

BEWARE OF ITINERANT TREE EXPERTS

The Illinois Tree Expert Licensing Law passed out of existence this summer.

According to James A. Fizzell, University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Horticulturist in Cook County this appears to have been an open invitation to some people to get into the tree trimming business.

These people cruise neighborhoods looking for likely customers and pass themselves off as tree experts when in reality they know very little about trimming trees, says Fizzell.

Before you hire anyone to work on your trees do some checking on the company.

Call the Better Business Bureau to see if complaints have been received about the firm.

Check to see if the firm has been licensed. Even though there is no longer a licensing law, reputable firms have been licensed up to now.

In order to have been licensed arborists must have passed a difficult exam on insects, diseases, tree identification and other aspects of tree care.

Also most reputable tree firms tend to belong to the professional associations, the National Arborist Association, and the International Society of Arboriculture.

It is also important when contracting for tree work to specify what kind of work is to be done.

Arborists may quote widely different prices on the same trees because of differences in the understanding what is to be done. The National Arborist Association, has four classes or types of pruning on which the prices for jobs are based. The first class is FINE PRUNING. This is the removal of dead, dying, diseased, interfering, objectionable, and weak branches, 1/2 inch in diameter and up.

The second class is MEDIUM PRUNING which is the same as the first class in all respects. The difference being that only larger branches of one inch in diameter and up are pruned.

The third class is SAFETY PRUNING. This is the removal of dead, diseased or weak branches large enough to cause injury if they fell on someone.

The fourth class is CUT BACK or TOPPING. This is the reduction of tops, sides, under branches or individual limbs, and is not very healthy for the trees.

Tree removal and spraying are other categories separate from tree pruning. Again, hire only reputable tree specialists for tree removal and spraying.

People spraying trees must be licensed by the Illinois Department of Agriculture as Spray Applicators.

Pruning, spraying and removing trees can be expensive and even more so if unqualified people do the work and it has to be redone.

Reputable firms will be more than happy to show you their qualifications.

Members of the Illinois Arborist Association are presently developing a Tree Expert Certification program which will be in effect next year.

**James A. Fizzell, Sr. Extension Adviser
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ARBORICULTURE — A PROFESSION — NOT A TRADE

Through the ages, from the beginning of time, man has marvelled at and adored — yes, paid homage to, and worshipped the beauty and majesty of his companions — the trees.

From the Tree of Knowledge (the tree of good and evil) in the Garden of Eden, to The Ash, Yggdrasil, of the Nordic Gods, to the zebu; the man tree of the Aztecs — to our own Joyce Kilmer — nothing else has so fired man's imagination and prompted reverence as the trees — providing him protection against danger and the elements, food to eat and beauty to see. Realizing a relationship of interdependence, man early became a keeper of trees. First, as a primitive woodsman, hewing and burning to build and also to keep the woods and the wolf away from his door. Later, man became a logger, sawyer, forester and after centuries, — lastly, because of conditions, unfavorable for thrifty tree growth, brought about by man himself — man became an arborist. Essentially an arborist is an exponent of the arboricultural profession — the art of planting, treating, and managing trees and other woody plants. A person, who, because of training and ethics, is qualified to cultivate trees individually or collectively for a consideration of a fee.

The forester cultivates trees collectively to realize a cash crop — the arborist generally treats trees individually to promote and preserve intangibles such as protection, beauty, shade, concealment, sentiment and history.

Today, because of conditions, harmful and abnormal to trees, brought about by man's "civilization" and gregarious habits, the services of thoroughly trained and ethical arborists are increasingly in demand.

Antecedent to the arborist came the "tree man" and his contemporary the tree surgeon; two categories of treeworkers, generally have acquired their experience through manual training only.

Unfortunately, however, the tree man and the tree surgeon were accompanied by the tree "quack", tree "gyps", tree "skinners" or whatever other name the duped tree owner considered appropriate. Today, tree "quacks", because of public apathy and gullibility, are still doing a thriving business, peddling worthless if not harmful "miracle cures", degrading the reputation and public esteem of the legitimate arborist. A few years ago in the state of Illinois, no fewer than twelve "cures" ranging from "intravenous" injections to chemotherapeutic soils were offered for the Dutch elm disease.

1953, in Stockholm, Prof. Romell of the Royal Forest Research Institute, after glancing through a "paper" by one certain Dr. X., peddling intravenous "cures" for the Dutch elm disease in the Midwest, unbelievably muttered "witchery — medieval". Still in the U.S.A., such tree rackets flourish — nurtured by public complacency and gullibility.

Not so very long ago a diploma in medicine or surgery could be had by correspondence with no questions asked when the "doctor" hung out his shingle. Today, such practices are not only illegal but certainly no one of average intelligence will consult a doctor not properly accredited and possessing a good reputation.

Today, the medical profession enjoys public respect, trust and confidence. The public knows that before being licensed to practice, every doctor has had to complete years of academic studies and arduous internship. A doctor because of malpractices and

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unethical conduct might also have his license revoked by the state.

