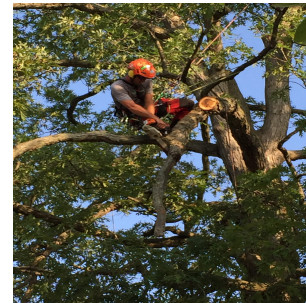


Why is tree work expensive?

By: Lindsey Purcell, lapurcel@purdue.edu



Expensive and complex equipment is often needed around homes.



Tree work requires training and expertise for safe pruning and removals.

There are many different aspects of tree work which include a wide range of costs, but let's start with the most common expense: tree removal. It can be difficult to understand why removing a tree can cost so much when the whole process seems as simple as "just cutting it down." In reality, the work is usually much more involved than making a few cuts with a chain saw and then hauling it all away.

Complexity - Trees being removed often need to be cut apart in sections to avoid dropping the whole tree or large pieces onto the lawn or landscape or into the street. This is a safer approach and also prevents serious damage to the turf and landscape below. News reports are full of accidents involving untrained tree workers, or homeowners, attempting to cut down a tree without the knowledge of how the tree reacts to being cut. Usually, specialized equipment is needed, such as aerial lifts or cranes to access the tree safely. This equipment is costly to acquire and maintain. Some of the typical equipment such as these mentioned can cost more than some homes! Often, the use of this equipment involves setting up traffic control in busy streets where permits and additional flagging support are needed.

Difficult and dangerous - Tree pruning and tree removal, is difficult and dangerous work. Also, there is a reason why the tree is being removed. Often it has been deemed high risk or presents a danger on the site. Tree crews are regularly asked to work on trees with compromised structure from storm damage or years of neglect. These compromised trees are often dead trees, which are particularly dangerous. A tree that has been dead for several years usually becomes brittle and inflexible. When you try to cut it down, controlling the direction of fall is a challenge and it will often shatter, throwing broken branches in an uncontrolled manner. Often, tree workers are in trees that have electrical conductors running through the branches. That risky situation should speak for itself.

Insurance, Licensing - Because tree work can be hazardous, qualified companies will have expensive liability insurance to protect the homeowner's property, as well as workers' compensation insurance to help cover injuries sustained by the crew, should they occur. You get what you pay for and this includes tree care as well! If you select a company that is less expensive, they may not carry insurance which leaves the tree owner at a high risk of having to pay damages several times the original job estimate, if something goes wrong. Always check with your tree care company to be sure they can validate proper insurance before starting tree work. This applies to any service company which may be used in and around your home or property.



Large cranes may be required to safely remove the tree.

Trained and Certified Workers - Its best to choose a tree care company where the crew has current industry credentials and a history of training and experience. How do you know if a company's staff is trained and experienced? Ask to see their credentials and look for programs such as the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist, or the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) Certified Treecare Safety Professional which are indicators of a professional business with the expertise to perform the work.

Tree owners and managers have the option to interview two or three tree care companies before deciding about tree removal or other critical practices such as pruning. Ask to see a copy of the current insurance certificate as well as copies of the crew's competency credentials. If a company representative hesitates to provide these documents or insists, they don't need to "prove" themselves, find another company to perform the work. Ask for references. This is easy since often all that is needed is to drive by a location to see the quality of the pruning work or removal work completed.

Find a professional



Certified Arborists can provide the best care for your trees.

A professional arborist can assess your landscape and work with you to determine the best course of action to care for and maintain the trees and shrubs in your landscape. Contact the Tree Care Industry Association, a public and professional resource on trees and arboriculture since 1938. It has more than 2,200-member companies that recognize stringent safety and performance standards and that are required to carry liability insurance. TCIA has the nation's only Accreditation program that helps consumers find tree care companies that have been inspected and accredited based on adherence to industry standards for quality and safety; maintenance of trained, professional staff; and dedication to ethics and quality in business practices. You can use this service by calling 1-800-733-2622 or by doing a ZIP Code search on www.treecaretips.org Also, to check for an ISA Certified Arborist in your area, visit the website www.treesaregood.org then click on the link "Find an Arborist". By entering your zip code, a list of credentialed arborists can be found nearest your location.

Tree care performed properly will be an investment in your property that, when done correctly, will give you valued returns for decades.

It is the policy of the Purdue University that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran. Purdue is an Affirmative Action Institution. This material may be available in alternative formats. 1-888-EXT-INFO Disclaimer: Reference to products in this publication is not intended to be an endorsement to the exclusion of others which may have similar uses. Any person using products listed in this publication assumes full responsibility for their use in accordance with current directions of the manufacturer.

Purdue Landscape Report © Purdue University - www.purduelandscape.com