

# How to Select an Arborist



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# With Credit to the Author

- Most of this Power Point presentation is borrowed from Edward F. Gilman
- Professor, Environmental Horticulture Department
- IFAS, University of Florida
- <http://hort.ufl.edu/woody>



# Why hire a certified arborist?

- International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) - Certified Arborist
- A tree care professional who has attained a generally-accepted level of knowledge in areas such as tree biology, diagnosis, maintenance practices, safety, and more
- Three years of full-time experience in arboriculture or a combination of education and practical arboricultural experience



# Why hire a certified arborist?

- They must also continue their education to maintain their certification. Therefore, they are more likely to be up to date on the latest techniques in arboriculture.
- Not taking the time to hire a reputable tree service may:
  - create greater problems in the future
  - be more costly in the long run





This leads to  This result





# Why hire a certified arborist?

Homeowner

Certified arborist



**Vs.**



*Unsafe*

*Safe*

# Just wear the PPE!



- Professional tree workers are required by law to use the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Photo courtesy of Kevin Eckert

# Certified arborists

These situations require advanced training and should be handled by ISA certified arborists:

- Removing a leaning tree or broken limb that is near a target
- Reaching limbs that require climbing
- Restoring a damaged tree that could be saved
- Pruning to promote good structure





# Beware of electrocution!

- Call the power company to report electric wires in, on, or under trees
- Assume all power lines are energized and do not touch!

Watch for hanging limbs, leaning trees or limbs near or on a power line



# Qualified line-clearance arborists

They are the only professionals allowed to remove trees and branches near electrical wires

Treat any power line as 'live'!





# Other tree care professionals

Other tree care professionals with adequate equipment and insurance should only:

- Take trees down in open areas and away from structures
- Remove dead or down limbs that don't require climbing
- Remove debris



# How to hire the right tree care professional



- Insurance
- Certification
- Estimates

Use the following questions to help you find a qualified arborist:



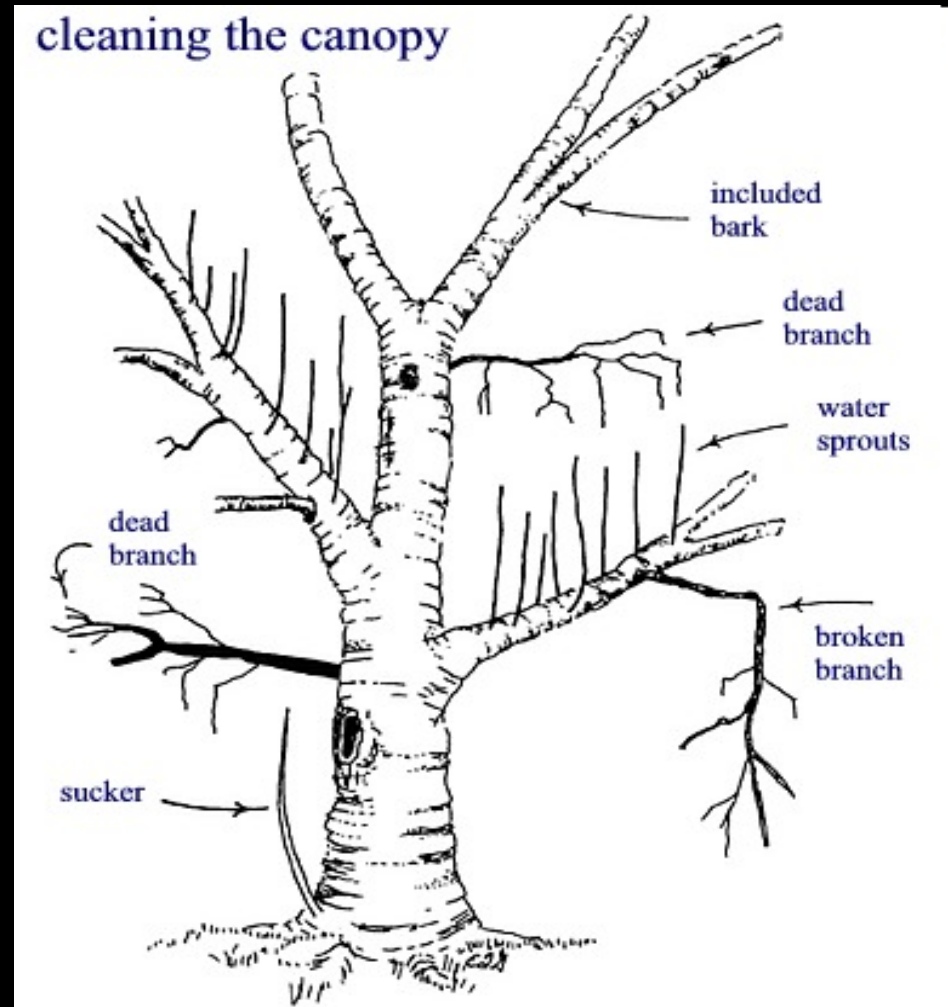
# Thinning



- Thinning and Crown Cleaning are usually done together
- Selective removal of branches to increase light penetration and air movement through the crown
- Reduces weight of heavy branches
- Too much thinning can result in production of watersprouts

