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Protect Your Investment, Hire An Arborist

CHAMPAIGN, IL (May 26, 2005) - *What is an arborist?* An arborist is a professional who is trained in the art and science of planting, caring for, and maintaining trees. ***Why hire an arborist?*** Proper tree care is an investment which can lead to substantial returns. Well cared for trees are not only attractive but will also add value to your property, while poorly maintained trees end up being a liability.

Knowing when and how to hire an arborist is an important decision for property owners. The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) offers the following tips to help make an informed decision.

When to Hire an Arborist

There are a variety of services an arborist can provide to help you maintain your investment.

1. **Tree Pruning**— An arborist can determine what type of pruning is best for the individual tree to maintain its health and to improve its appearance and safety. Also, if pruning requires a ladder and a chainsaw, hire a professional.
2. **Tree Removal**—Arborists can help determine whether or not a tree should be removed, though usually this is a last resort. Arborists have the skills and equipment to safely and efficiently remove trees. Tree removal is dangerous and should be done by a professional.
3. **Emergency Tree Care**— Storms can cause major damage to limbs or entire trees which can result in damage to other property. These trees need to be removed or trimmed to lessen the long-term damage to the tree and surrounding property. This is dangerous work and an arborist should be hired to perform this job safely.
4. **Planting**— Planting the right tree in the right place is important for the long term health of the tree. Arborists can recommend the appropriate tree for the desired location, and assist in proper planting.

There are many other services that arborist provide when necessary such as fertilization, insect control, cabling, aeration, and lightning protection. Consulting with an arborist and establishing a plant health care plan will help determine when these services are necessary. Money spent on hiring an arborist is well worth it. "Many tree care services can be dangerous and paying a professional may cost you less than a trip to the emergency room," states Eric Duchinsky, ISA Director of Membership and Public Relations.

How to find a qualified arborist

When searching for a tree care company, there are several things to look for before making a selection.

- **Certification**—Ask if the arborists on staff hold an ISA certification. ISA offers a range of certification credentials from Certified Tree Worker/Climber Specialist to Board Certified Master Arborist. To be certified individuals must pass a voluntary comprehensive exam. Certification must be maintained through continuing

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education, which means they should be up-to-date on the latest in arboricultural technology and are knowledgeable of acceptable practices. Some states also require licensing for tree care companies. Check your state's requirements, and make sure companies you are considering are in compliance.

- **Professional Affiliation**—Ask about membership in professional organizations such as the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). Affiliation with industry organizations demonstrates a willingness to stay up-to-date on the latest techniques and information.
- **Advertisement**— Check the local yellow pages directory, etc. for arborists who list themselves as ISA Certified Arborists or display the official logos of professional membership. Also look for logos of business accreditation by organizations such as The Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), who requires they have an ISA Certified Arborist on staff. Most reputable tree care professionals do not go door to door soliciting business, so avoid those companies that show up at your doorstep offering to prune your trees.
- **Insurance**— Ask for proof of insurance and then verify coverage with the insurance company. A reputable arborist should have insurance to cover personal and property damage as well as worker's compensation. If you hire an uninsured tree expert, you can be held liable for any damages or injuries that occur while they are on the job.
- **References**— Ask for references from past customers and do not hesitate to check them, or to visit the locations where the company or individual has done tree care work.
- **Estimates**— Do not be afraid to ask for an estimate, and it is ok to get more than one estimate. You should not always select the lowest bid. When examining the bids, you should look at all specifications and credentials, and the work to be done to determine which company will provide the best service with the skill and professionalism needed to protect your investment. And most importantly get it in writing. Most reputable arborist will have the customer sign a contract so be sure to review it and do not be afraid to ask questions.

For more information on tree care, why you should hire an arborist, and how to find an ISA Certified Arborist in your area, visit www.treesaregood.com.

The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), headquartered in Champaign, Ill., is a nonprofit organization supporting tree care research and education around the world. As part of ISA's dedication to the care and preservation of shade and ornamental trees, it offers the only internationally-recognized certification program in the industry. For more information, contact a local ISA Certified Arborist or visit www.isa-arbor.com.

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