

## Hiring an Arborist

An arborist is a tree specialist whose work is based on knowledge of tree biology. There are two types. A *commercial arborist* performs services such as pruning, tree removal, fertilizing, pest control, cabling and bracing of branches, and installation of lightning protection. Some commercial arborists also plant trees. A *consulting arborist* makes recommendations for care of trees, calculates tree values for legal or insurance purposes, and develops tree management plans, tree risk assessments, or tree preservation strategies. Both types of arborists may also be employed by government agencies. Itinerant tree workers, especially those that show up after storms soliciting work, are not considered to be arborists.

An arborist certification program administered by the International Society of Arboriculture (see below) is widely recognized. In some areas, a state or municipal license or permit may be required to practice arboriculture. This type of license is usually intended to help insure that the company is a legitimate business, not that they meet any level of knowledge or skill. The state of Missouri does not require a license, and municipal licenses are not common in Missouri.

The references listed below contain valuable recommendations on hiring an arborist including where to look, what questions to ask, insurance coverage, and a contract or agreement. Professional organization websites also offer more explanation of services offered by their members.

### **Tree City USA Bulletin**

Fazio, James R. *Hiring an Arborist*, Tree City USA Bulletin No. 6, 8pp, \$3  
Purchase from website

[www.arboday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/bulletins/browse.cfm](http://www.arboday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/bulletins/browse.cfm)

Note: One part of a collection of tree management-related bulletins from the National Arbor Day Foundation. Although it was written several years ago, it is perhaps the best reference on this subject and well worth acquiring.

**Professional Organizations** to which arborists in Missouri may belong:

**International Society of Arboriculture** includes commercial arborists, municipal arborists, utility arborists, and academics, with a membership of over 20,000 including many international chapters. Publications include the *Journal of Arboriculture and Urban Forestry*, and *Arborist News* magazine, and many others. Over 13,000 members are *Certified Arborists*; names may be accessed on their website.

[www.isa-arbor.com](http://www.isa-arbor.com)

**Tree Care Industry Association** (formerly American Arborist Association) represents over 2100 commercial arborists. Publications include *Tree Care Industry* magazine and newsletters.

[www.tcia.org](http://www.tcia.org)

**American Society of Consulting Arborists** has approximately 550 members and offers many technical reference publications. *Registered Consulting Arborists* meet standards established by ASCA.

[www.asca-consultants.org](http://www.asca-consultants.org)

**St. Louis Arborist Association** has approximately 50 members, including some advisory, honorary, and other non-practicing members.

<http://stlouisarborist.org/>

Tim Frevert, October 2008