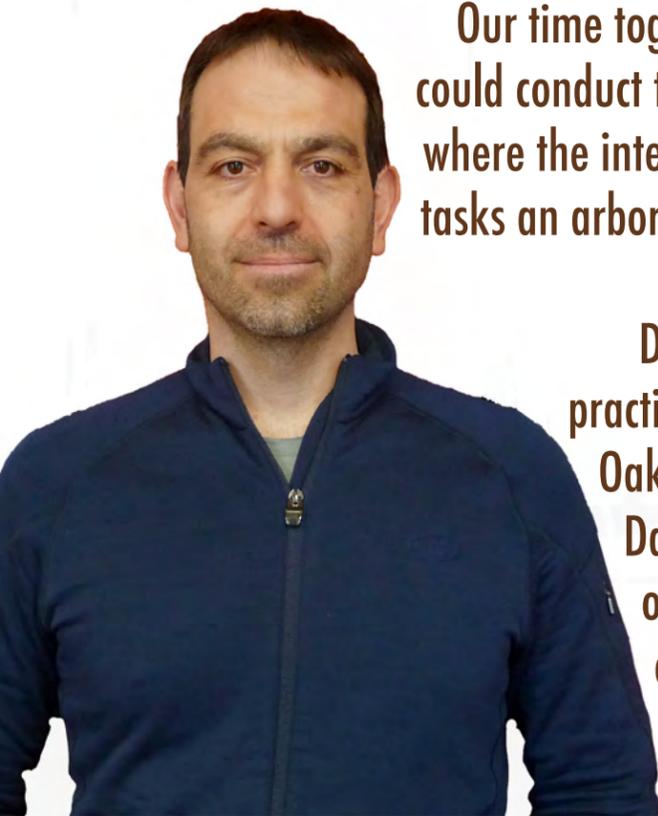


Subject Matter Expert Interview:

Davide Carnevale



Our time together began with Davide hastily asking if we could conduct the interview on the road. I agreed, wondering where the interview would take us. I was eager to see what tasks an arborist tends to do daily.

Davide Carnevale (pronounced "Carni -valley") is a practicing arborist. He and his wife Karen run one of Oakville's most successful arboriculture companies. Davide is sharp, business-minded, driven and family oriented. Their business The Tree Specialists employs 14 staff members. Davide now spends most of his days managing his business and completing onsite consultations.

What is the common term for your job? "Arboring, Tree Doctor, Tree Surgeon"?

Consulting arborist, arboriculture, Arborist, Aska Registered Consulting Arborist. ASCA = American Society of Consulting Arborists. There are some other accreditations out there within the industry of arboriculture.

What inspired you to get started on this career path (a particular event or experience?)

What schooling did you have to complete?

"As a young kid, I was pretty hyperactive. I spent a lot of time doing sports and being outdoors. My father owned 50 acres of farmland in the northern Beaverton area and

we would go up there regularly. 25 acres of that was forest, and I would just spend hours and hours in the forest being around wildlife and trees. It kinda never got old. As I got older, a really good friend of mine was registering for forestry and if I had to be completely honest I really didn't know what to do with myself. I just rode his coat tail

"I'm going to try this forestry thing too"

and thought 'I'm going to try this forestry thing too'. By some kind of miracle I got into university and it was a huge opportunity for me and I graduated on the dean's list with a degree in forestry"

Do you have to do continuing education?

"If you're going to become accredited in any of these associations you have to get what are called CEUs. Continued Education Units where you need to meet a certain requirement. If you do that you maintain your status in your chosen organizations. If you are not in any particular organization then no, you don't need to have any CEUs but it is prudent to stay abreast of new ideas and technologies".

Was there another career path that you considered? If so what was it?

