

CONSUMER'S AWARENESS GUIDE TO CHOOSING THE RIGHT TREE SERVICE

***What Shady Tree Services Do not Want You To Know
About Your Landscaping Project!***

By: Ray Elmore
Monkey Business Tree Service & Landscape, LLC

Read this guide and you will discover:

- 3 Common Rip-Offs You Need To Know About Before Choosing A Tree Service
- 6 Common Misconceptions About Tree Services
- 5 Costly Mistakes To Avoid When Choosing A Tree Service
- 8 Step Checklist To Finding And Choosing A Reputable Tree Service
- Tips For A Weekend Warrior's Tree Trimming & Maintenance Project
- Stop Topping– Why Topping Is Killing Your Trees

Provided as an educational service by:

Monkey Business Tree Service & Landscape, LLC.

RAY ELMORE
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Dear Valued Customer,

Finding and choosing a reputable tree service can be a laborious task and the impact of choosing an inexperienced one can cost you thousands.

How do you ever find a qualified, competent, professional **tree service** that truly cares more about you and your project than making a buck; one that you can trust?

You can start by reading this Consumer's Awareness Guide. In this fact-filled report, you'll discover three common rip-offs, six common misconceptions and five costly mistakes to avoid when choosing **tree service**.

Here at Monkey Business Tree Service & Landscape, LLC, we strive to be a valuable resource for helping you clear away any fear and confusion related to common misconceptions and mistakes about arboriculture and tree trimming projects so that you can make an informed decision about choosing a **tree service** that meets your needs.

We encourage you to read this guide and make any notes and if you have any questions, you are invited to call us at **863-797-4400**. We have dedicated our business to thoroughly educating our customers providing them with exceptional service. We are happy to help you in every way possible.

Sincerely,

Ray Elmore
Monkey Business Tree Service & Landscape, LLC



RAY ELMORE

At Monkey Business Tree Service & Landscape, LLC we are committed to helping our customers achieve the greatest level of understanding and to educate them on the safest tree trimming practices.

We welcome your inquiries and will gladly answer any of your tree trimming questions, so do not hesitate to contact us. We do not want you as “just another customer”, we want to build trust with you and have you join the Monkey Business Tree Service & Landscape, LLC family of satisfied customers.

Monkey Business Tree Service & Landscape LLC

TREE TRIMMING SPECIALIST

863-797-4400

Are you feeling:

- Completely overwhelmed when you start thinking about your tree trimming and landscaping needs, what you want done, how long it will take, how much clean-up will be involved, how much you want to spend and who you should hire?
- Unsure about how to go about finding and hiring a reputable tree service?
- Like you could make a more informed decision if you only knew what qualifications you should look for to find an experienced tree service?
- Frustrated with companies that do not return your calls and who behave unprofessionally by putting your home and the safety of others at risk?

Guess what. You are not alone! In fact here at Monkey Business Tree Service & Landscape, LLC, we offer this consumer education message to keep smart homeowners - just like you - from making common mistakes and believing misconceptions that shoddy and unscrupulous landscapers will try to sell you when you are looking for a reputable tree service.

Read this entire report as it offers insight into ways to protect yourself and choose a tree service you can trust; one you will be proud to recommend to others.

3 COMMON RIP-OFFS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BEFORE CHOOSING A TREE SERVICE

RIP-OFF #1: Bargains, bargains, bargains

Do you get giddy with excitement when you come across an outlandish bargain or discount?

Before you leap into a victory dance, take another look at the fine details. What you'll find can give you sticker shock including hidden fees that rack up your bottom line cost.

This scenario happens repeatedly with unsuspecting homeowners who are more concerned with the cheap price rather than the quality of the crew and work that is being offered. The tree service crew will come to your home to start the job and then tell you how they didn't factor in certain details and that you'll have to pay extra for these services.

With added fees for materials, equipment and trash removal, you might find that you are paying more for the discount deal than you would have for a full price service from a reputable tree service.

