Tree Management in Hong Kong – Issues and Challenges

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• Vision: To have more beautiful, healthy and safe trees in Hong Kong for the public to enjoy
Contents

- Background
- Present policy and planning
- Administration and management
- Technical, professional aspects
- Resources and capacity building
- Community involvement

Urban Development – TST, Central  c. 1970s

Source: internet
Mongkok – 1960s

Source: internet
Overall planning for urban greening in PRD cities

Shenzhen

Zhongshan

Sheungshui

Tin Shui Wai
**Planning** — overall landscape planning, choice of spp, 
e.g. Lacking of space for the trees to grow properly, utilities

**Poor maintenance** — no proper structural pruning
Aging Effect

Aging of fast-growing tropical trees: natural life span 30-50 years, then health decline
E.g. Delonix, Cassia spp., Lagerstroemia spp. Bauhinia spp., Erythrina spp., Acacia mangium, Acacia auriculiformis

Structural weakness
- timber brittle – (above spp.)
- Included bark – e.g. Celtis sinensis

Bottle neck effect of aging and weakening
  e.g. Acacia confusa planted in the 1950s or before
Bauhinia spp – flowering but brittle

Celtis sinensis

Acacia confusa

Delonix rigia
Management should begin with a preventive, proactive approach

- **Species selection** – the first step
  - right tree for the right place
- **Individual selection, Installation, transplantation…**
Poor individual!!

Present approach:
– transplanting a topped big tree for instant effect

Better alternative:
- plant a good young sapling, which will take over in a few years
Present policy & planning

- Conservation - preservation vs development - urbanization
- Planning – e.g. old CDBs, new town development, redevelopment priority
- GMP, overall planning, future 2-3 decades, choice of the right spp. for the right places

- Environment Bureau vs Development Bureau [Env., Transport & Works Bureau July 2007]
Ordinance

UK, Singapore – Tree Protection Ordinance

HK needs new Legislation

**Tree protection clause** [not in old land lease];

ETWB -- Technical memorandum – vegetation management, pruning, maintenance, monitoring, supervision etc.

Building Dept -- Practice Notes on Felling and Transplanting of trees

Lands Dept – Application for tree felling

Administration & management

Management of Trees by Government Depts. in Hong Kong
One Tree Preservation Ordinance & One Management Department

e.g. Singapore – National Parks Board

Two Management Authorities

Urban Trees, for landscaping

Countryside Trees, for ecological conservation
Private sector –

- Gardening contractors -
- Arborists / Horticulturist / Landscape Architects
- Or a tree butcher?

Photos

- Ngau Tau Kok Estate, Sept 2006
- Leung King Estate, Nov 2006,
- Wu Kai Sha Youth Camp, 2006
- Nam Choeng Estate, Jan 2007
- Wong Tai Sin Temple, June 2008,
- Bonham Road Church, 2008
- Stanley Erythrina case, Aug 2008
【本報訊】前全國政協委員何世柱位於跑馬地藍塘道的花園洋房寓所，昨午發生工傷意外，一名工人爬上屋外一棵白蘭樹上修剪樹枝時，疑安全帶綁的一條樹幹不勝荷截斷，工人連同安全帶及鋸樹裝備從20米高處跌下，幸好樹身枝葉及地面泥地卸去不少下墜力，不致當場喪命，但事主經送院急救後情況危殆。記者：胡恩宏

Technical & professional requirements

- Tree Biology (& Arboriculture) is a complex discipline, needs professional knowledge.
- Tree work is highly dangerous and technical, needs professional training.
• **What does it mean by Professional?**
  • Extensive academic education and formalized training (degree level &/or above)
  • Maintain a high level of output (product/service)
  • Self regulating, assessment and control of standard / performance by the industry
  • E.g. Accountant, doctor, engineer, lawyer, landscape architect, … , …

• **Professional recognition**
  • Make arboriculture a profession (at all levels) tree assessment, pruning, maintenance
  • Arborist = accountant, doctor, engineer, Landscape Architect…
  • E.g.
    – Fees: Leung King Est. ~ $140,000 for 250 trees (@$560) => all cut by topping
    – 2 Coral trees in Tune Wan - $48,000 (@$24,000)
Resources & capacity building

- Need to formalize industry standard, protocols etc; provide/encourage training; incentives
- Legislation, incentives
- Grace period, e.g. 3-5 years etc.

Training for Construction Industry – by CICTA (with certification)

Supervision of Tree Works Course [12 hrs. course for work site supervisor, no assessment! 600 people completed] since Dec 2006.

⇒ intermediate => advanced courses?

Basic Landscape Theory Course for Landscape Works [6 hrs course including exam.] Started, monthly course since Oct 2008.
Technical training

Proposed by VTC – Skill Upgrade Scheme,

Basic Arboriculture

Tree Climbing and Working Technique

Workshops, Seminars on various arboriculture subjects organized locally and overseas

e.g. ATP organized a 2-day workshop on Tree Assessment by Dr. John Ball, professor of South Dakota State Univ. Nov. 28-29, 2008 Hong Kong.

• Training in tree works: more professional
  – HKU SPACE
    CA preparation course – 30 hrs.

  – In UK, using chainsaw, must received training and passed assessment, as required by law (NPTC Level 2 Cert.).
– ISA CA – 1 to 3 years in the industry; 200 MC (overall > 70%; each and very domain > 60%); real practical experience needed!!

118 CA; 16 CTW
c.f. Houseman in a ward!

• UK – NPTC (National Proficiency Test Council); BTEC
  - National Certificate on Horticulture / Arboriculture – Level 2 (ISA CA)
  - National Higher Certificate / Diploma on Arboriculture – Level 3 (A-level)
  - National Higher Diploma on Arboriculture – Level 4
  - Univ. Degree – Level 5

• New Zealand – proper on the job training, Level 2 to Level 4 Cert.; Level 5 – Diploma
Role of Community

- Need more attention and support from both public and private sectors
- Put much more resources in the community

Discussions in online forum
http://www.discuss.station.hk/viewthread.php?tid=1071

NGOs and Volunteers
- Conservancy Association – spotting of trees, training of 1+2 days, need follow up by staff.
- LCSD – green volunteers.
Summary

Formalize and regulate the arboriculture industry
Professional Training
Best Practices in the industry
Care and support from the community

• Vision: To have more beautiful, healthy and safe trees in Hong Kong for the public to enjoy
THANK YOU !