# Crown Cleaning

- Selective removal of dead, diseased, broken, or weakly attached branches from a tree crown
- Most common type of pruning technique
- Regular pruning should correct small growth problems before they become large problems





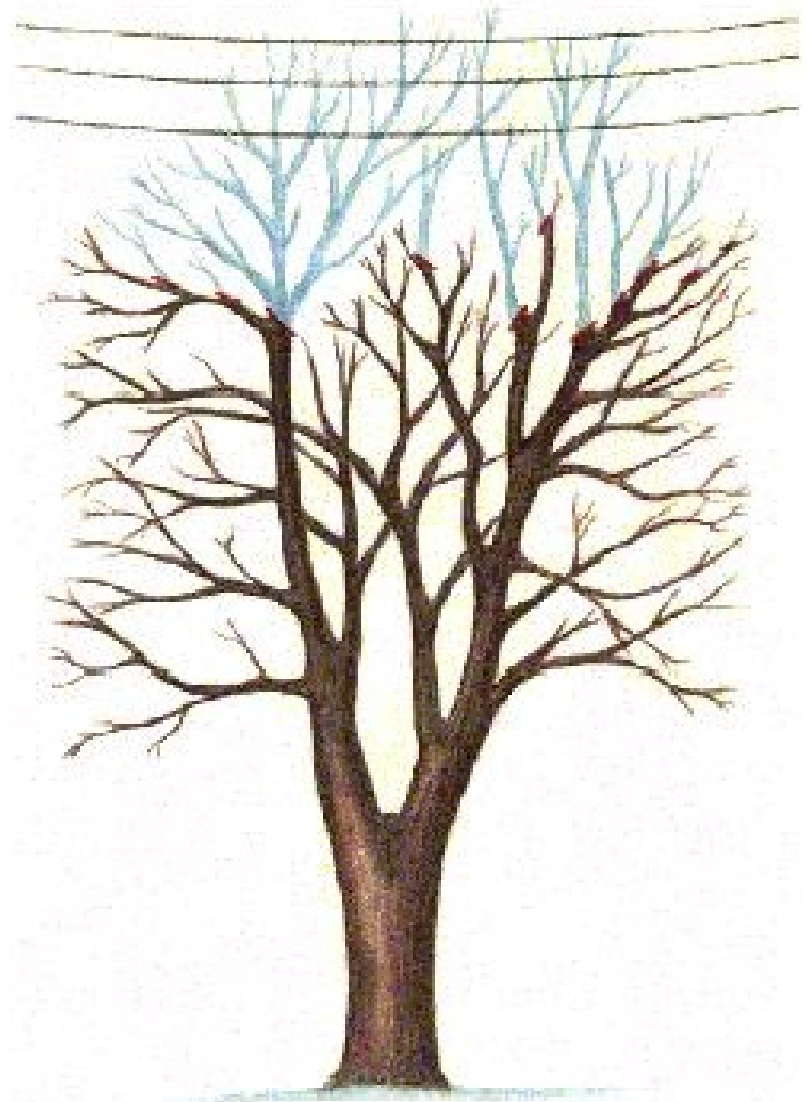
# Raising

- Removes lower branches in order to provide clearance for buildings, signs, vehicles, or pedestrians
- Avoid excessive removal of lower branches while tree is still young
  - Lower branches are important in the development of trunk taper and the structural stability of the whole tree