If the "bargain" you are being sold sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

The sad truth is, some crooked tree service companies use lowball prices as the bait for their false and misleading advertising to take advantage of your weakness. Follow these five simple steps to protect yourself:

- 1) Only work with licensed and properly insured companies or individuals.
- 2) Request a written estimate and contract.
- 3) Check for hidden fees and ask if everything is included.
- 4) Verify that the written estimate includes the materials, equipment, trash removal, start and finish date, included labor and the total out-the-door price.
- 5) Remember that your rights as a consumer should not be reduced just because you pay less for something.

Reputable and licensed tree services are never as cheap as some unethical companies would like you to believe.

RIP-OFF #2: Bait And Switch

A common scam is to lure homeowners with a low-price tree service **WITHOUT REVEALING** requirements or limitations that must be met to receive the advertised price.

They hide behind the small print and do not provide you with full disclosure ...all in an effort of "getting you in the door". Once they have you in their clutches, you will be told that your home or tree requirements do not qualify for the advertised special, a lengthy maintenance agreement has to be signed or that there are additional fees that were not included in the advertised special.

To protect yourself:

- Call and ask if there are any special requirements or limitations to the advertised service special.
- Verify everything that is included in the advertised price and ask about any additional fees you may anticipate, such as equipment and disposal fees, before you agree to any service.
- Confirm everything that is covered in the advertised price.

Yes, you can do some homework and ask questions, but if you have a bad feeling from the get-go and feel that the tree service is trying to charge you more than the advertised price, walk away and seek out an honest company that won't hide behind the small print!

RIP-OFF #3: Unsolicited Estimates as Part of a Neighborhood Scam

One common scam is when so-called "tree service" drive through neighborhoods and offer unsolicited landscaping estimates.

These crooked landscapers talk to you like a local, long lost friend and often quote prices well under the average market price.

Once they have suckered you in, they will request a large deposit upfront for “material and expenses” only to take your check and several other checks in the neighborhood, and ride off into the sunset, for good.

You are out money and your home is still in need of a tree service.

Do not let unscrupulous individuals take advantage of you. If you have landscape and pruning needs, do your homework and compose a plan. Hire a tree service who is fully licensed and insured in order to protect your home. Make sure they understand your needs and avoid unscrupulous characters who ask for large sums of money up front like the plague!

6 COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS TREE SERVICE COMPANIES

Misconception #1: My Trees Do not Need to Be Pruned

Neglecting important tree maintenance, such as pruning can result in costly damaged property or injuries.

When you hire a tree service to maintain your trees you can avoid unexpected damage from tree failure caused by:

- disease
- decay
- insects
- weather

The longer you put off important maintenance, the more diseased and decrepit your trees can become resulting in broken limbs that cause expensive property damage or personal injury.

Misconception #2: Professional Planting, Pruning or Removal of Trees Is Too Expensive

There is a higher price to pay when you neglect your trees, including expensive property damage or personal injury.

The health and stability of your trees is dependent on proper maintenance and protection from insects, disease, lack of nutrients, weather and more. Therefore, by paying a reasonable fee to optimize the health of your trees, you are more likely to avoid expensive and possibly life threatening accidents. PLUS healthy trees can increase the value of your home by 10% or more!

It is recommended to utilize a professional tree service because proper maintenance and removal of trees often times involves labor intensive, even dangerous work. tree services offer skilled services, proper equipment and ideal insurance protection to handle all of your arboriculture needs to keep your trees structurally sound.

Misconception #3: All tree services Are Basically the Same

It's important that you know that NOT ALL tree services are created equal.

Here are a few differences that you should be aware of in order to make the most informed decision. Not all tree services:

- ❖ Are Licensed and Fully Insured. To protect yourself from poor workmanship or unscrupulous contractors, avoid working with any tree service that is not fully licensed, bonded and insured.
- ❖ Carry Workmen's Compensation Insurance; this protects the homeowner from lawsuits due to onsite accidents.
- ❖ Invest in specialty equipment to make planting, pruning and removal safer and more efficient.
- ❖ Practice continued education or require the crew to be properly certified or trained.
- ❖ Offer a guarantee or warranty.
- ❖ Exercise good customer service by returning calls in a timely manner and treating customers and their homes with respect.

