

## Tips For Selecting A Tree Care Company

We recommend you use a licensed tree surgeon. To find one in your area, contact the Mississippi Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry, at P.O. Box 5207, Mississippi State, MS 39762, or call (662) 325-3390.

1. Check in the phone directory under Tree Service. Although anyone can list themselves in the yellow pages, a listing at least indicates some level of performance.
2. Beware of unsolicited offers. Most tree companies have all the work they can handle without going door-to-door. Unsolicited offers are especially common after storms when nonprofessionals see a chance to earn some quick money. Often, storm damage creates high risk situations for both workers and homeowners, and there is an opportunity for even more damage to trees and shrubs if work is not done correctly.
3. **NEVER PAY IN ADVANCE. Never pay for work until you are completely satisfied.** Never let yourself be rushed by bargains (“if you sign an agreement today, I can take ten percent off the price.....”)
4. Ask for certificates of insurance, including proof of liability for personal and property damage (such as your house and your neighbor’s), and workmen’s compensation. Then **phone the insurance company to make sure the policy is current.** Under some circumstances you can be held financially responsible if an uninsured worker is hurt on your property, or damage is done to a neighbor’s property!
5. Ask for local references-other jobs the company or individual has done. Take a look at some, and if possible, talk with a former client. Experience, education, and a good reputation are signs of a good arborist. Ask for professional credentials such as Licensed Tree Surgeon and Certified Arborist, and professional affiliations such as Professional Arborist Association of Mississippi and International Society of Arboriculture.
6. Have more than one tree care company look at your job and give you estimates. Don’t expect one to lower a bid to match another’s, and be willing to pay for the estimate if necessary; two or more opinions and cost estimates are well worth your extra efforts.
7. A good tree care company will offer a wide range of services (pruning, fertilizing, cabling/bracing, lightning protection, pest control, etc.,).
8. Conscientious tree care companies will only use climbing spikes when removing dead trees. Topping (Hat-racking) and Lion-tailing are never acceptable practices.
9. Beware of an arborist who is eager to remove a living tree. Removal should be a last resort.

