

## Selecting and Hiring an Arborist

Beware of door knockers. Never let yourself be rushed by bargains.

Ask for certificates of insurance including proof of liability for personal and property damage (your house and your neighbor's) and workman's compensation. Then phone the insurance company to make certain the policy is current.

Ask for local references. Ask neighbors and friends for recommendations. Don't hesitate to check references or visit other worksites.

Check for membership in professional arborist organizations such as the Kansas Arborist Association, International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), National Arborist Association (NAA) or the American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA). Membership demonstrates willingness to stay up-to-date on the latest techniques and information.

Get more than one estimate unless you know and are comfortable with the arborist. You may have to pay for the estimates, and it will take more time, but it will be worth the investment. Don't always accept the low bid.

Good arborists generally offer a full range of services such as pruning, fertilizing and pest control.

A good arborist will not recommend topping a tree. Branches should be carefully selected for removal and removed where the branch meets the tree trunk.

A conscientious arborist will not use climbing spikes on living trees.

Be sure to have a company's contract. Suggested items included in a contract:

- The dates the work will begin and end.
- Exactly what work will be done, such as prune all dead, dying and diseased branches 1-1/2 inches or greater in diameter. If the tree is to be sprayed, get a written statement detailing the specific insect or disease to be treated and the chemical to be used. If fertilizing is to be done, it should be stated how much fertilizer would be applied by what method.
- Specify what cleanup work will be done and when. Determine who gets the firewood and if it is you, determine where the wood will be stacked and the size of the logs.
- Clarify if removal of the tree includes grinding out the stump and even filling with soil and planting grass. Clarify the total charge amount. Work may be charged as a single price or on an hourly basis plus materials. With the latter, be sure to include the wording "...but not to exceed..."



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