The key point that you should take away from this is that all tree services are not the same, many times not even in the same ballpark! To protect yourself from shoddy workmanship, added expenses from inexperience and flat-out rip-offs, it's important that you arm yourself with a little knowledge and ask a lot of questions before hiring a tree service for your landscaping and tree work needs.

Misconception #4: The Cheapest or Most Expensive tree service is the Best Choice

In all actuality, the low bid isn't likely to be top-rate work nor is the most expensive bid a guarantee of the best work.

Low price often equals the bare minimum service, inexperience and improper insurance coverage.

On the other hand, an over-priced estimate is likely to account for excessive labor fees, unnecessary equipment charges and service that may not be necessary.

Whether a low estimate or high estimate, make sure that you are 100% informed about what you can expect to get from your tree service, so that you are not spending more on your tree service than you really want or need.

To protect yourself, request an itemized contract that details your project. It should include:

- The number of trees to be planted, pruned or removed
- Any equipment or disposal fee that is applicable
- Detailed information regarding insurance liability
- Start and end date

- That ALL labor is included in the quoted cost
- A cancellation and guarantee policy
- The total price

Bottom line: Would you rather trust a quality tree service professional or the cheapest/most expensive landscaper you can find?

Misconception #5: The Tree Service Company With Immediate Availability Is Best Choice

With the structural health of your trees and your home's safety in the balance, what is more important to you... the fastest response time possible or a qualified, experienced tree service?

Whether you are facing an emergency situation due to a fallen limb, new tree installation or maintenance to optimize the beauty and health of your existing trees, your #1 STEP should always be verifying that the tree service is a licensed and insured.

BEFORE YOU HIRE JUST ANY TREE SERVICE, VERIFY THAT THEY ARE:

- Licensed and fully insured and has a respectable amount of experience.
- Covered with Workmen's Compensation Insurance.
- Using the proper equipment and techniques to ensure sound service.
- Willing to provide you with a written statement that includes the services, material, equipment and labor fees in the total out-the-door price and if they are charging by the hour or per project.
- Capable of strong communication skills.
- Happy to provide referrals from past clients.
- Guaranteeing their work with a warranty that they provide in writing.

Remember, just because a tree service has immediate availability, this doesn't make them instantly reputable. In fact, you should never rule out a service because they ARE BUSY... It's likely that they have a steady clientele and have achieved a great reputation because they ARE experienced and reputable.

Ask questions and do your homework and you will find a tree service that is right for your arboriculture needs without sacrificing quality, protection and experience.

Misconception #6: Tree Maintenance Contracts Are Just a Way to Rip You Off

It should go without saying that if you wait for broken limbs to crush your house, decaying tree trunks that invite pests or some other catastrophic tree disaster, before you call a tree service, that you've dropped the ball.

Most costly tree disasters can be avoided or corrected early if your trees are serviced regularly.

With regular pruning and maintenance, an experienced {arborist, tree service} can prolong the beauty and health of your trees. PLUS these service calls lessen the likelihood of an expensive, possibly even dangerous, disaster due to structural failure as a result of neglect.

In fact, you will find that maintaining your trees will pay for itself in the long run as you avoid high cost, emergency service calls or the expense of replacing trees due to disease or decay. PLUS, healthy and beautiful trees have been shown to increase the value of your home by 10% or more!

5 COSTLY MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN CHOOSING A TREE SERVICE COMPANY

MISTAKE #1: Not Hiring A Professional to Plant, Prune or Remove Your Trees

Planting, pruning or removing a tree can be exhausting, difficult, even dangerous work.

Here are three reasons that you should hire a professional tree service:

1. They have training and experience with trees of all different shapes and sizes and can take care of your tree trimming needs safely and efficiently.
1. Many homeowners take a “do-it-yourself” perspective and invest hundreds of dollars on landscaping only to watch their trees wilt and die within the season because they were not planted or cared for properly. Then there are the homeowners who try to remove their own damaged trees and with their inexperience, take out the entire neighborhood’s power in the process.
2. They are trained to optimize the beauty and health of your trees and know how to recognize early signs of disease, insect infestations or structural damage in order to care for your trees properly.
3. They have the proper equipment and insurance coverage to handle tough, dangerous tree or limb removals and planting of full size trees.

