

Eric Wiseman receives Alex L. Shigo Award for Arboricultural Education

Aug. 18, 2016 – [Eric Wiseman](#)^[1], associate professor of urban forestry and arboriculture and [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#)^[2] specialist in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation in the [College of Natural Resources and Environment](#)^[3], received the 2016 Alex L. Shigo Award for Arboricultural Education from the [International Society of Arboriculture](#)^[4].

The award, one of the society's Awards of Distinction, recognizes the important role that education plays in enhancing the quality and professionalism of the arboriculture industry through sustained excellence in arboricultural education. Its namesake, Alex Shigo, was a tree biologist and plant pathologist renowned throughout the industry for his studies on tree decay, which led to major changes in arboriculture.

Wiseman earned his undergraduate degree in wildlife science from Virginia Tech but took an entry-level position with Bartlett Tree Experts in Raleigh, North Carolina, after a chance meeting with a representative at a job fair on campus.

"You don't really find careers in arboriculture; they seem to find you," he said. While working as an arborist, he developed a passion for trees that he now strives to share with his students.

For Wiseman, fostering curiosity and enthusiasm in his students is crucial to successful arboriculture education. "I teach a lot of students who aren't destined to become arborists, but most of them are living in areas surrounded by urban forests," he said. "I try to show them that they're going to learn something that will be relevant somewhere down the line."

To do so, Wiseman, a faculty member in the [Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation](#)^[5], makes an effort to provide as many hands-on learning opportunities as possible. He has encouraged students to participate in Sustainability Week, Arbor Day events, and a campus tree inventory.

"As an undergraduate, I didn't do as much as I could have to prepare for my career, so I want to make sure that my students have those opportunities" he said.

Some of his favorite mentorship opportunities have included involving his students in field research. Between 2009 and 2013, Wiseman partnered with the Virginia Department of Forestry to conduct street tree and urban forest assessments, allowing several undergraduate students the opportunity to assist with data collection. As program coordinator for the [Virginia Big Tree Program](#)^[6], which is dedicated to educating citizens about the value of trees, Wiseman works regularly with student interns.

"Each day is something new for them," he said. "It keeps you excited and motivated to work alongside them." ([continue reading](#)^[7])

Links

- [1]. <http://frec.vt.edu/people/wiseman/index.html>
- [2]. <http://www.ext.vt.edu>
- [3]. <http://cnre.vt.edu>
- [4]. <http://www.isa-arbor.com>
- [5]. <http://frec.vt.edu>
- [6]. <http://bigtree.cnre.vt.edu>
- [7]. <http://vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2016/08/cnre-wisemanshigoaward.html>