

The Ugly Tree: *Prunus turpis*

Kohle Torgenson

Abstract

Confirmation of the transmogrifying effects of *Prunus turpis*, more commonly known as the ugly tree, is established in a Y-axial acceleration and deceleration test. This study, which flies in the face of common perceptions of a benevolent mother nature, will pave the way for further investigation into trauma caused by *Prunus turpis* and other lesser floral malcontents.

Introduction

For decades, rumours of a tree that causes horrifying deep tissue trauma when fallen from have circulated behind closed doors in horticultural circles. These rumours became a startling reality when an unsupervised laboratory carried out loosely controlled growth trials on the windy plains south of Calgary, Alberta with the largely untested *Prunus turpis* (Figure 1).

The trials progressed such that seeds from this prolific plant were allowed into the natural ecosystem, where they grew unchecked for a period of ten years, infecting the natural flora of the rugged landscape. This shocking oversight has led to the proliferation of *Prunus turpis* across the southern plains of Canada and the northern United States, and now poses a threat to the sun-kissed Pacific coast region, which is noted for its regional fauna and recorded as having “the cutest

girls in the world” (Wilson, 1965).

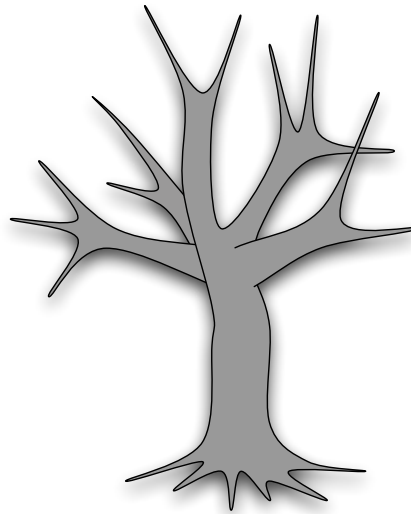
Faced with the dire need to preserve this natural bastion of beauty, *Prunus turpis* is here evaluated to determine whether it has the near-mythical ability to make “yo’ mama so ugly” (Spuddz, 1993), through Y-axial acceleration and sudden deceleration tests.

Method

Three male participants (Strømmen, 2003) aged 21 to 24 were selected for their perceived beauty¹ from among a cast of hundreds of applicants under the impression that they were auditioning for the six-member boy band “Hott Stixx.” The members of this male cohort were selected by an aesthetic assessment team (AAT) consisting of six fourteen-year old girls

¹ Perceived beauty does not include “rugged beauty” within its scope, as this is simply a term used to make ugly people feel good about themselves.

Figure 1. *Prunus turpis*



Prunus turpis

(Martin, 2003), ranging in hair colour from strawberry to platinum blonde (Louis, 2001). Each boy band hopeful was evaluated by the AAT using the following criteria.

1. *I'd like him to:*
 - a. *avoid me;*
 - b. *call me;*
 - c. *date me;*
 - d. *be my husband so everyone else knows I'm the hottest.*
2. *He's like so:*
 - a. *septic;*
 - b. *nasty;*
 - c. *rad;*
 - d. *smokin'.*

3. *On a scale of 1 to 10, I'd rate this guy a:*
 - a. *1;*
 - b. *5;*
 - c. *10;*
 - d. *11.*

4. *If this guy was a piece of furniture, he'd be a:*
 - a. *Lazy Boy recliner;*
 - b. *rocking chair;*
 - c. *killer stereo system;*
 - d. *coin-operated vibrating bed.*

Any auditioning hopeful deemed to have a rating of "a" in any category was removed from the study for potential ugliness, and answers b, c and d were allotted a value of 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Only potential male participants with a numerical

Table 1. Aesthetic Modification from Y-Axial Acceleration and Deceleration

Trial		Pre-Trial Aesthetic Evaluation		Post-Trial Aesthetic Evaluation	
		Rating	Aesthetic Injuries	Rating	Aesthetic Injuries
Control	Chris	12	None	12	Swollen right ankle (minor)
<i>Prunus mayday</i>	Taz	12	None	10	Slight laceration below the eye
<i>Prunus turpis</i>	Luke	12	None	7	Deep tissue trauma around both eyes and mouth and “red neck” rash

score of 10 or higher were accepted as aesthetically pleasing enough for the ensuing study. The final three participants were then selected from this group for having masses ranging between 67.4 and 67.7 kilograms. Upon selection, all pre-trial marks, abrasions and rashes were recorded.

The participants were isolated in a theatrical trailer and transported to a remote testing site. Prior to the Y-axial acceleration and sudden deceleration tests, each participant was determined to have suffered no aesthetic injuries in transit.

The participants (hereinafter referred to as Chris, Taz and Luke) were each lifted to a height of 5 meters in a standard telecommunications industry cherry picker. Chris, the control, was lifted directly above a sand pit, Taz was lifted above a seven-limbed *Prunus mayday* tree and Luke was lifted above a seven-limbed *Prunus turpis* tree. The three participants were simultaneously dropped along the Y-axis by releasing

a trapdoor in each of their respective cherry picker baskets from a remote location. All participants were evaluated postoperative for aesthetic injuries suffered from the Y-axial acceleration and sudden deceleration testing by the six-member AAT (Table 1).

Results

Participants accelerated at a rate of 9.8 m/s², and each fully decelerated upon contact with the earth. Chris fell directly downwards, and did not deviate from his projected path. He suffered a considerable ankle injury in as a result of the fall, but “chunky socks” and long pants covered the damage such that close investigation was necessary to observe any aesthetic damage to his “smokin’” body, according to the AAT. Taz suffered a less-severe wrist injury as a result of his fall, but did receive several epidermal abrasions and one small laceration under his left eye, from an errant branch he contacted in the deceleration phase of his trial. The AAT docked two points from Taz’s perceived

beauty rating, dropping him to a still-attractive 10. Luke, while having no damaged joints, suffered the most traumatic injuries during his deceleration phase, as he endured eight acceleration and deceleration cycles, contacting each branch of the “ugly tree” in his Y-axial decent. The damage to Luke was less topical, as there were few minor abrasions. However, extensive deep tissue trauma occurred around Luke’s eyes and mouth, and there was an extensive rash about his neck, giving the distinct impression that Luke was, as one member of the AAT noted, “one ugly redneck.” The AAT adjusted Luke’s perceived beauty rating from 12 to 7.

Discussion

The daunting reality of “falling from the ugly tree and hitting every branch on the way down” has finally found verification with this vanguard study. Clearly the quantity and depth of damage sustained by beautiful tree-climbing enthusiasts must not be taken lightly. Unfortunately, this paper raises more questions than it answers.

If *Prunus turpis* did not have the transmogrifying effect on people falling from it, or if it simply caused gentle disfigurement upon contact with its limbs like other knobby trees, then its ecological impact would be reduced to the inconvenience of “introduced species nuisance syndrome” (Brickhouse, 1986).

Sadly this is not the case. Instead, the North American public is faced with temptingly simple trees to climb, and the possibility of developing a face “so

ugly that even yo’ mama won’t kiss it” (Spuddz, 1994). What’s more, there is a growing interest in the possible impact of “ugly sticks” carved out of heavy *Prunus turpis* branches on children whose naïveté and lust to become all-American baseball stars could lead to lower aesthetic standards for decades to come.

This research paper points to the need for political intervention through funding for the development of turpicides and other anti-ugly remedies for this imposing species of tree. It is also noted that for the time being, parents can help protect their children from becoming aesthetically impaired by sequestering them in the house, perhaps using video games and snacks to curb the natural desire of children to be active in the foreboding outdoors.

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