



SELECTING AN ARBORIST

Hiring an arborist deserves careful consideration. A qualified arborist will do tree work properly and safely, but an unqualified person may further damage the tree, and more importantly may not be insured, leaving you exposed to liability if anyone gets hurt. This liability could run into the tens of thousands of dollars.

Remember the following points when hiring or contracting with an arborist:

- Check your telephone directory's yellow pages under "Tree Service" for a listing of those businesses which do tree work in your area. A listing indicates some degree of permanence.
- Ask if the arborist is certified by either the New Hampshire Arborists Association or the International Society of Arboriculture. Certification is not required by the state of New Hampshire but it does indicate that the arborist has a high degree of knowledge.
- If the arborist you are considering is not certified, determine if he or she is a member of any professional organizations, such as the New Hampshire Arborists Association, the International Society of Arboriculture, or the National Arborists Association. Membership does not guarantee quality, but does indicate professional commitment.
- Ask for certificates of insurance, including proof of liability for personal and property damage and worker's compensation. Then, contact the insurance company to make sure the policy is current. You can be held financially responsible if an uninsured worker is hurt on your property or if the worker damages a neighbor's property.
- Experience, education and a good reputation are signs of a good arborist. Ask for local references and talk with former clients. Do not rush into a decision just because you are promised a discount if you sign an agreement now.
- Be sure you understand what work is to be done for what amount of money. It is not generally a good idea to pay in full until the work is completed. Legitimate arborists never ask for payment in advance. If possible, get more than one estimate.
- Beware of estimates that fall well below the average. There may be hidden costs or the arborist may not fully insured or trained.

Remember that good tree work is not inexpensive. A good arborist must carry several kinds of insurance as well as pay for expensive and specialized equipment.

For a listing of certified arborists, visit the NH Arborists Association at:
http://www.nharborists.org/list_nhaa.php