

Strasser Captures 6th Title

By Andrew Koeser and Stephanie Davy



Though the temperature neared a muggy 100 degrees in Minneapolis on Sunday, July 30, Bernd Strasser remained cool and calm during this year's International Tree Climbing Championship at Loring Park. While spectators sought shade around the Masters' Challenge tree, Strasser soared with great ease to each bell station, finishing with a score of 269 points.

As a result of his efforts in the Masters' Challenge and other competitions, Strasser has once again climbed to the top in the ITCC, making him the first climber to win six times.

This German crowd-pleaser is known for his fluid movements and instinctive confidence in trees.

In Minneapolis, Strasser glided around the towering maple with ease and grace unparalleled by any of the other competitors. Leaping from branch to branch without any hesitation and scurrying up rough-barked limbs, Strasser's movements resembled those of a swift gray squirrel.

With such success in climbing, one would think Strasser goes to great length to prepare. In reality, all of

his preparation comes from his daily work, which involves collecting seed and leaf samples for research with his company, Baumkletterteam, and teaching advanced climbing, aerial rescue, and rigging techniques. Currently he is working with his colleagues at Baumkletterteam on a cone-picking contract. They are working to fulfill a contract for 50 tons of Douglas-fir cones!

Between seed collection projects, Strasser has traveled to various countries in Europe to conduct climbing and tree care workshops. His most recent was in Stockholm, Sweden, for Nordic Treecare.

"Maybe the good Swedish air and being on the ocean helped me during the competition this year," Strasser commented.

The Swedish air might have helped, but Strasser may owe more credit to skill and a new climbing harness—his self-designed, Treemotion. Almost four years ago, Strasser bought an industrial sewing machine and, with the support of Chris Cowell and the input of climbers from all over the world, has produced the new harness. This is one of the few products developed by Treemagineers—a cooperative training team with Baumkletterteam.

With all Strasser's experience and passion for trees, he continues to climb and to awe spectators, fellow climbers, and competitors. He continues to break climbing records and is adamant in his beliefs regarding ethical tree work. Strasser believes it is important to do everything possible to help trees live better.

"We need trees to survive ... they don't need us."

In his interview, Strasser offered this bit of tree philosophy: *Bäume sind Gedicht, die die Erde in den Simmel schreidt*—"Trees are poems that the Earth writes into the sky."

ITCC 2006 EVENT AWARD WINNERS

HEAD-TO-HEAD SECURED FOOTLOCK

Women

Paloma Ziegelmeier, Germany
(world-record
time: 22.66)



Men

Frank Chipps, Prairie

THROWLINE

Women

1st: Elena O'Neill, New Zealand
2nd: Kathy Holzer, Pacific
Northwest
3rd: Eva Persson, Sweden



THROWLINE

Men

1st: Ronny Epple,
Germany
2nd: Bernd Strasser, Germany
3rd: James Roach, Penn-Del



WORK CLIMB

Women

1st: Chrissy Spence, New Zealand
2nd: Rebecca Richardson, Minnesota
3rd: Kathy Holzer, Pacific Northwest



WORK CLIMB

Men

1st: Bernd Strasser, Germany
2nd: Mark Chisholm, New Jersey
3rd: Dan Kraus, Pacific Northwest



MASTERS' CHALLENGE

Women

1st: Elena O'Neill, New Zealand
2nd: Kathy Holzer, Pacific Northwest
3rd: Chrissy Spence, New Zealand

Men

1st: Bernd Strasser, Germany
2nd: Ronny Epple, Germany
3rd: Mark Chisholm, New Jersey
4th: Dan Kraus, Pacific Northwest

