

*For Immediate Release*

## ISA Announces Separation of International Annual Conference and Tree Climbing Championship

CHAMPAIGN, Ill (September 2, 2015) – The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) is excited to announce a new strategic plan for separating its annual international conference and the International Tree Climbing Championship (ITCC). After careful consideration, the ISA Board approved a new format that creates greater opportunities for involving ISA chapters, associate organizations, and members and also increases opportunity for public outreach.

ISA leadership believes that holding the events independently provides flexibility in selection of locations, facilities, and dates that are best suited for the growth and success of both events, which may result in them occurring at different times of year and in different locations altogether. This flexibility moves ISA toward being able to deliver better benefits to a wider audience, reaching more people within the industry and among the general public.

“With the events separated, ISA will be able to better allocate human and financial resources to organize events that meet our strategic goals and provide even more educational opportunities and interaction with our members,” says Jim Skiera, the executive director of ISA. “Separation also allows capacity to build out a greater public engagement experience with our tree climbing championship.”

Without the time constraints of one annual event, ISA plans to offer more educational workshops during the ITCC geared toward reaching niche groups of the industry. In conjunction, an outdoor trade show will provide additional opportunities for demonstrations and networking among our members, vendors, and other industry partners. More interactive educational activities will also be a key component in order to attract the public and generate more exposure for the industry.

The board had previously approved a temporary separation for the 2015 and 2016 events. The first stand-alone ITCC was held March 21 and 22 in Tampa, Florida. A new event structure was introduced at this event, which included the Arbor Fair and Expo. Post-event review of the experience was instrumental in the board decision to move toward longer term separation of the competition and the annual conference.

“The board believes that holding two separate events will provide more volunteer opportunities with fewer administrative constraints for staff and host organizations,” adds ISA Board President de Gourét Litchfield. “This will permit more focus on creating experiences that are valuable for our members, vendors, sponsors, components, and the public.”

Currently, the events are scheduled to be held separately in 2016 as previously decided by the board, but will be together for 2017 in Washington, DC, in order to honor previously established commitments. However, future planning for 2018 and beyond will develop them as two separate events. To encourage participation from the climbing community at the ISA Annual International Conference and Trade Show, there are plans to incorporate more educational programming focused on safety, industry innovation, and climbing techniques geared toward the everyday working arborist.

Next steps for ISA include finalizing a business plan for the ITCC focusing on additional human and financial resources needed for expansion as a stand-alone event. ISA will also be communicating with chapters and associate organizations on future scheduling to allow time to adjust their event schedules, particularly the climbing competitions used to qualify competitors for the ITCC.

### *About ISA*

*The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), headquartered in Champaign, Ill., U.S., is a nonprofit organization supporting tree care research and education around the world. To promote the importance of arboriculture, ISA manages the newly re-launched consumer education web site, [www.treesaregood.org](http://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](http://www.isa-arbor.com).*



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