

Ottiger Tree Service, LLC Tree Care Tips



Fully Insured  Nationally Accredited

Volume 1, Issue 3

Economic Times are Tough but Don't Make it Tougher

The unlicensed tree trimmer you hire today could own your home tomorrow

With the number of unemployed trade workers increasing, more and more “fly-by-night” tree care companies are as well. Homeowners who hire unlicensed contractors to perform tree work may expose themselves to liability for injuries suffered by employees of the contractor.

“With thousands of dollars at stake, not to mention the integrity and appearance of your property and your personal safety, make sure you investigate before deciding which company you should hire,” warns Peter Gerstenberger, senior advisor for safety, standards and compliance with the Tree Care Industry Association. “If the ‘professional arborist’ you hired to remove a tree drops it on your house instead of your lawn, it’s too late to confirm the company is insured.”

A large number of consumers have been dragged into litigation involving uninsured contractors. Why? Because if an employee of an unlicensed contractor is injured on the job, the homeowner may be responsible for his injuries or disabilities. Of course, if that unlicensed tree service drops a limb on the house – or a tree on the neighbor’s house – there is probably no protection other than the homeowner’s insurance.

Consumers believe that paying a tree service company “under the table” will save them money. That may or may not be true,

but if there is a problem the consumer almost never has any option with an unlicensed or uninsured contractor. In addition to having no insurance, unprofessional companies are less likely to perform professional work. Consumers may end up paying more to repair the damage, or may lose the value of a specimen tree that declines due to poor care.



“Disreputable companies are renowned for ripping gutters off, breaking fences and bird baths, and even dropping trees on houses,” says Gerstenberger. “Then they typically fold up and leave, never to be seen again.” In most cases unlicensed tree workers are employed by companies that do not have workers’ compensation insurance or liability insurance. These companies do not pay city, state, or federal taxes. They do not secure permits when required. Any of these problems can cause a homeowner costly legal problems!

How can homeowners protect themselves?

Disreputable companies tend to:

- Solicit work door-to-door
- Demand payment in advance
- Advertise topping, an injurious practice to trees
- Sell jobs without producing a written estimate or work order.

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 local references, and check on the quality of their work and level of service.
- Verify professional affiliations, such as membership in the Tree Care Industry Association.
- Don’t be lured by a bargain and don’t pay in advance.
- Insist on a signed contract as to cost, dates when work is to be performed, and exactly what is to be done.

Obviously, Ottiger Tree Service is fully insured, nationally accredited and has certified arborists on staff. We hope you have not experienced the misfortune described above, but we provide this information from TCIA in order to maintain the safety and satisfaction of our customers and their properties.

Our Mission:

We are dedicated to maintaining the balance between tree health, customer safety & satisfaction, and raising the standards of the arboriculture industry.

Membership Affiliations:

St. Louis Arborist Association
www.stlouisarborists.com

Tree Care Industry Association
www.tcia.org

International Society of Arboriculture

www.isa-arbor.com

Better Business Bureau
www.bbb.org



**This Month
We Are Looking
to Meet:**

- Realtors
- Contractors
- Insurance Adjusters
- Subdivision Trustees

Ottiger Tree Service, LLC

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Call for an Estimate Today!

636.225.3292

Taking Care of Trees for Over a Decade.



Ottiger Tree Service (OTS) offers tree/brush removal, pruning and deadwooding to the greater St. Louis area.

We are a first-generation, family-owned business, and proud of our reputation as a dependable and quality-oriented arbor care services company.

With ISA Certified Arborists on staff, we are staying up-to-date on the latest techniques and information since these professionals pass extensive exams covering all aspects of tree care and have continuing education requirements to maintain certification and accreditation.

Prevent Damage To Your Trees' Roots

Trees are hardy plants, and their roots fight back against manmade limits around them. In the urban and suburban landscape, tree roots often are forced to grow between buildings or under driveways and walkways. As roots grow they will break walls, pipes and patios, causing damage to properties.

Plan before you plant

"Before you plant a new tree in your yard, you need to understand how a tree damages your property and look for methods to preventing it," says Peter Gerstenberger, senior advisor for safety, standards and compliance with the Tree Care Industry Association. Woody tree roots thicken as they grow, gradually pushing shallow roots toward the surface. Since soil near the surface is best suited for root growth, most tree roots are just below the surface - putting them in conflict manmade obstacles. Where the soil is covered by a solid driveway or patio, upward growing roots don't experience the normal signals (increased light and air) that they are reaching the surface. As a result, they often grow against the underside of pavement.

"Most damage is found six feet or less from the tree," notes Gerstenberger, "since roots become smaller and less damaging the further they are from the trunk. Keep this in mind before you plant. That small sapling could become a large shade tree with roots spreading 30 or 40 feet outward from the trunk."

Fixing the problem

Some homeowners, masons and landscapers deal with intrusive roots by grinding down or removing them. This can be expensive and is very harmful to the tree. Wounding a tree's roots creates points of entry for pathogens, leaving a tree vulnerable to disease. Cutting major roots also reduces a tree's ability to take up nutrients and water, leaving it more susceptible to drought. Finally, reducing a tree's structural support from the roots increases the danger the tree will topple onto your house in high winds.



Keep these cautions in mind if you plan to deal with a problem tree:

- The farther you cut from the trunk, the less threat to the tree's health, and the less danger of creating a hazard.
- Try not to cut roots over 2 inches in diameter.
- Roots recover better from being severed when you: cut them cleanly with a saw instead of breaking them with a backhoe; mulch and water well after pruning; and fertilize in early fall or spring.

Deciding what to plant

Select trees for your landscape that cause less damage, match species with site conditions, and - most importantly - do not plant large shade trees within 12 feet of hardscapes. Since the health of trees in your yard is put at risk whenever root systems are cut back or damaged, anything that can be done to reduce the damage caused by tree roots will also benefit your trees.

Information provided by:
www.treecaretips.org



Green Tip

The practicality of a compost bin is that it transforms items you might otherwise throw out into gardening "gold." This soft brown organic material enriches the soil and does wonders for plants that could use a little boost. Keep in mind that veggie and fruit scraps aren't the only things you can compost. Stale herbs and spices, matches, refrigerator lint, popcorn, Post-it notes, pet hair, wool socks and toenail clippings can all be composted as well.

For Help Other Than Tree Care Needs:

Ph: (636) 462-8665 Fx: (636) 462-4773

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