



Emerald Ash Borer

Hiring a Tree Care Company- What You Need to Know

Knowing how to hire an arborist or tree care company is critical to ensuring you get the best care possible for your trees. As the Emerald Ash Borer devastates southeastern Michigan's ash trees, services provided by qualified arborists will be in high demand. This demand is sure to inspire some enterprising people to get into the business who don't know the first thing about tree care or safe tree care practices. If you know what to look for in a tree care company, you can be confident that the individuals working on your trees are knowledgeable, properly equipped and will put safety first. These questions will help you become an informed consumer who can expect quality work.

Does your company have current workers compensation as well as personal and property damage insurance?

Feel free to ask for proof. Reputable companies should be able to provide current certificates of insurance. If an uninsured worker gets hurt on your property, you could be held liable.

Is your company a member of professional organizations such as the National Arborists Association (NAA), the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), or the Michigan Forestry and Park Association (MFPA)? Membership in these organizations is voluntary, and shouldn't be required of a company; however, membership demonstrates a commitment to continuing education and a willingness to stay up-to-date. Often companies who maintain memberships to professional organizations will advertise as such in the yellow pages.

Does your company employ ISA Certified Arborists?

Certified arborists are individuals who have achieved a level of knowledge in the art and science of tree care through at least three years experience and who have passed a comprehensive examination developed by nationally recognized tree care experts. The employment of certified arborists demonstrates a commitment to quality.

Does your company have references for similar work performed?

Tree care can be a major investment. You should not feel hesitant to ask for, and check, references. Companies with a good track record will gladly provide them.

Will the company be responsible for the disposal of all limbs and debris? If a tree is being removed, will the stump be removed and cleaned up?

Make certain that the full scope of the work to be done is covered in the original price estimate. If you live in the quarantine area, verify that any ash material will be disposed of according to the Michigan Department of Agriculture guidelines. (Available at: www.michigan.gov/MDA)

No matter how companies answer questions, if you are not comfortable feel free to shop around. In fact, getting more than one estimate is a good idea. Estimates may not be free, but they can provide needed information to help you choose a tree care company. The questions above should provide you with the information you need to make an informed decision about your tree care needs. Remember, trees are an investment that if cared for properly can provide substantial returns.

If you are contemplating treatment for an ash infested with the Emerald Ash Borer, please check with your local Michigan State University Extension for the latest treatment recommendations.

For more helpful information please see the International Society of Arboriculture's "Why Hire an Arborist" brochure online at www.isa-arbor.com/consumer/arborist

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March 2004