ARBORISTS — GUIDE

How to choose an arborist

Match the person and company to the job, then compare evidence and written scopes.

Updated November 10, 2026

Start with the decision you need. You may need an assessment before you need a removal crew. Describe the tree, the concern and the site. Ask each company whether it provides assessment, the proposed work, or both.

Check a person and a company

Ask for the name of the arborist who will advise you. Request their credential number and check the public record. ISA describes Certified Arborist as a credential covering arboriculture knowledge and a Code of Ethics. ISA, ISA Certified Arborist, fetched 2026-11-10. Use the ISA Find an Arborist service, fetched 2026-11-10 to check the person.

Ask the company for its legal name, any applicable licence record and current insurance information. Confirm these with the issuer or insurer. Keep each check separate. A membership listing, an ISA credential and an insurance document answer different questions.

Ask about this site

Share access limits, nearby structures, utilities and known tree concerns. Ask who will inspect the site and explain the work. Ask for experience with the species and task, plus references for comparable jobs. Do not accept a price alone as a work plan.

If the tree may be retained, ask for the retention option before choosing removal. ISA's tree owner resources cover plant health care, pruning and risk. Use those topics as questions for the assessment. ISA, Tree Owner Resources, fetched 2026-11-10.

Compare written scopes

Put each quote beside the same brief. Compare tree identity, the objective, work included, exclusions, cleanup and the proposed schedule. Ask who will resolve the permit question. Keep the quote date and currency visible. Ask what can change the price and how a change will be approved.

For pruning, ask how the company will write the specification. TCIA's ANSI A300 summary says the standards support work specification writing. Ask for the resulting scope rather than only the name of the standard. TCIA, ANSI A300 Tree Care Standards, fetched 2026-11-10.

Before you agree

Keep the written scope, company identity, credential record, insurance confirmation and permit response together. Ask who will be the site contact. Agree how the company will tell you about a change before it does extra work. Read the payment and cancellation terms before you sign.

Arborists publishes source-linked records. A listing does not mean we have inspected the company or your tree. Featured and Sponsored labels are paid placement. They do not establish competence. Contact the business directly; lead routing on this site is off.

Source dates

All named public sources in this guide were fetched 2026-11-10. Confirm current credential and permit records before each job.

Frequently asked questions

Should I hire the lowest quote?

Compare the same written scope, exclusions and evidence first. Ask the company to explain any difference you cannot account for.