



416-413-9244
www.yourleaf.org

Did you know?

- *Certified arborists have the qualifications and equipment needed to perform safe and proper tree care.*
- *Pruning young trees must be done correctly with the proper tools. Improper cuts can lead to future structural problems.*
- *Pruning should never be used as a way to keep a large tree small.*
- *Urban trees often experience leaf deterioration or loss due to urban stresses.*
- *High nitrogen fertilizers used for lawns can cause excessive growth of leaves on new trees before the trunk and roots can support them.*

Selecting a Tree Care Company

Looking through the yellow pages to find a tree care company isn't easy. Who do you choose, what do you look for and how do you know if you're hiring a qualified professional? Here are some tips to help you find someone with the necessary skills, equipment and experience to do the job properly.

- 1. Only hire a certified arborist.** Experience, education and a good reputation are essential. Ask for the qualifications of the person doing the actual work on your tree. For a list of certified arborists in your area, contact the International Society of Arboriculture at 1-888-463-2316 or www.isa-arbor.com or the American Society of Consulting Arborists at www.asca-consultants.org.
- 2. Beware of door-knockers.** This is especially common after storms when non-professionals try to earn quick money. Storm damage creates high-risk situations for both workers and property owners, and if improperly pruned, your trees could be further damaged.
- 3. A qualified company will offer a wide range of tree services.** These include pruning, cabling/bracing, fertilizing, pest control and safe removal. Look for descriptive terms such as "complete plant health care," "preventative maintenance," and "integrated pest management" as indicators of responsible approaches to tree care.
- 4. Ask if workers will use climbing spikes or spurs.** Responsible companies will not use these devices on a live tree unless it is being removed, as they puncture the bark and create potential entry points for pests and disease.
- 5. Ask for proof of worker's compensation with the Workers Safety and Insurance Board and proof of liability insurance.** Contact the insurance company to make certain the policy is current. Under some circumstances, property owners can be held financially responsible if an uninsured worker is hurt, or a neighbouring property is damaged.
- 6. Request a list of local references.** Look at a potential company's past work and talk to former clients if possible.
- 7. Never be rushed or pressured into "bargains."** Get more than one estimate and be willing to pay for them. Be aware that the lowest bid is not necessarily the best service.



Factsheets in the series:



The Three "P"s of Healthy Trees



Top 10 Things To Do for Your Trees



Selecting a Tree Care Company



Inventories: The Place to Start



Improving the Urban Forest in your Neighbourhood



Protecting Our Trees: City of Toronto Bylaws and Policies



Fundraising for Your Urban Forest Project



Made in the Shade: Shade Trees for Sun Safety



Volunteer Opportunities in Urban Forestry



Trees: The Key to Cleaner Air



THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION



LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO

8. **Beware of a tree service provider that is eager to remove a living tree.**

Removal should always be the last resort. Check to see if your municipality has a private tree by-law in effect which may require a removal permit.

9. **Be an informed consumer.**

Educate yourself on proper tree care techniques. Research reliable sources of information at the library or on the internet. Visit www.treesaregood.com or www.yourleaf.org

Modified from information provided by Tony Fleischmann, Certified Arborist