

HOW TO CHOOSE AN ARBORIST

by Francis W. Holmes

Personnel of the University of Massachusetts' Shade Tree Laboratories are often asked to recommend companies for tree care. At least two good reasons prevent compliance:

1. It is improper for public employees to favor one commercial concern above others equally competent and ethical.

2. Contacts of arborists with the Shade Tree Laboratories usually concern educational questions, including tree identification, choice, location, planting, feeding, culture, injuries, pruning, wound treatment, disease and insect diagnosis, and use of pesticides. University personnel seldom see enough of the arborists' work performance to judge their qualifications.

Many ways used to choose a doctor, mechanic, or contractor can be used for an arborist. The first step is to make a list of those available, using these sources:

1. The yellow pages of your telephone directory and the classified advertising section of your local newspaper, under "Arborists" or "Tree Service."

2. Your Tree Warden or City Forester, who knows many of the local companies.

3. Any neighbors and friends who have employed arborists.

4. Tree workers' professional associations, which have lists of members who operate in your vicinity.

The next step is to choose among the candidates, considering these factors:

1. Are all employees of the arborist fully insured against damaging your property and also against injuring themselves and/or others while working on your property? And does your own insurance cover liability for such injury to workmen or anyone on your property ("blanket")?

2. Is the arborist's business well-established locally? If so, presumably he or she keeps a high standard of quality in the work to keep clientele from year to year. A nearby office saves money by saving workers' travel time (for which the customer pays!). A local firm can easily finish any work undertaken or correct any unsatisfactory

work. Beware of itinerants, who come one day and are gone the next, no one knows where.

3. Are the men who will actually work on your trees (not necessarily company owner, office manager, or salesman) qualified either by long experience or by special training or both? Are they well equipped? Do they keep up-to-date by refresher courses, demonstrations, conferences, books, government pamphlets, and professional journals? Arboriculture is a specialized field, requiring much knowledge and skill, beyond the capacity of a "jack-of-all-trades." Careless, ill trained, or ill equipped workers may injure themselves, your trees, grounds, and buildings, and may waste your money by using excessive time to do their work.

4. Are the prices reasonable? Don't come to a final agreement over the phone about work to be done. Ask each arborist to examine your trees and estimate the price of a particular job. Remember that a low price *may* or *may not* mean poor work, and a high price *may* or *may not* mean good work. Prices should be compared with reports from other sources.

5. What do your friends, neighbors, Tree Warden or City Forester, former customers or other references named by the arborist, say about their experiences with his or her work and/or reliability?

6. Does the arborist make exaggerated claims for his "miracle cure," try to hurry you into a sudden "on-the-spot" decision, or try to sell just any job regardless of the need for the work? An arborist should show interest in the greatest benefit to your grounds for each dollar spent. Remember, however, that tree work which urgently needs to be done *may* be apparent only to the trained arborist and not to you. Compare what the representatives of various firms think needs to be done and why.

7. Is the agent with whom you talked really the person responsible for the work? Does any contract offered you contain all the promises made? Read and understand all written agreements or

contracts you are asked to sign. Do not sign until you are satisfied about all specifications and until you are sure you want to go ahead.

8. What record does the arborist have for safety in past work, and are all OSHA safety requirements enforced by the firm?

9. Are the arborist's on-the-job personnel properly licensed to use restricted pesticides? (It is an interesting legal point, probably not yet re-

solved in any court, whether the *employer* of the arborist (i.e., *you*) may share in the guilt for knowingly employing someone to spray a restricted pesticide who is spraying illegally by virtue of the lack of a required license.)

*Shade Tree Laboratories
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Massachusetts*

THE 4 KEYS TO SUCCESS¹

by Gregg Piburn

Why in the world would a group of arborists be concerned with keys to success? Probably for the same reason a group of football players, newspaper editors, teachers, and attorneys would want to know how to be more successful. Let's think of success as becoming who you want to be and achieving what you want to achieve. Obviously, that means success is different things to different people.

A sportswriter once called professional basketball player Spencer Haywood a superstar. Haywood said: "Hell, I'm no superstar. A superstar is a man or woman who makes 150 bucks a week, raises six kids, and gives them good values."

I believe creativity, objectives, patience, and enthusiasm are four keys to success.

Scientists have discovered you can cut the heads off some insects and their bodies will continue to live for as long as a year. The bodies continue to react to stimuli. Unfortunately, many people seem to be running around with their heads cut off — reacting to stimuli. Use creativity to take control of situations . . . rather than being controlled by situations. Don't put blinders on your mind when problems crop up in your life. Break the chains of mediocre thinking by using creativity

to rise above problems.

Creativity can also be used to set objectives for your life. Studies have shown you are more likely to succeed if you determine goals for your life and take the extra step of writing down those goals. This will enable you to focus your energy — do a few things well, and as you set short-term objectives to help you reach long-term dreams, you will not feel frustrated. You will automatically become more patient as you see in your own life that success comes one step at a time.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "A thousand forests are in one acorn." Remember, first comes the acorn (an idea), next comes the sprout (objectives for that idea), and last comes the forests (success).

But you won't be truly successful and happy unless you are enthusiastic. Napoleon said the effectiveness of an army is based on its size, experience, training, and morale . . . and morale counts for more than all the other combined.

Four keys to success are: (1) creativity, (2) objectives, (3) patience, and (4) enthusiasm. But there is a fifth — and most important — key to success. If you combine the first four keys with love, you'll end up with a giving spirit. And a giving spirit will enable you and others to reap tangible and intangible rewards for years to come.

¹Presented at the annual conference of the International Society of Arboriculture at Boyne Falls, Michigan in August 1981.