

CHECK THOSE TREE CARE CREDENTIALS!

Trees are prized possessions in our communities and at home. They give needed shade in the summer, help clear the air of pollutants, provide a home for songbirds and wildlife, and please the eye with the beauty of the foliage and blossoms. Trees and other woody vegetation can also add value to our property.

Proper care of these valuable assets is important. Selection of a tree care professional requires some research. All tree care professionals practicing in Maryland must obtain a Tree Expert license from the Department of Natural Resources Forest Service. Without a license, they may not practice or advertise tree care services in the state. A Tree Expert is any person who holds himself/herself out as being skilled in the science of tree care. Tree care includes, but is not limited to, crown pruning, root pruning, fertilizing and pesticide application.

To obtain a license, the applicant must possess adequate and related college education plus one year of experience under a Licensed Tree Expert (LTE) or have five years' experience under a LTE, then have passed an exam and carry adequate amounts of liability and property damage insurance. The license must be renewed annually every January.

The purpose of the Tree Expert Law is to provide a layer of consumer protection by licensing qualified and insured tree care companies and individuals. It is very important for the client to check to see if the tree care professional has the proper qualifications and carries the proper insurance in case of accident. Without this, the client may be liable for any damage or injury caused by the tree care. When considering a tree care professional, always ask for the Tree Care license number and check with the DNR Forest Service to see if the license is current. To locate a licensed tree care expert, you can visit the DNR Forest Service web site at <http://dnrweb.dnr.state.md.us/forests/oflists/lte/treeexpert.html>.

For additional information, visit the Maryland Department of Natural Resources web site at www.dnr.state.md.us or call 410-260-8531