

WHY AN ARBORIST SHOULD CHECK YOUR TREES

Time and time again I talk to homeowners and property managers who are having problems with their trees. A lot of the time they have had trees planted by landscape companies and the trees have died. If this falls within the one year guarantee window that most companies give, they get the trees replaced for free.

But what if it happens again? I recently ran into this situation and the installing company did not guarantee the replacement trees. Now four of these trees are dead and two more will soon be dead. The others have disease and insect problems. This is a perfect example of why you should have a certified arborist inspect your existing trees, advise you on what type of trees to plant and if possible, install the trees for you.

In the example I mention, a certified arborist would have known that the non-native trees being planted are susceptible to insect and disease problems whereas there is a native alternative that is resistant to these. The certified arborist would have recommended the native tree be planted. While it might cost more to have an arborist install the trees, they will take care in doing it as prescribed by the International Society of Arboriculture. This means digging the hole twice as wide as the root ball, taking off the burlap and not planting the tree too deep. A well trained and knowledgeable arborist will also include mycorrhizae fungi at the time of planting to help the root systems develop.

While a landscaping company might be well meaning and willing to perform the labor involved in tree planting and tree care, most of them do not have the training and knowledge to do it correctly. This can mean added expense to the customer in replacement of trees that do not survive initial planting and ones that don't live as long as they should due to improper care.

Certified arborists are dedicated to the long term survival of trees. They are trained and keep up on the latest information in proper tree care. While their fees might be higher than those of a landscaper, in the long run you save money by having the best practices being recommended for your trees. And after all, trees are meant to live a lot longer than they do under urban/suburban conditions.

The best way to go about a new planting project is to have a certified arborist visit the proposed site, tell them what you have in mind and let them give you their opinion on whether your plan will be successful in the long run. We all want landscapes that have mature trees but if we are constantly replacing trees that fail we lose precious years needed to grow small trees into large shade trees.



CARBON DAY 2009

On September 15, 2009 Illinois celebrated the first annual Carbon Day. From the Carbon Day website, "The Carbon Day Holiday is an annual event that promotes the reduction of our individual and collective carbon footprint through various climate action plans such as: Tree Planting, Recycling Programs, City Gardening, and Educational developments in schools, corporations, and government agencies." (<http://carboday.com>).

Carbon Day took place in the idyllic setting of Lincoln Park, under some mature trees, a fitting location. There was live music, tree planting, mulching and climbing demonstrations, electric cars, recycling information, city gardens, children's activities and other efficient energy organizations.

The day started with local 7th and 8th graders visiting in shifts with the different demonstrations and eagerly listening to the presentations. Since children will inherit the world that we leave them, it is important that they get an appreciation for the challenges humans face in cleaning up the environmental messes that we have made. As the day went on more people started trickling in, from mothers and fathers with kids in strollers to local workers and other adults attracted by the live music.

Carbon Day organizer Brae Hattaway looks forward to next year's celebration and is planning to schedule the event for a weekend to allow more people to attend. Look for information on their website.