

SCA In The Industry

2019 RakeMaster Challenge

The 2019 RakeMaster Challenge was held at the International Tree Climbing Championships on Saturday, August 10, in Knoxville, TN. We had a great time this year with many of the same antics as previous years, and a few new tricks for the time-honored event.

Of the changes we implemented this year, RakeMaster Challenge Teams were not restricted to Chapters and Climbers, but instead was opened up to the general public in attendance on Saturday. This opened up the diversity of the teams, even having our first ever competitor under the age of ten!

Safety was, of course, the focus for this event, with judges monitoring the passing of the PPE and audience members gleefully exclaiming if they noticed a loose buckle on a chap, or a tossed branch missing the circle by 'just-this-much'.

We had five great teams compete this year, and the team names ran the gamut of expected to extraordinary. Team Lady Pants, made up of female climbing competitors, started things off by racing against Team Davey Tree. The next head-to-head matchup pitted the AMA (Mexican Arboricultural Association) against Team Asian Chapters (a combination of people from different chapters, including Japan and Hong Kong). Our final team, the Toasted Butterflies, featured the hardest RakeMaster that the SCA has ever seen - ten-year-old Maddie dove all in to the competition, and everyone in the audience (and the other teams!) shouted assistance, encouragement, and tips from the sidelines.



After a great deal of log rolling, brush dragging, and laughter, we finally had our 2019 RakeMaster Winners - Team AMA! Their enthusiasm was infectious, accepting the Honorable Golden Rake and Helmet and leading the crowd into a rousing rendition of 'La Bamba'. It was quite a spectacle!

Following the event, the SCA's very own Jim Eaves served fresh, hot jambalaya to everyone in the crowd. Sponsored

by Bofinger's Tree Service (Baton Rouge, LA), Jim was able to cook up enough jambalaya for the starving crowd of over 200 people, who happily ate their portions while waiting for the results of the day's climbing events to be announced.

It was a one-of-a-kind experience this year, and the Society of Commercial Arboriculture is hugely thankful to our continuing RakeMaster sponsors: ArborMaster, Buckingham, Samson, Oregon, and Silky. With their continued support, the SCA was able to host an incredible, informative event, and we raised approximately \$600 to be donated to the TREE Fund's Safe Arborist Techniques Fund.

Were you at the RakeMaster Challenge this year? We would love to hear about your experience! Email us at admin@sca-trees.org and share your story.

We hope to recreate the magic for our 2020 event in Albuquerque, New Mexico, at next year's ITCC. Thanks again to all of our sponsors, participants, RakeMasters, audience members, and Jim Eaves, for making 2019 an unforgettable experience!

Thank You To Our 2019 RakeMaster Challenge Sponsors!

