



ARBORISTS, BIG AND SMALL

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Arboriculture is a broad industry and there are different types of Arborists with different qualifications. The term 'Arborist' is broad. Most industries have a term like this that has a broad meaning. Think Doctor or Lawyer—it tells you something but not enough to hire the right one. You still need to know their specialty. Choosing the right arborist for your trees is half the battle.

Tree Removal and/or Pruning Companies

There are many local tree companies. These companies may be licensed by the State of California to do business, but they do not necessarily know any of the science of tree growth and/or response to canopy pruning and root impacts. These companies are qualified to remove trees that are no longer valuable in the landscape, such as dead or dying trees. You should remember when you discuss your trees with these companies that there is no guarantee the information they give you is accurate.

ISA Certified Arborist

An International Society of Arboriculture <https://www.isa-arbor.com> Certified Arborist is someone who has been trained and tested to have specialized knowledge of trees. You will still want to check references and make sure the arborist you are talking to isn't just out of school. Experience is required!

Some services provided by arborists:

- Health and Structure assessments—to help homeowners take better care of their trees
- Risk Assessments—decisions about whether or not a tree will damage your property. There is a specialized course for this process "Tree Risk Assessment Qualification." Any arborist offering advice about pruning and/or removal due to a risk of failure should have this qualification.
- Development Reports—Property development rules are different in every jurisdiction. An arborist that provides these services will be able to help you identify which trees should be preserved and provide a replacement/fee plan for submittal with grading or building plans.
- Municipal Arborist—Management of our urban canopy as a whole. Address issues such as how many trees are over mature and declining vs. how many young trees are growing to take their place. Often they are intimately involved in making local regulations and working at the cities and counties in the planning departments.

Consulting Arborist

An American Society of Consulting Arborists Registered Consulting Arborist <https://www.asca-consultants.org> is someone who has been trained and tested to have specialized knowledge of trees and trained to provide high quality reports and documentation. Most of the consulting arborists have been in the industry for a long time and many provide services for disputes and damage claims.



An arborist using a tomograph, a tool used to detect decay and assess the interior health of a tree.

Photo by Denice Britton.