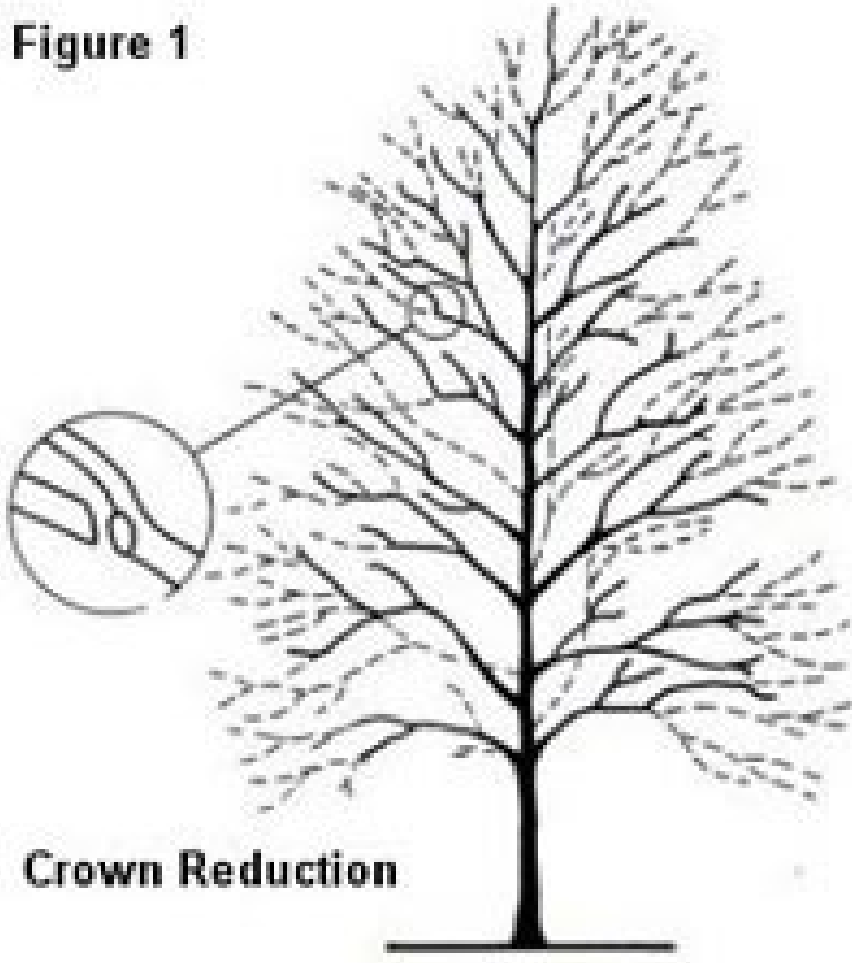
# Crown or Branch Reduction

- Used to reduce or redirect a tree away from an object
- Limb is pruned back to its point of origin or back to a lateral capable of assuming dominance
- Power companies (should) use this type of pruning



# Crown or Branch Reduction

Figure 1



- The remaining branch must be large enough to handle dominance
  - Lateral branch must be  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  the diameter of the removed portion
- Trees will grow back to fill the void created
- Requires continual labor to maintain the desired size and/or shape



# Restoration - Structure



- Trees that have been topped, sustained storm or vandal damage or have not been pruned
- The selective removal or subordination of sprouts and branches to create a desired tree structure
- The removal of all stubs and dead branches
- Usually requires several years of pruning

## Question 1.

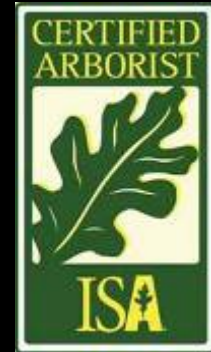
Are you insured for property damage, personal liability, and worker's compensation?

- Ask for proof of insurance.
- Call the insurance company listed to verify if the policy is current.



## Question 2.

Are you certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)?



- Being certified requires professional experience and knowledge of the best techniques in the industry
- Arborists attend training courses and continuing education classes to learn the latest tree care research
- Some states require a license to operate





### Question 3.

What are the guidelines arborists should follow for tree safety and management practices?

- **ANSI Z133.1** represents safety standards for pruning, repairing, maintaining or removing trees in the United States
- **ANSI A300** represents the best management practices in the industry for pruning and other tree care operations

## Question 4.

What are the procedures involved, equipment used, price, and time frame?