In the medical profession every cure is predicated by correct diagnosis; — the same is true in arboriculture. Without substantial knowledge of botany, soils, plant pathology, entomology, chemistry, years of practical experience and training, it is difficult to conceive how anyone can correctly diagnose tree troubles and prescribe successful treatments. Certainly, an occupation demanding such diversified and profound knowledge as Arboriculture, administering to living trees, creations, so indispensable to the comfort, well being, if not continued existence of man, — of so great and immeasurable beauty, is a profession — second to none.

Some states are now licensing custom arborists. Since 1957, in the state of Illinois the applicants are licensed after submitting satisfactory credentials and passing a written "exam" covering tree identification, general tree maintenance, control of tree diseases and pests. In other states attempts are being made also to license the arborists. It will well serve the profession of arboriculture, the public and the environment, if all established arborists work for and promote universal state licensing of all custom arborists.

Repeatedly and much to the chagrin of the Illinois State Tree Expert Examining Board, it has been found that only about 20-25% of the examinees scored a passing grade of 70 in relatively easy tests. It was further found that only a few had reasonably good command of the American language and that some were not able to write. It can be concluded that a good many aspiring arborists will need much better schooling and will profit through the use of proper texts.

For the future arborists, the road to professional recognition is clear — two or three years acquiring the manual and mechanical skills, followed by a degree in arboriculture from the university having the foresight of instituting such studies. Universal licensing of all custom arborists, and enforcement of the law.

JULY 27, 1983

July 27, 1983: — a black day for the Illinois licensed tree experts; — our trees, the homeowner, and the environment. On this day Governor Thompson of Illinois signed House Bill No. 1142, phasing out the Illinois Tree Expert Act of 1957. There will be no more state examinations covering tree identification, control of tree pests and diseases, and accepted arboricultural practices. No more licensing; anyone, from any state, can now pose as a tree expert and administer to the "care of trees", in our state of Illinois. The status of the custom tree service field has been shoved back some 40-50 years, to where it was when Kiplinger and The American Forestry Association prudently warned the public against tree "quacks" and "gyps".

Ironically, while the State of Illinois is "deregulating" other states are "regulating" the custom tree experts. Several universities are now also offering full curriculums in Arboriculture. The Illinois Tree Expert Act defines a tree expert as "any person who, for profit, diagnoses the condition of shade or ornamental trees and recommends or supervises the treatment of such trees or in any manner treats any such trees, by feeding or fertilizing, or by pruning, trimming, bracing, treating cavities or other methods, or protects or attempts to protect such trees from damage by insects or diseases by spraying or any other method."

For some 26 years, disregarding rumored indifference and lax enforcement by the Department of Registration & Education, the licensed tree experts have afforded the home owner, the public and environmental officials, reasonable assurance that their tree care operations would be carried out according to accepted arboricultural practices. July 27, ult., however, is the date when some 545 Illinois tree experts had their licenses invalidated, equating them with those who for various reasons never were licensed through examination. Now, the transient from out of state or just about anybody can pose as a custom tree expert and administer to the care of trees. With the Illinois Tree Expert Act phased out, the "Tree gyms", "Tree quacks" and "Fly-by-nights" or worse will soon be back.

The phasing out of the Illinois Tree Expert Act is a gross disservice to the arboricultural profession, the homeowner, our trees and the environment.

Evanston, Illinois, October 26, 1983

Nels J. Johnson

Father of the Illinois Tree Expert Act

SCIENTISTS TO "STARVE" WEEDS

Every frustrated farmer and gardener knows that the only things which grow without fail are the weeds.

And how to get rid of them without endangering other aspects of nature is a problem that has bothered man ever since he began tilling the soil.

Now a Japanese team of scientists has announced a breakthrough in creating what potentially is a unprecedented ideal herbicide.

They have developed a spray which literally "starves" the weed to death by inhibiting its ability to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and nitrogen from the soil to produce life-sustaining glutamic acid.

Being essentially an amino acid, the herbicide easily circulates through any given weed, including its roots.

The product is the result of years of research by a team from the Agricultural Faculty to the governmental Utsunomiya University, led by Professor Tetsuo Takematsu, in collaboration with Meiji Seika, one of Japan's oldest confectionary makers now actively involved in advanced pharmaceutical products.

The herbicide, named "bialaphos", is yet to be produced and sold here. Meiji Seika is hoping to obtain government permission for commercial debut in April 1983.

Experiments so far have shown it is highly effective when sprayed on weed leaves and stalks without limitation to the type of plant.

However, it is not so good when sprayed onto the soil — in other words, against seeds. So timing is important to ensure the weeds are attacked before they drop their seeds.

The latest trials have shown that it begins to work against the weeds in two or three days.

But most important of all, no adverse toxic effect to the ecology has been detected, since it is essentially a natural product of the soil. Once it returns to the soil, it either separates into inert properties or is consumed by microorganisms.

Credit - The Japan Times & "Divots"

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Miami Valley G.C. Supt.