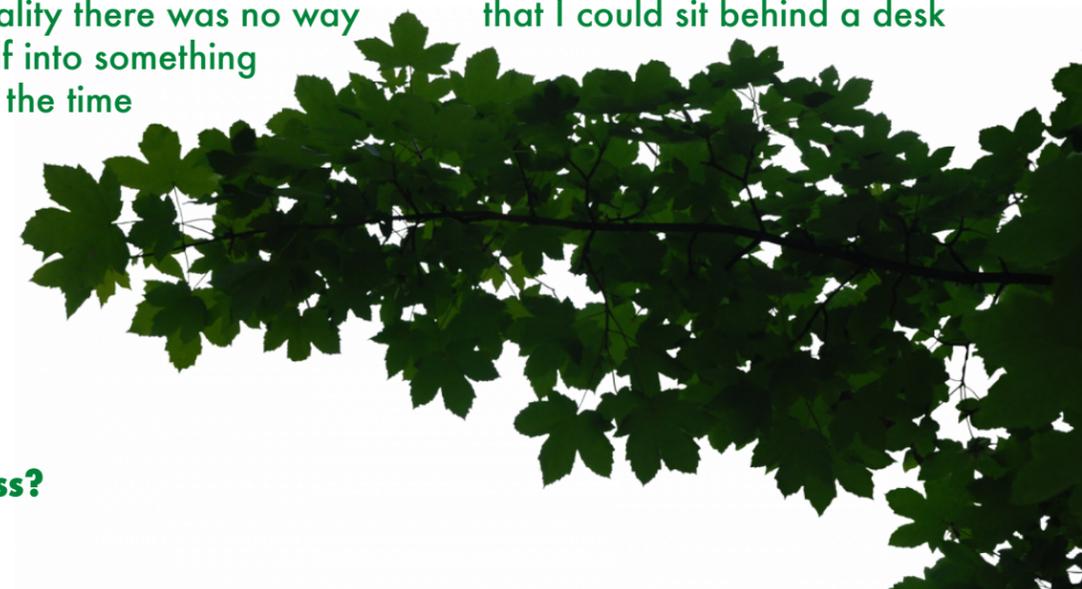
"The big craze at that time [when I graduated] was computers. My parents were really pushing towards, 'Dave, you gotta get on that computer craze'. So I considered that but the reality is with my personality there was no way that I could sit behind a desk all day long and mold myself into something that I was absolutely not. At the time when I graduated, I had no idea that I would be running a business.

How long have you been working as an arborist?

Since 1990.

Do you run your own business?

Yes, absolutely



What are your main responsibilities?

"The business is owned by myself and my wife Karen, and my wife has an MBA. She knows about the business aspect. Its partly why we are relatively successful; we have a team of myself with the technical expertise and my wife who has the business expertise."

From there we need to assess the job and most importantly is we need to have a 'tailgate' meeting where we assess the hazards associated with the job which could be electrical wires or many other different things. After that is completed the individuals responsible for climbing,

properties. With every one of these properties there are people and you meet them. The diversity of people that come with the service that I provide is great".

Are there things you don't enjoy?

"I don't enjoy the 3% of those clients that are just hard to deal with."

Are there any particular challenges that you face in your career? If so what are they?

"Personally, we started this business in 1990 and since then we wanted the core values of our business to be a week day business. If we could not run this business like a traditional 9-5 business and provide the service that we wanted to then we would have to reevaluate." Additionally, Davide adds that since the tree service industry is seasonal, it is important to them that they wouldn't have to lay anybody off. 14 employees work continuously on all variations of jobs with the exclusion of plant health care [fertilizing and pest treatment].

Is it difficult to make a name for yourself as an arborist?

"My philosophy is that I don't pay any mind to what others think about me. I don't really do a lot of advertising. I only care that our clients and the company have a mutual respect for each other."



What are the top three reasons that people call?

- People want their trees pruned and maintained.
- Clients may have an issue with their trees [a hazard, dead, storm-broken].
- Consultations and advice.



Within that my main responsibilities are to: A. assist with business operations. B. primary sales advocate within the company. C. Assist the consulting division and consult on my own.

Can you describe the steps you take for a typical job?

"On a typical tree service job which we call 'general tree care' we first need to bring the employees together with the skills required to do the physical work in a safe manner while having the appropriate equipment to do so. Ideally, you want them to be team players. The next thing is to equip these people with the appropriate equipment, and send those people out to a property.

grounding, stumping, roping, operating equipment will take their individual tasks and work together cohesively to ensure the client is happy. Then we have to dispose the materials and then we have to maintain our equipment. The equipment always take some level of beating so we have to make sure it is well maintained."

What do you enjoy most about being an arborist?

"Believe it or not, the thing I enjoy most about being a commercial arborist is meeting people. That's what I enjoy most. Every single day [in the busy season] I can visit 15 different properties. Everything from 20 million dollar homes to very simple





average to above average pride of ownership generally you will maintain your trees the same way they maintain their cars, houses and walkways."

How important it is to city communities to have an arborist? Is it more necessary than in country communities?

