

STRAIGHT TALKING WITH A TREE SURGEON

Melissa Jones finds out from Tree Surgeon, Greg Whitton, exactly what his job entails...



What exactly do you do, what is your job title?

"I'm a Senior Arborist for Leeds City Council. In order to obtain this position you have to be a qualified tree climber. We tend to work in a group consisting of a couple of Senior Arborists and two trainees. A lot of my work consists of looking after trees at the side of the road, in parks and near council houses."

What kind of career opportunities does your job hold?

"Personally, I finished my degree in Business Management and started working for a civil engineering company. I saw a programme on the television about tree surgery and decided to do a basic qualification at Askham Bryan College to find out more about the subject."

"After discovering that tree surgery was for me, I enrolled on a 10 week short course at Merrist Wood College, which studied the practical aspects, such as pruning trees and how to work with dangerous trees, pest and diseases etc."

"The next step for me is the online course 'Technicians Certificate' I'm currently studying for through Myerscough College, this two part course

run over a year, will enable me to become more office based and eventually take on a managerial role, surveying trees."

"Most people I have met in this field have degrees or diplomas in arboriculture or have started out in apprenticeships and worked themselves up the ranks, a lot of them started out as groundsmen."

Why did you decide to go down the tree surgeon route?

"As I mentioned earlier, a programme on TV attracted me to this field of work. I'm very keen to run my own business and this career path will offer me this opportunity."

and we have to complete a certificate through the National Proficiency Test Centre (NPTC)."

What kinds of diseases do you come across when looking after the trees?

"There are a 101 different diseases that trees can get. Trees react differently to different environments. Most of the trees I deal with are by the side of the road so have been stressed by cars bashing into them, dogs weeing on them, not getting enough light or water etc."

"Trees on a golf course will be different in this environment and different factors i.e. types of fertiliser, will affect and disease them, golf ball damage etc."

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What satisfaction do you get out of your job?

"You are able to see the 'finished product'. This is how this 'hands-on' work differs from office work, in the office you cannot always see the goal but in this instance you can see the tree improving and growing and it's quite exciting."

What kind of health and safety measures do you need to have in place to undertake your work?

"Working for the council they are very keen on best practice. There are a lot of risk assessments and emergency scenarios to be completed and much of this is quite often common sense."

"As there are different roles within tree surgery, you need to be certified in each area that affects you. Health and safety measures are regulated

Useful Links

Colleges

www.guildford.ac.uk/College/MerristWood

www.myerscough.ac.uk

www.asham-bryan.ac.uk

Other

www.nptc.org.uk

www.ecotreecare.co.uk

www.treesurgery.com

www.trees.org.uk

www.rhs.org.uk