Whether you are experiencing an emergency or simply want to make your landscape work for you, a licensed and trained tree service can service all of your tree needs.

MISTAKE #2: Not Asking Your Tree Service Company the Right Questions

Planting, pruning and removing trees can be a tough and dangerous job. To make sure that you are hiring a qualified tree service, you need to ask them the following questions:

- What are your credentials?
- **Are you covered with liability and Workmen’s Compensation insurance? Will your insurer send me a copy?**
- Will you provide me with a written agreement?
- Do you have a service warranty or guarantee? Will this be detailed in our written agreement?
- How long have you been caring for trees?

- Is your crew trained in safety and proper tree care? What are their credentials?
- What practices do you subscribe to? Do you use spikes or recommend topping trees? (FYI, these practices are NOT GOOD for the health of your trees!)
- How will you dispose of any brush or limbs removed?
- Will you provide me with referrals and/or photos from past clients?

Communication is a critical quality to look for in a reputable tree service. If they appear to be put out by your questions, move on to the next one!

MISTAKE #3: Not Verifying Proper Insurance

If you've taken the time to find a tree service that you trust to plant, prune or safely remove your trees, then your next step should be VERIFYING their insurance before you sign any agreement or allow them onto your property.

Unethical tree services have been known to underinsure or flat-out lie about insurance coverage. Better yet, some tree service companies have been known to instate insurance and then cancel insurance but still present old paperwork to clients to give the impression that they have insurance. This can leave the homeowner at risk for responsibility should an injury or damage occur.

To protect yourself:

- Request certificates of insurance to be sent to you directly from the insurance company or call the insurance company to verify it's validity.
- Verify what is covered in general liability policies. If the tree service company is utilizing vehicles, you will want to see their auto coverage proof as well.
- Verify Workmen's Compensation Insurance and that all crewmembers who set foot on your property are covered. Some unethical companies will cover only a couple of employees that are on their payroll, but not cover employees that are paid under the table.

Bottom line: If damage or injury occurs, **you** can be held liable if the tree service company does not have proper insurance.

MISTAKE #4: Choosing A Tree Service Company Based on an Uber-Low Estimate

Remember, you get what you pay for...

Here are THREE MAJOR REASONS why choosing a low estimate for your tree needs can be disastrous:

1. You are very likely to be hit with an unexpectedly large bill due to hidden fees for equipment, disposal, etc. that were not included in the initial estimate.

2. You may end up with shoddy work or property damage, leaving you with unstable trees, broken limbs, disease and the high likelihood of having to pay another tree service to replant, re-prune or correct a failed tree removal.
3. It's VERY likely that a wildly low estimate comes from a company that is not properly insured. Liability and Workmen's Compensation insurance is costly and fair market prices reflect insurance coverage costs.

Why fall for a cheaper than dirt advertisement that will force you to spend more one way or another? Work with an ethical tree service who cares about planting, pruning and removing your trees for a fair price and who is invested in building a lasting working relationship for years to come.

MISTAKE #5: Not Getting the Details In Writing

To fully protect yourself from unscrupulous or inexperienced tree services, it is critical that you get all of the details of the tree service they are providing in writing.

BEFORE any work begins, you must request the following information in a written estimate:

- start and end dates.
- itemized costs for all material, equipment, supplies, disposal and labor.
- costs for any changes or upgrades that could arise; also specify that all changes or upgrades are to be approved by your signature first.
- total fee to be charged.
- cancellation policy and warranty/guarantee details.
- proof of insurance.

Read your entire agreement or estimate thoroughly, including any small font disclosures before signing it. If the tree service will not supply you with a written agreement, walk away. After all, if they are reputable they will want to cover their bases as well.

8 STEP CHECKLIST TO FINDING AND CHOOSING A REPUTABLE TREE SERVICE

As we said in the beginning, finding and choosing a reputable and experienced tree service can be a very daunting task. However, if you follow these 8 steps, you should be able to filter through the candidates and find the one you'll be the most satisfied working with and referring to your friends and family:

STEP #1: Compile your list of possible candidates. These candidates would come from your friends and family referrals and research on the internet such as Angieslist.com, or talking to people at the nursery.