"Absolutely," Said Davide. He explained that the arboriculture industry thrives within urban settings. Municipal and commercial arborists work on private and city owned properties. Trees are a massive

resource and like any other resource they need to be managed.

Do people understand the importance of your job?

"Everybody has a different perspective. As an industry people do understand the importance of our job. I think that trees offer a large amenity to people. Arborists in general understand that.

What kind of environmental impact does your job have? Positive, negative or neutral?

"Just like humans, trees have a life cycle. They seed, they grow and then they die. And you have to replace them. If you look at the big picture, there are huge benefits that we get from trees that are not just environmental. Almost all municipalities have tree planting programs which are

indicative of us trying to enhance the current resource that is there." Davide explains that they always try to put emphasis on preserving trees when possible.

Does your work promote or encourage environmental awareness and preservation?

"Yes", explains Davide. He says that preservation is largely involved with many of the jobs that they work on throughout the year. Ordinances [laws] are increasing to encourage the preservation of trees all the time. The value of trees is evident in their environmental impact. The industry understand this and encourages people to look at the positives that trees provide and why it is so beneficial to save them when possible.

What is it about plants and trees that you find most interesting? Can nature teach us any lessons?

"The potential of what size they can get. I see trees as very dynamic. You know, they have the flower and seeding process, the leafing process. How resilient trees are. When I see a specimen tree its almost an awe to me. I stand back and I look at that tree and I think, 'If this tree could talk, what could it tell us that it has been through in the last 200 years?' Furthermore, he elaborates about nature and it's lessons, "Oh God yes, I could go on forever. Human beings try to inject solutions to problems that do not necessarily take nature into consideration. There are a lot of invasive species that have come into the GTA: Asian Long Horned Beetle, Emerald Ash Borer, Thousand Oaks just to name a few, that are wiping out entire species of trees.



Do you have to be well versed in customer service?

"Oh absolutely, I say to my employees and anybody who cares to listen, I have never had a tree pay my bill. It's the person that writes the cheque. You can prune all the trees you want, cut it all down; if you don't understand that it's people who you have to satisfy then you don't understand customer service".

Do you notice that one particular demographic pays more attention to the health of their trees than another? If so, why do you think this is the situation?

"In very crass terms, people of resource can afford to. People with less recourse have the exact same desire to do so but are not as likely to be able to do so. Largely though, it has to do with pride of ownership. Old, young, in between, rich or poor, whatever you are, if you have an



The reality is there isn't a solution, generally nature will take it's course. I think we have learned that at the end of the day if you try to put resources into a planting strategy you are ten times better off in the future.

Do you focus on planting native species? Is their preservation important?

"Of course, native species trees are a great asset. We should focus on diversity of planting. That way you have a diverse defense against natural threat. Also, when you create an environment where a diverse habitat exists you have created have resistance."

Is there a "tree enthusiast" community in Oakville?

Many of Oakville's residents are tree-proactive and wish to preserve their trees. There are also small local enthusiast groups!

Private Tree bylaw states that trees which are 20cm or greater at DBH. DBH = Diameter at Breast Height.

If a tree is 76cm or greater DBH you require a permit to remove it.

Are there arborist conventions?

"There are many of them. The International Society of Arboriculture, The Tree Care Industry Association, The American Society of Consulting Arborists, The Ontario Forestry Association and The American Society of Consulting Arborists and there are many local organizations too.

What is the life span of the average softwood tree? Hardwood?

In an urban setting with limiting factors Davide states

that an average hardwood tree can live from 75 to 100 years. In an urban setting with limiting factors Davide states that an average softwood tree can live about 60.

I read that trees do not die of old age and always die because of sickness, infestation or damage; is this true?

Usually some type of force ends up killing a tree before 'old age' is a factor. Some type of factor always contends with the tree's life span.

"If I can do so, then I have freed up the most valuable commodity to a human; time"

What is your definition of success?

"What is success? My definition of success is being able to achieve the lifestyle you desire without having to pay the price to do so. I'm motivated by my goals to have a business that can run successfully without being there to micro-manage it. If I can do so, then I have freed up the most valuable commodity to a human; time. For me success is about meeting my financial needs without sacrificing the time to do so."

Where do you see your profession in the future?

"I really believe that the industry becoming more professional. There is more regulation coming into play, whether it is municipal or employment regulation. Regulation and stringency puts pressure on the industry to pull up it's socks. There is definitely more room for women within the industry and within my company."