L. Shigo Award for Excellence in Arboricultural Education. This Award of Distinction recognizes the important role that education plays in enhancing the quality and professionalism of the arboriculture industry.

Click her for videos on [Ken Palmer](#) and [Rip Tompkins](#).

Through their training company, ArborMaster® Training Inc., Palmer and Tompkins have trained thousands of arborist worldwide. With training modules covering all aspects of tree work, they have worked with commercial tree care companies, utility companies, municipalities, state DOTs, and various institutional organizations and government entities.

“When ArborMaster Training came along they changed the way that training was viewed in arboriculture,” says Paul Ries, ISA board president. “Ken and Rip brought professionalism, innovation, and hands-on practicality to arboricultural training and education, and their efforts have created an improved culture of safety in their students.”

ArborMaster Training began with their desire to take field workers away from work for a day or two and have them focus on learning in a hands-on environment. In subsequent years, their offering has grown into many different training modules with a variety of subject matters and lengths of programs. Their goal is to train tree care workers to be safer and more productive at work by introducing them to new techniques and technologies. “Our purpose has been to provide the very best education and training possible to effect change, connect modern technique and technology, and promote safety, skill, and productivity,” says Palmer.

When they started the company 22 years ago, there was no other training company of this type in their industry. And though other training programs have sprouted up, ArborMaster® Training remains a leader in industry standards and continues to grow and thrive. Tompkins adds, “We started the trend of conducting hands-on training in the field. Now, it’s a lot more popular and groups are offering training.” Palmer and Tompkins are grateful when they come across a past trainee and are told how they helped get someone started in their career.

After so many years, some may wonder how this partnership has worked so well. “It is our shared belief in safety, skill and productivity, and a passion to help save and improve lives,” states Palmer. It is fitting that they are sharing this award named after an industry icon like Alex Shigo. “I’m very honored to receive this because it bears his name,” adds Tompkins. “He was a huge presence in the industry and a good friend of mine. I’m glad to share this award with Ken.”

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Shigo's impact can still be felt today; he once invited Palmer to go with him to Western Europe so he could teach modern techniques to the European tree climbing community. "Alex was my teacher, colleague, mentor, and dear friend," Palmer reflects.

Palmer and Tompkins were recognized during the opening ceremony of the ISA Annual International Conference and Trade Show on Sunday, August 5 in Columbus, Ohio. "By recognizing individuals who have a positive impact on arboriculture, ISA helps provide role models and learning opportunities for all of us," added Robert Bartlett Jr., chairman and CEO of Bartlett Tree Experts. "We applaud Ken, Rip, and all of the honorees for their contributions in research, education and mentoring."

ISA serves more than 30,000 members and credential holders worldwide, and has been honoring members and industry professionals with the Awards of Distinction since 1963. The winners are selected by the ISA Awards Committee, a diverse group of experts in arboriculture, and are approved by ISA's Board of Directors.

ABOUT ISA

The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), headquartered in Champaign, Ill., is a nonprofit organization supporting tree care research and education around the world. To promote the importance of arboriculture, ISA manages the consumer education web site, www.treesaregood.org, which fulfills the association's mission to help educate the public about the importance and value of proper tree care. Also, as part of ISA's dedication to the care and preservation of shade and ornamental trees, it offers the only internationally-recognized certification program in the industry. For more information on ISA and Certified Arborists, visit www.isa-arbor.com.

ABOUT BARTLETT TREE EXPERTS

The F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company was founded in 1907 by Francis A. Bartlett and is the world's leading scientific tree and shrub care company. The organization's current chairman, Robert A. Bartlett Jr., represents the third generation of Bartlett family management. Bartlett has locations in 27 U.S. states, Canada, Ireland, and Great Britain. Services include pruning, insect and disease management, fertilization and soil care, cabling and bracing, tree lightning protection systems, and tree and stump removal. Its corporate offices are located in Stamford, Connecticut. To find out more, visit the company's web site at www.bartlett.com or call 1-877-BARTLETT (227-8538).

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Editor's Note: Photos are available upon request. To arrange an interview with Ken Palmer or Rip Tompkins, contact Julie Gaier at 262-786-5970 or julie@trg-marketing.com.