

National Arborist Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tips on Becoming an Intelligent Tree Care Consumer

Break with tradition and shop in the off-season

Spring and Summer are typically when our thoughts turn to the yard and the trees, but shopping for tree care in the Winter offers several potential benefits:

- Many reputable companies offer modest price discounts on winter work. They do this to provide employment to their loyal help and to improve their cash flow.
- You can get the service when you need it. The best service providers typically have huge backlogs of work in the Summer, but can respond to your needs more quickly in the off season.
- Winter is a good time to look at and work on most trees. The tree architecture is highly visible, and there are no leaves to add to the cleanup time.

Shop carefully for the professional tree care service provider that meets your needs. Even though a lot of tree care companies offer great discounts during this time of the year, cheap rates do not guarantee good tree work.

Here are some tips on how to hire good professional help:

Start with the arborists that are listed in the phone book. Don't place much emphasis on the size of the yellow pages ad - some of the most reputable firms rely almost entirely on word-of-mouth advertising and use relatively small Yellow Pages ads. Look instead for what the ad that tells you about the company: number of years in business, professional affiliations, licences, certification, etc. Avoid companies that advertise topping, an injurious and unacceptable practice.

Seek recommendations from neighbors, friends or business associates who you know have had professional tree care work done in the past. You should be aware that the credentials of someone calling himself an arborist can vary widely. Don't just hire someone with a chain saw who knocks on your door! Look for the company displaying the credentials of a professional.

When you meet with the arborist:

- Ask to see current certificates of liability and workers compensation insurance, if applicable.
- Ask for references, and check on the quality of their work and level of service.
- Don't be lured by a bargain, don't pay in advance, and get more than one work estimate.
- Insist on a signed contract with costs, dates, and exactly what is to be done spelled out.
- Insist that climbing spikes are used only if the tree is to be cut down; they damage the tree.

For information on the care of trees or to search for an arborist in your local area visit the NAA's web site: WWW.NATLARB.COM. The NAA is a 60-year-old public and professional resource on trees and arboriculture.