



# Heartland Science



Ohio's Legacy of Discovery & Innovation



## Environmental Resources

From Animal Extinction to Ozone

### Davey: Father of Tree Surgery

John Davey, of Kent, became the "Father of Tree Surgery" when he established the Davey Institute of Tree Surgery. "Tree surgery" is the imaginative name for providing care that saves the lives or improves the looks of ornamental trees and shrubs. Trees catch diseases, get injured in storms and accidents, develop decayed spots, and encounter other health glitches. "Tree surgeons," specialists in tree care, are their doctors. Tree surgeons apply medicine, splints, braces, fill cavities, prune, top, trim, fertilize, and tend to trees in other ways.



John Davey (1846-1923), of Kent, Ohio, invented this occupation from scratch after immigrating to the United States from England in 1870. In 1909 Davey and his son, Martin, founded the Davey Tree Expert Company. Martin later was elected mayor of Kent, Governor of Ohio, and a member of the U. S. Congress. Father and son also opened a school in Kent, the Davey Institute of Tree Surgery, that was the nation's first to teach scientific principles of tree care. Those steps planted the seeds of the modern company, whose name is synonymous with tree surgery almost everywhere.



In 2002, the Davey Tree Expert Company's branches in 43 U. S. states and 6 Canadian provinces sold \$320 million worth of services. Davey tree surgeons do everything from battling insects chewing the leaves in Aunt Emma's backyard in Peoria to tending golf courses to overseeing the grounds of Arlington National Cemetery outside Washington, DC. These tree surgeons are even into transplants, often called upon to move big, valuable trees to new locations. The company's work is so good that it has few competitors. Over the years, Ohio's gift of scientific tree care has assured the good health and good looks of millions of trees and shrubs.

A lot of hard work and personal sacrifice lays behind that achievement. John Davey worked long hours in low-paying jobs and sunk deep into debt while establishing tree surgery as a new occupation. People, of course, had cared for ornamental and fruit trees for thousands of years. But John Davey put tree care on a scientific foundation. To existing knowledge that accumulated over the centuries, Davey added his own personal observations. He wrote everything down in a book, a classic entitled "The Planting and Care of Trees" published in 1923. It made the knowledge available to everyone.

#### Find out more...

- [The Davey Tree Expert Company](http://www.davey.com/) (<http://www.davey.com/>)
- [Davey Tree Expert Company History](http://speccoll.library.kent.edu/reghist/history.html) (<http://speccoll.library.kent.edu/reghist/history.html>)

**HEARTLAND SCIENCE – ([www.heartlandscience.org](http://www.heartlandscience.org))**

Page 1 of 1

Note: All materials © 2005 The Ohio Academy of Science, but may be duplicated for research or educational purposes.