

Clemson Horticulture

Student Essay

Reflective Essay: Drone Use in Arboriculture

by Josh Hall



During class on Thursday, January 30, we had the Clemson University Arborist, Paul Minerva come and speak with us about assessment of trees. I learned that his job isn't as simple as just walking around or driving around and looking at trees all day. Mr. Minerva and his team of assistants not only have to maintain the health of the thousands of trees on campus, but they also have to map out the campus in order to keep an accurate inventory. When Mr. Minerva came to Clemson 15 years ago he had an outdated and inaccurate inventory to look at. Now, with help from his assistants, he is in the process of making a fully updated inventory by using drones to photograph every tree on campus. By getting accurate and real time photos of the campus, they will easily be able to find and assess any tree they want to. When they were talking about the drone, it reminded me of one of my Ag Mech classes just a week or two ago, where we talked and learned about how using drones for scouting fields is becoming extremely popular in the Ag world. By taking your own photos instead of using someone else's, you can dramatically cut costs over a period of time. After hearing how Mr. Minerva and his team maintain the trees on campus, I will

be able to inform others what is going on when they see someone trimming or cutting down a tree on campus.

Scholarly Paragraph: Why Risk Assessments Can Save Lives

During Mr. Minerva's presentation on tree health and maintenance of the trees on Clemson's campus, I now know and understand why some trees need to be trimmed or even cut down. I also read an article in the *The New York Times* which talks about how not maintaining trees can have serious side effects. Mr. Minerva explained that in a risk or health assessment of a tree, there are more factors than just the health of the tree. The numbers of targets also play a major role. A target can be anything from the amount of human traffic walking or passing under or around the tree to any structure that was put or placed around the tree (P. Minerva, Tree health assessment demonstration, January 30, 2014). The more targets there are, the more risky it is to leave an injured tree. In the case of an accident in the Central Park, the risk was not taken into consideration as a tree branch fell and killed a 6 month old girl (Grynbaum, 2010). This was a horrific accident that no one should take lightly. By doing more risk assessments of trees, especially ones in highly targeted areas, the chances of more accidents like this one in Central Park can be drastically reduced.

Works Cited

Grynbaum, M. M. (2010, June 27). *Accident at park puts focus on trees. The New York Times.*

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