

## German Tree Care Conference in Augsburg

The German Tree Care Conference will be held for the 31st time in 2024. When the first symposium was held in the Augsburg Congress Hall in 1993, it was still known as the "Augsburger Baumpflegetage". In the years that followed, the event grew steadily, attracting more and more of the national and international arboricultural sectors. Since 2006, the event has been known as the German Tree Care Conference, and in 2009 the move to the Augsburg Trade Fair Centre provided sufficient space for the conference to become the largest arboricultural event in Europe to date.

### The founding in 1993

The inspiration for the founding of the German Tree Care Days came from Dr Steffen Wiebe. He studied Forestry at the University of Munich in the 1990s and completed his doctorate there on the subject of "Investigations into the development and treatment of wounds in trees with particular reference to the moisture content of the wood". He also trained in tree care, climbing techniques and seed harvesting. Steffen Wiebe's vision was to establish a major tree care symposium in southern Germany. He explained his concept to Jürgen Rohrbach, the long-time managing director of FLL, as follows:

*"The symposium should give the participants the opportunity to refresh their knowledge and also help them to make decisions about controversial issues in tree care. Due to my own education, I attach great importance to objectivity and try to ensure that the organiser deals with controversial issues in a neutral and unemotional way. My aim is that the event should not be seen as the 'camp' of one of the debating parties, but as their common forum".*

Steffen Wiebe looked for a suitable venue and found it in the Congress Hall in Augsburg. The premiere of the Augsburg Tree Care Conference in 1993 was attended by 100 people.

### Dr Dirk Dujesiefken takes over the Augsburg Tree Care Conference

The second Augsburg Tree Care Conference in 1994 was conceived as a three-day event and attracted more than twice as many participants to Augsburg as

the previous year's premiere. The initiator, Dr Steffen Wiebe, was unable to attend as he was diagnosed with leukaemia in early 1994. In December of the same year, he met Dr Dirk Dujesiefken in person and gave him a written mandate to continue the conference in his spirit. Steffen Wiebe died on 22 December 1994, aged just 36. Dirk Dujesiefken took over as conference director in early 1995. From then on, the lectures were held in the main hall of the Augsburg Congress Centre, and the event grew step by step over the following years.

### **German Arboriculture Days on course for growth**

In 1996, the scientific poster exhibition became part of the conference for the first time. It provided an opportunity to present current research results in a short form. In 1997, the first Jahrbuch der Baumpflege (Yearbook of Arboriculture) was published, replacing the previous "Conference Proceedings" and soon becoming a much sought-after reference work for the tree care industry. Two years later, in 1999, the German Tree Care Conference was joined by the Kletterforum (Climbing Forum), which from then on became a meeting place and practical training platform in one.

In the following years, interest in the Augsburg Tree Care Conference grew to such an extent that it became by far the largest tree care event in Germany, both in terms of the number of speakers and exhibitors and the number of visitors. The organisers decided to rename the Augsburg Tree Care Conference as the German Tree Care Conference from 2006.

### **Europe's largest tree care event**

In 2009 the conference moved to the Augsburg Trade Fair Centre. This venue offers much more space than the Congress Hall and is particularly suitable for practical indoor and outdoor demonstrations. At the same time, the German Tree Care Conference office was expanded and moved to Hamburg. This reorganisation enabled further improvements to the conference on a both professional level and international focus. In the years that followed, the German Tree Care Conference developed into the industry's largest specialist conference in Europe.

Participants from more than 20 countries now travel to the German Tree Care Conference in Augsburg every year. All presentations are simultaneously translated (English-German / German-English). The accompanying tree care

exhibition now attracts around 160 exhibitors and more than 1979 conference delegates. Here, fruitful contacts are made between companies and decision-makers from across the industry.

More than ten years after moving to Messe Augsburg, the growth of the German Tree Care Days has necessitated further reorganisation. The Hamburg office has been expanded and is working with external service providers in the areas of online booking and contactless ticketing. From 2021, Thomas Amtage has been managing the German Tree Care Conference together with Dirk Dujesiefken. This means that the conference is future-proofed at all levels and will continue to be an open forum for the entire arboriculture industry, as envisioned by Steffen Wiebe.