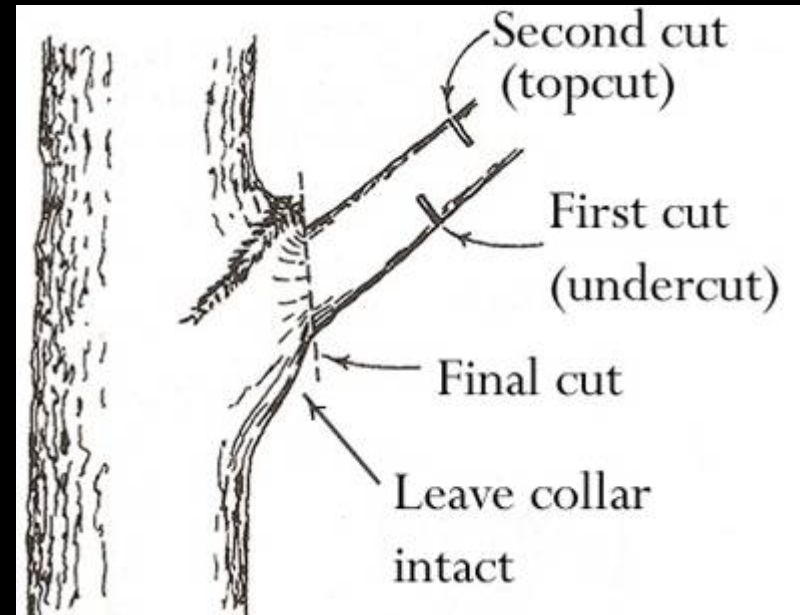
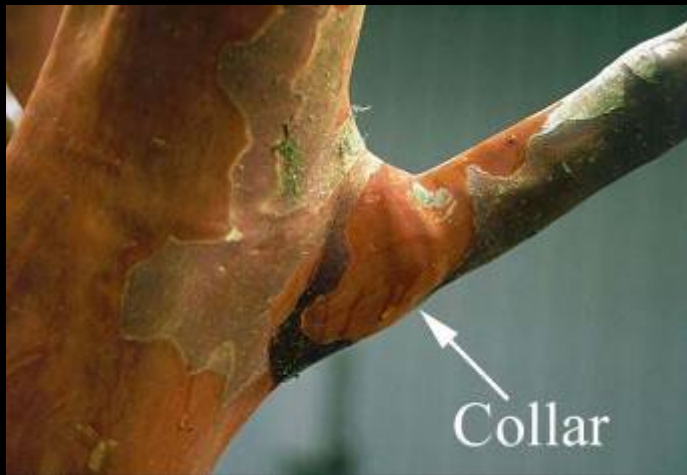


Get a written estimate that includes:

- a thorough description of the work, e.g. "prune all dead, diseased and weak branches one inch or greater in diameter"
- the phrase "all work to be carried out accordingly to ANSI A300 standards"

## Question 5.

# How do you make your pruning cuts?




Good pruning cuts avoid cutting into the collar.



# Additional tips for hiring an arborist:

- Avoid arborists who:
  - say they routinely top trees
  - use spurs or spikes to work on a living tree
- Beware of an arborist who is too eager to remove a living tree
- Keep in mind that a living tree is not always equal to a healthy or structurally sound tree





# Additional tips for hiring an arborist:

- Ask for a client or reference list
  - this could be neighbors who have used the tree service and/or arborist after the hurricane
- Avoid arborists who:
  - demand payment in advance
  - offer a bargain such as "if you sign today you can save 20% off the price"
  - do not provide a written estimate

# Example of City Tree Trimming Specifications - 1st

## Description of Services

### Complete Prune

Thinning the tree's crown to increase light penetration and air movement, removal of crossing and interfering branches, removal of dead, dying, broken, and diseased branches, removal of branches to obtain appropriate clearance around structures, streets, and sidewalks, and removal of branches to improve or create appropriate structure. This applies to  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch and greater diameter branches and all final cuts shall be made according to the ANSI 300 pruning standards as well as the ANSI Z133.1 safety requirements.

### Crown clean

The removal of dead, dying, diseased, broken, crossing/interfering, poorly attached, and insect-infested branches with diameters of  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch and greater.



# Example of City Tree Trimming Specifications - 2nd

## Description of Services

### Selective Prune

The removal of selected branches, storm-damaged limbs or other specialized pruning for trees and shrubs as determined by the City Representative.

### Crown restoration

The removal of selected branches to improve and/or restore structure in trees significantly damaged by storms, previous pruning, or vandalism.

### Crown raise

The removal of the lower branches from a tree in order to provide clearance for buildings, vehicles, and pedestrians.

### Removal

The complete removal of a tree, this includes the removal of all wood unless otherwise specified, as well as removal of the stump to a depth of no shallower than 9 inches.

# Example of Special Requirements

- ▶ The Vendor must be an International Society of Arboriculture licensed Arborist.
- ▶ Must possess the following equipment:
  1. A 65 foot aerial boom in good operating condition with a copy of current OSHA safety certification.
  2. High capacity forestry body chip truck designed to contain at least 9 yards of chip waste.
  3. High capacity knuckle boom/crane designed to handle and transport large pieces of wood waste quickly and efficiently.
  4. Trailer mounted stump grinder with a minimum 12 inch flywheel in good operating condition.
  5. Large capacity wood chipper with a minimum 13 inch diameter wood waste capacity in good operating condition.
  6. Standardized safety equipment including large traffic control hazard signs, 24 inch traffic control cones, and personal safety equipment adequate for passing the ANSI 300 safety standards.
  7. Diverse sizing of chainsaws in excellent operating condition.



# To find a certified arborist in your area, contact:

- International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)  
<http://www.isa-arbor.com> Toll Free (888) 472-8733
- Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA)  
<http://www.tcia.org>