





# A Sprit of Giving: **JOHNNY GEORGES AND THE TREE T PEE**

BY BRIAN NORRIS

**“When good people come together with a noble cause, great things happen.”**

Those were the final words that Johnny Georges spoke while pitching the Tree T Pee to the sharks on the ABC’s “Shark Tank.” Little did he know that with that closing statement, he was going to change to the world.

Johnny Georges was born in Winter Haven on March 2, 1966. He started working at the young age of just 10 years old. Growing up, he worked for his father, Rick Georges, who owned an irrigation company. Johnny’s father was also an innovator, as the inventor of the micro jet irrigation system in the 1970s, also known as the Georjet.

As the citrus industry changed, the heart of the industry moved south due to freezes so the Georges family did as well, moving to Arcadia, the town Johnny considers home. Johnny worked twenty years for his father traveling all over the world installing irrigation systems, soaking up everything he could learn from him. Georges admits the work was hard and his father didn’t give him any special treatment, but he enjoyed learning from a man who had so much knowledge. Johnny has always been a hard worker; in fact, he says he only missed three days of work while working for his father and that was only because he had his appendix removed.

Johnny had to start from scratch after his father passed away, and after working a few years for someone else, decided he was going to become his own boss. On March 2nd, 2005 Johnny started GSI Supply, an irrigation and pump installation company. Johnny purchased his first crane truck and got to work. He continues his father’s legacy by working right beside the farmers in the field, helping them get water to their crops. Working many long days, Johnny knows that many farmers rely on him for water for their crops or they could lose everything. Part of this interview even took place



at a blueberry farm while a job was being finished; a job that if he didn’t complete, could have resulted in a complete loss for the farmer.

While Johnny stays busy working long days with GSI Supply, he has also been working diligently on an invention he and his father designed. One that by the time you are reading this will have already started to change the world. This invention is called the Tree T Pee. The Tree T Pee is a water containment and frost protection system for trees. The Tree T Pee is not a new invention though, in fact, Johnny and his father first came up with the idea in the 1980s.



Like most great inventions, the Tree T Pee was created from what Johnny refers to as “just common sense.” One day he and his father were banking young citrus trees in preparation for a freeze. ‘Banking’ is the process of piling up sand around the base of a tree to help keep the tree from freezing and dying. After the freeze, the pile of sand then has to be removed. While working hard to bank all their trees, the pair started thinking and came up with an idea to place a plastic cone around the tree instead, giving the same protection without having to move so much sand (and significantly reducing labor, a major bonus for young Johnny). This small cone would be placed at the base of the tree before the freeze and removed after. Johnny started analyzing it even more and said to his dad “what if we made the cone a little bit larger and left it on all of the time?” The thinking was that it would contain the water, and by doing so conserve water

as well. At that point in time though, the thought of a water shortage was non-existent so Rick pretty much laughed at his son’s idea. Needless to say, it was a great idea, but never fully pursued by his father. Johnny knew back then though that the Tree T Pee was something that could revolutionize the industry. Since then, he has improved upon the original prototype and developed a product that can save farmers a great deal of money.

For the past 8 years, Georges has been traveling through the Heartland telling farmers about the Tree T Pee and all that it can do. While some have come on board, Georges admits it hasn’t been easy. He said, “I’m trying to change 30 years of mindset.” It’s been done the same way for such a long time and it worked, but we are approaching a critical crossroads when it comes to our water supply. Tree T Pee might just be



there was no difference in leaf nitrogen concentration and other leaf nutrients between the conventional method and the Tree T Pee method. All in all, it was concluded that almost 90% of the fertilizer applied with the conventional (non Tree T Pee) method was not used by the young tree, meaning it ended up in the subsoil or groundwater.

Here it is in terms everyone can understand: A farmer would normally have to run his pumps for 8 hours to give a young tree the equivalent of three inches of rain. With the Tree T Pee, a grower only has to run his pumps for 1 hour to get the same 3 inches of water. Because all of the water is contained to a two-foot area around the tree and is not subject to wind diffusion, no water is wasted.

One could go on about the benefits of the Tree T Pee, including its superb frost protection, but that's not really what this article is about. This is really about a man, who wants nothing more than to help others. For years, Johnny has been practically giving away his Tree T Pees, not because he wants the farmer to come back to him for large quantities to make a huge profit, but because he truly cares about the farmers. He's been surrounded by farmers his entire life and comes from a long line of farmers himself; he knows how hard they work to provide food for the rest of the world. Johnny knows that by using the Tree T Pee, the farmers will be able to save money on fuel and fertilizer, while increasing the growth of the trees and getting a return on their investment much sooner. This not only helps the farmer, but with the reduced water and fertilizer usage, the rest of us will reap the benefits too.



the answer everyone has been looking for. Johnny Georges will be the first one to tell you though not to take his word for it, he's got science to back up everything he says.

The University of Florida conducted an independent research study that included the Tree T Pee a few years ago. This study looked at watering requirements and fertigation requirements for young trees using conventional micro sprinklers with and without the Tree T Pee. The daily watering requirements were tracked and on average, the tree with the Tree T Pee needed .65 gallons per day compared to the estimated 8.6 gallons without the Tree T Pee. The study concluded that the irrigation water savings due to the Tree T Pee were estimated to be 93%. Furthermore, fertilizer savings were 80% when using the Tree T Pee. The study goes on to say that even with the reduced usage of water and fertilizer,

Recently Georges had an opportunity to introduce the Tree T Pee to the rest of the world. He was approached by the ABC television show Shark Tank and asked to come on to pitch the Tree T Pee to a group of investors. Georges decided to audition not really knowing the end result. While presenting to the sharks, Georges was drilled on the financial numbers of the business and at one point was asked why he sells the Tree T Pee for only five dollars, only making one dollar on each sale? One shark asked, "Why not sell for twelve dollars and make a lot more money?" Johnny's response, "because I'm selling it to farmers."

