



The People Behind Your Power: Arborist Craig Westling

Arborist probably isn't the first job that comes to people's minds when they think of Idaho Power, but that's Craig Westling's title. He works to keep trees away from powerlines so they don't cause outages and safety hazards. In 23 years with Idaho Power, Craig — who is based in Twin Falls, has seen and pruned about every kind of tree southern Idaho has to offer.

Here's what Craig has to say about his job:

Q: What do you do for Idaho Power?

A: As a utility arborist, my job is to keep trees and other vegetation from interfering with Idaho Power's electrical system. I'm responsible for the Southern and Eastern regions of Idaho Power's service area, which has approximately 8,000 miles of overhead lines between the Hagerman Valley and Blackfoot, and up into the Wood River Valley and Salmon.

I oversee a large group of contractors who help with this important work. Our goal is always the same: continue Idaho Power's tradition of safely delivering reliable, affordable energy. It's my responsibility to ensure these contractors are on time, perform their work safely and professionally, and follow national pruning standards for the health of the trees.

Q: Why are arborists important for a utility?

A: Vegetation is one of the greatest challenges the electrical system faces and one of the most common causes of power outages across North America. Utility arborists are responsible for identifying and minimizing these risks to help prevent outages and wildfire. We work hard to keep the public and our workers safe, and to protect the electrical system and the places where we live and recreate.

Q: How did you get into this line of work?

A: After graduating college, I was hired by a line clearing contractor in the Pacific Northwest. I then became a licensed

certified arborist and really enjoyed what I was doing. In late 2001, I came across an opening at Idaho Power for a line clearing specialist (now known as utility arborist). I got the job and started in January 2002.

Q: What's your favorite part about your job?

A: I enjoy working outside and educating people about planning and planting the right tree in the right place. And since I cover such a vast area, I get to see a lot of remote places that not everyone can, especially when we do annual aerial patrols by helicopter, which gives me a chance to see some of Idaho's beautiful landscape.

Q: What trees do you recommend for customers?

A: I like burr oaks. They're a hardy tree that grows well across most of Idaho and should live well into the next century. Just make sure to plant them well away from powerlines. If you do plant a tree under a powerline, I recommend the colorful Eastern Redbud, because it usually doesn't grow higher than 20 feet.

See Page 2 for Idaho Power's best recommendations for safe planting this spring.



Spring Electrical Safety at Home



Keep Trees Away from Powerlines for Safety and Reliability

Nothing dresses up your property quite like a tree. But before you plant that gorgeous oak, spruce, or whatever your favorite species is, look up and around for powerlines.

Trees can cause outages and safety hazards if they touch powerlines. So if you do plant a tree under a powerline, choose a low-growing species. Here are a few examples, most of which are available at nurseries in our area:

- White flowering dogwood
- Radiant crabapple
- Amanogawa cherry
- Thundercloud plum

For more examples, visit idahopower.com/trees or your local nursery. Treasure Valley residents can find more information, including guidelines on choosing the right tree for your property, at tvcanopy.net.

No matter what tree you choose, research how high the species grows and how wide it spreads. Make sure that, at maturity, the tree will be at least 10 feet from any overhead powerlines to avoid safety hazards and prevent power outages.

Idaho Power trims trees when they get too close to larger powerlines or the lines that might run through your neighborhood. If you see a crew trimming trees, there's a good chance they're one of the qualified contractors Idaho Power hires.

These contractors follow strict safety guidelines. Their works helps prevent outages and hazards, so we ask for your understanding and patience as they carry out their tasks. We'll notify you ahead of time if they have to enter your property.

Visit idahopower.com/trees for more information on how we care for trees to keep your service reliable.

As you prepare for more outdoor activities this spring — including sprucing up your landscaping — keep electrical safety in mind with these tips:

- If planning yard work that requires digging, call 811 at least two business days beforehand to mark any underground utility lines to avoid. When you call, be prepared to give the location, scheduled date, type of work, and information about the company or contractor doing the work (if it's not you). This is a free service that's required by law and designed to ensure your safety and electric service reliability.
- Be aware of overhead power lines and other electrical equipment. Ensure you stay at least 10 feet (sometimes more) away from overhead lines — and never attempt to prune a tree near power lines. When planting trees, plant **the right tree in the right place** to avoid growth into power lines and to provide energy-saving shade to your home.
- Keep kites, drones, and other items far away from power lines, and ensure sprinklers don't spray power lines.

From the Electric Kitchen Breakfast Burritos

- 6 ounces turkey sausage
- 1½ cups frozen southern-style hash brown potatoes
- 6 eggs
- ½ cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- ½ cup hot salsa
- 6 (8-inch) flour tortillas

In a large skillet, cook sausage on medium heat until brown. Drain fat. Transfer sausage to a paper towel-lined plate and squeeze to remove excess fat; set aside. Add hash browns to skillet and cook 10–12 minutes, turning occasionally until golden brown. In a medium bowl, beat eggs. Pour over potatoes; cook and stir until eggs are set. Return sausage to skillet. Meanwhile, heat tortillas in microwave on HIGH for 30 seconds to warm. Spoon an equal amount of the egg mixture in the middle of each tortilla. Sprinkle each filling with cheese and salsa and roll up tightly. Makes 6 servings.

Recipe selected from Idaho Power's Centennial Celebration Cookbook.



March 2025
Breakfast

idahopower.com

Check out our YouTube channel at youtube.com/idahopower for a video demonstrating these safety tips and more. Learn more at idahopower.com/safety.

Did You Know?

Reliable hydropower helps keep Idaho Power's prices 20-30% lower than the national average.

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