

Tips for Hiring a Certified Arborist



Finding the Right Certified Arborist for You

If you are concerned about the health or safety of trees located on your property, you may consider reaching out to a certified arborist to help with management or removal.

When to Reach Out to a Certified Arborist

- ✓ If the tree is large and requires a ladder or harness system to reach impacted branches.
- ✓ If there are large, broken branches from storm damage.
- ✓ If in need of assistance with tree pruning.
- ✓ If the tree in question is near a structure or electrical lines.
- ✓ If the tree is becoming a safety risk, e.g., leaning, branches overhanging buildings.
- ✓ If tree roots are causing damage or upheaving pavement or property, e.g., sidewalk, driveway, retaining wall, foundation.
- ✓ If there is significant tree decline potentially from disease, insect, or environmental damage.

Certified Arborist Services:

- **Pruning:** Pruning enhances a tree's form and structure, addresses insect or disease issues, removes dead or dying branches, and prevents branches from interfering with utilities, structures, streets, or sidewalks.
- **Tree Removal:** Assess whether tree removal is necessary due to risk factors or if a tree is situated in an area that requires its removal.
- **Emergency Tree Care:** After a storm, certified arborists can be called to assist in clearing properties affected by fallen limbs or trees.
- **Planting:** Choosing the right tree for a specific site is crucial for the tree's long-term health and longevity.
- **Insect and Disease Management:** Fungicides and insecticides should only be applied if a serious outbreak occurs. This requires monitoring and proper diagnosis; rather than applying chemicals on a pre-planned schedule or preventative basis.
Note: Samples may or may not need to be lab tested at an additional cost for proper identification.
- **Additional Services:** Many certified arborists also offer other services, such as plant health care, fertilization, cabling/bracing, and soil aeration.



Horticulture Program
DIVISION OF EXTENSION
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Considerations When Hiring a Certified Arborist

To find an arborist in your area, head over to treesaregood.org (International Society of Arboriculture), asca-consultants.org (American Society of Consulting Arborists), or waa-isa.org (Wisconsin Arborist Association) where you can enter your zip code, and a list of nearby certified arborists will be provided. If you have any questions regarding diagnostics or hiring an arborist, consider submitting your question to the Ask Your Gardening Question form on the UW-Madison Extension Horticulture website.

- ✓ **Look for Customization:** A reputable arborist will address the specific needs of your tree and will not pressure you into unnecessary treatments.
- ✓ **Evaluate Total Value:** Rather than looking only at the price, evaluate the full scope of the contract: timeline, the quality of product(s) used, the number of visits, and the company's procedures for troubleshooting and resolving issues.
- ✓ **Establish Clear Communication:** Confirm in writing exactly what the service includes and which tasks remain your responsibility.
- ✓ **Check Credentials:** Ensure the company or arborist is properly licensed and is either ISA or ASCA certified.
- ✓ **Verify Individual Licensing:** Each employee who applies pesticides on your property must be certified and licensed annually as a commercial applicator.
- ✓ **Organic Services:** Note that organic products registered as pesticides are subject to the same licensing and regulatory requirements as conventional synthetic pesticides.
- ✓ **Tree and Branch Removal:** Determine if the arborist will dispose of the tree or removed limbs.

Additional Resources

Finding the Right Certified Arborist for You

UW-Madison Division of Extension
go.wisc.edu/hiring-an-arborist

UW Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic

UW-Madison
pddc.wisc.edu

UW Insect Diagnostics Lab

UW-Madison
insectlab.russell.wisc.edu

Tree-Owner Resources

Trees Are Good
treesaregood.org/treeowner

Deciduous Trees and Shrubs

UW-Madison Division of Extension
hort.extension.wisc.edu/deciduous-trees-shrubs

Evergreen Trees and Shrubs

UW-Madison Division of Extension
hort.extension.wisc.edu/evergreen-trees-shrubs

Tree Fruits

UW-Madison Division of Extension
hort.extension.wisc.edu/tree-fruits