That six word statement sums up the type of person Johnny Georges is. He doesn't strive to be wealthy; he only strives to help other people. Georges said, "I've already got everything I need. The three most important things in my life are God, family and work, in that order, and I've already got them."

Needless to say, one of the sharks, a man named John Paul DeJoria, who you may recognize as the co-founder of Paul Mitchell hair products and Patron Spirits, believed in what Johnny was doing and became an investor in the Tree T Pee company. DeJoria said to Johnny on the episode "I like everything you stand for." Even though it's only been a few weeks since the Shark Tank episode, Tree T Pee has already gone global. People from all over the world are realizing the benefits of using the Tree T Pee not only on citrus trees, but apple trees, cherry trees, almonds and many more. When asked about what it's like having John Paul DeJoria as a business partner, Georges replied, "It's a dream."

Georges, an avid hunter and fisherman, is concerned about the affects of farming to the environment. The amount of water used in farming is starting to have an impact on our freshwater supply. In the 1980s when Johnny and his father first developed the Tree T Pee, water conservation was not something that was preached, let alone practiced. The mentality was that water was something that we would never run out of. Now 30 years later, water conservation is on everyone's mind. Johnny sees this firsthand every day and knows that if something doesn't change soon, there will be no more fresh water for any of us. This is what drives Johnny and why he is so passionate about the Tree T Pee.

Georges' new business partner has a very similar mindset and is conservation-minded as well. The two of them together have a strong desire to not only change the way farmers use water in the United States, but all over the world. That is exactly what they are doing. Georges says that orders are coming in for the Tree T Pee from all over the globe.

Johnny is quick to give credit where it is due, and he says everything he knows and stands for comes from the people he admired growing up, especially his father.



While at his house, Georges shared with us a few letters he has received from people all over the country who want to help his cause by sending encouragement and often, gifts. Johnny graciously returns the gifts with a note telling that person to donate it to a local charity or someone who really needs it. He reads each of these letters and refers to them as 'blessings of the heart.' He is grateful for the outpouring of support he has seen the past few weeks. He also shared with us a note that he wrote and wanted to share with everyone, paying tribute to the people that have paved the way:

"How honoring and humbling this is to me, all because I'm doing what I love to do. Let's reflect on the ones who came before us though. My father, Rick Georges, was a visionary whose influence is still here.

Revolutionaries and Changers: these are terms that are sometimes used loosely, and don't always evoke admiration. Back in 1966, Rick Georges came up with an idea, the micro sprinkler grove watering and heating system. Ten years later, men like Jack Berry, Ben Hill, Gilbert Bowen, Joe



When asked why he is so passionate about everything that he does, from GSI Supply and Tree T Pee to his family and friends, Johnny said he tries to live his life through his actions. Georges said a good friend, the late Walt Brewer, once asked him "What's going to be your legacy?" Georges says that simple question is what drives him to "do right by everyone," not by his words, but by his actions. Before we left, Georges shared a poem he was once told, that really sums up how he lives his life. He says he was told the poem one day when he was younger and was so inspired by it that he went home that night and memorized it. As he sat there on his couch, he recited the poem from memory. The poem is titled "I'd Rather See a Sermon" by Edward Guest.

"I'd rather see a sermon  
than hear one any day;  
I'd rather one should walk with me  
than merely tell the way.  
The eye's a better pupil  
and more willing than the ear,  
Fine counsel is confusing,  
but example's always clear;  
And the best of all preachers  
are the men who live their creeds,  
For to see good put in action  
is what everybody needs.  
I soon can learn to do it  
if you'll let me see it done;  
I can watch your hands in action,  
but your tongue too fast may run.  
And the lecture you deliver  
may be very wise and true,  
But I'd rather get my lessons  
by observing what you do;  
For I might misunderstand you  
and the high advice you give,  
But there's no misunderstanding  
how you act and how you live."

Johnny Georges went on national television to talk about Tree T Pee and stayed true to who he was, even when standing in front of some of the wealthiest people in the world. He stood up for every hard working American that does what it takes to provide for his or her family without compromising their beliefs. He's a guy from the Heartland of Florida who had a dream. Now that dream is coming true.

For more information on the Tree T Pee visit [www.treetpee.com](http://www.treetpee.com) or find them on Facebook.

Davis, Gene Turner and Clyde Hollingsworth, I could go on, tackled the problems of their day with the same persistence, stubbornness and integrity that we do today. An evolution happened because these farmers knew common sense when they saw it.

A new revolution is now going worldwide, water containment systems for agribusiness. Citrus farming is just the beginning because citrus farmers are the leaders of the world in water conservation and frost protection. Florida growers are not only faced with obstacles like canker, black spot and HLB (greening), but also weather and water authority and labor issues, yet at the end of the day still are able to make a living. Whether it's a corporate farm or a mom and pop farm, both put capital in the ground and work hard to make sure there is a return on that investment. Farmers have put the bread on our tables since the day we were born. If we don't have farmers, we will all go hungry. So my hat is off to the American farmers who truly feed the world."