If you have storm-damaged trees, you may need to hire an arborist. Unskilled work often results in damage or structural weakness the tree will keep throughout its existence. Unskilled tree work, such as topping or excessive limbing up, often causes tree problems including excessive regrowth or decay due to overpruning. These problems require repeated tree work that would not have been necessary. This creates additional costs over the now shortened life of the tree. The skill level of the person hired will dictate the safety and longevity of your tree.

Most professional arborists are members of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). The ISA works hard to educate its members and ensure that up-to-date science and skills are spread to the profession as quickly as possible. Membership in professional arboriculture organizations is a good sign that the people you are hiring know something about what they are selling.

Ask for arborists' proof of insurance. The words "Licensed and Bonded" are usually displayed or discussed openly by professional tree services and arborists. They should have personal, property, liability, and workers' compensation insurances. Call their insurer if you have a concern. If you have tree work done by an underinsured company and something unfortunate happens, you or your own insurance will be liable for the costs of damages. Hiring uninsured service providers leaves you, the purchaser, liable for any damages. This means that an uninsured tree service company will not be expected to reimburse you for damages without a civil suit to demand it.
applicant to pass an examination covering 12 domains of knowledge about trees and tree care. People with this certification are more likely to be knowledgeable about 

![Image](image1.png)

pass a written examination to obtain an Alabama tree surgery license. If the tree service provider is working without this license, fines and potential jail time can be levied against him or her. Some municipalities also require tree service companies to obtain registration or permits before doing any tree work within their boundaries. These permits and licenses are usually displayed, discussed, or shown when you speak with the arborists. If they aren’t, request them. If the tree service you are speaking with doesn’t have these licenses, decline their service.

Ask for some references with phone numbers you can call. A good arborist and businessperson will provide these for you.

Ask for the work proposal in writing. This is usual business practice. Most companies, even small ones, will have a form for on-site proposals.

The proposal of work should have a description of what they’ll be doing, when they’ll be doing it, and the costs with the arborist’s signature and expectations of payment.

![Image](image2.png)

A professional will plan the work and schedule it; expect no less. Hiring tree work shouldn’t be a terrible chore. Arboriculture professionals are usually knowledgeable and happy to provide an estimate.

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For more information, contact your county Extension office. Visit www.aces.edu/directory.

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