STEP #2: Write out a detailed description of what it is you want done. Provide details on the project completed any other requirements, i.e. which trees, what you'd like it to look like, which trees to inspect. This will become the document you provide the contractors to assist them in creating their bid so that you can easily compare "apples to apples" when you receive their quotes.

STEP #3: Call or email each tree service candidate. Provide them with the information on the project you created in Step 2. Answer any questions.

STEP #4: Ask for references and testimonials from previous clients who have hired them for a similar services and follow-up on the references for the contractors you are seriously considering.

Check for any complaints with the BBB and make sure they are licensed and insured.

STEP #5: Schedule a meeting with the tree service to come and see the “job site” to complete his quote. A professional contractor will arrive on time, will treat you with professional courtesy, and will respect your home and your time. If they do not, it’s a good indication of how they will work on your job! Ask any questions you may have and insure you get an answer. The contractor should take the time to answer all your questions.

STEP #6: After your process of elimination, have your top 3 contractors prepare a comprehensive proposal.

STEP #7: Review all the proposals and ask questions to get any needed clarification. If one contractors quote is significantly higher or lower than another, call him and ask why. Get enough information to make sure you are comparing apples to apples and finalize your decision.

STEP #8: Make your final selection of a tree service and let the project begin!

TIPS FOR A WEEKEND WARRIOR’S TREE TRIMMING AND MAINTENANCE PROJECT

If you are a weekend warrior with a mile long honey-do list wanting to check landscape maintenance and tree care off it, always remember that this can be a very dangerous job.

Here are a few safety tips if you decide to take this on yourself:

1. Never, ever use ladders near electric wires. Many amateur tree pruners lose their lives to being electrocuted.
2. Do not climb the tree without proper training. Many weekend warriors are seriously injured or even killed when falling from trees and /or falling on the equipment they are using
3. Do not climb a tree without proper climbing equipment.

Here are a few things you can do yourself as long as you do it safely:

1. Be cautious when pruning branches that are directly overhead since they can sometimes fall or tear while pruning.
2. Work only on trees or shrubs that do not require a ladder. Prune the dead and broken branches that can be reached with a handsaw, pole pruner or pole saw.
3. To help create a moisture retainer and a beneficial organic material for the roots, apply a layer of wood chips or organic mulch layer about 2-4 inches thick over the root zone.

For trees and bushes that are too tall or too large to tackle on your own, call a professional tree trimming service to safely do a quality job.

STOP TOPPING– WHY TOPPING IS KILLING YOUR TREES

For many years, tree topping has been considered an easy and inexpensive way to make mature trees safer and reduce their size. However, this ancient hacking practice has devastating impact to the health and structural integrity of your trees.

Following the proper industry standards of professionalism can improve the health, growth and appearance of trees. There is a delicate line a tree maintains between the crown to root ratio for proper health. By topping a trees' crown, the ratio is upset and severely limits the trees ability to sustain its own roots. As a result, they are more susceptible to decay, insects and disease.

The decay and disease causes weakening of the limbs and branches of the trees. Over the course of a few years, the trees become a serious safety hazard, more so than the hazard it would have been prior to topping.

THANK YOU!

Thank you again for reviewing our new CONSUMER'S AWARENESS GUIDE: What Shady Tree Servies Do not Want You To Know About Your Landscape Project! It's our hope that you found this information helpful and useful in choosing a {Arborist/ Tree Service} that you can trust.

As we mentioned earlier, we are committed to eliminate any fear and confusion related to common misconceptions and mistakes about hiring a tree service so that you can make an informed decision about choosing one that meets your needs...we want to make it as easy as possible for you.

We would be pleased to work with on you a quality landscape job for your next home project so you can enjoy your yard for years to come.

If you have any questions or comments or if you would like to schedule an appointment for a comprehensive estimate – please call us at 863-797-4400. We look forward to hearing from you and would love for you to join the Monkey Business Tree Service & Landscape, LLC of satisfied customers.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Ray Elmore

Monkey Business Tree Service & Landscape, LLC

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