

## Helpline Hot Topic for November 2020

### Finding a Certified Arborist

By Cynthia Zimmerman

*Until you dig a hole, you plant a tree, you water it and make it survive, you haven't done a thing. You are just talking. Wangari Maathai*

What's wrong with my tree (citrus, fruit, shade, palm, coniferous, evergreen, deciduous)? At the Helpline we get some form of this question at least once a month. The problem can be pests, diseases, mechanical damage, or cultural issues. Often the homeowner doesn't even know the type of tree. Through a process of diagnostic questions and photographs the Helpline workers endeavor to find answers. Still there are times when it is impossible to give a definite solution for the problem. This is when we suggest contacting an arborist.

What is an arborist? The common, simple definition is tree surgeon. But arborists, also known as arboriculturists, are so much more. Arboriculture is the cultivation, management, and study of individual trees, shrubs, vines and other perennial woody plants in dendrology (scientific study of trees) and horticulture. Arborists provide a number of services: tree identification, tree variety and placement recommendations, pruning (tree surgery), safety determination, tree removal, emergency tree care, planting, plant health care, disease diagnosis, treatment and prevention, the control of pests, and consultations on construction sites to save trees.

Certified Arborists have achieved a high level of knowledge in the art and science of tree care through experience and by passing a comprehensive examination. As Master Gardeners we cannot recommend specific arborist individuals or companies but we can direct the public to two sites:

- **International Society of Arborists**  
<https://www.isa-arbor.com/For-the-Public>
- **American Society of Consulting Arborists**  
<https://www.asca-consultants.org/search/custom.asp?id=3818>

Both sites provide the ability to find certified arborists by zip code or within certain mileage of a specific address.

They also provide other great information:

<https://www.treesaregood.org/treeowner/choosingtherighttree>

<https://www.treesaregood.org/treeowner/plantingatree>

<https://www.treesaregood.org/treeowner/pruningyourtrees>

<https://www.treesaregood.org/portals/0/docs/treecare/WhyToppingHurts.pdf>

*Never say there is nothing beautiful in the world anymore. There is always something to make you wonder in the shape of a tree, the trembling of a leaf. – Albert Schweitzer*