

Sustainable Landscaping – Why Hire a Tree Care Professional

I've been an Urban Forester for over 16 years in both the public and private sectors in our region. I am a Certified Arborist and hold the Tree Risk Assessment Qualification through the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). I'm also a Registered Consulting Arborist with the American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA). I've been a Lake Ridge resident for over 6 years, and I'm very passionate about protecting and restoring the urban forest within the community, including the trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants within the common areas as well as on residents' individual lots. The last few years I have also worked to restore the natural forest habitat within our community as Operations Director with Lake Ridge Deer Management and Conservation, Inc.

I am excited to introduce this series, "**Sustainable Landscaping**," the practice of selecting plants that are specifically adapted to your climate and implementing maintenance practices that require minimal resource inputs such as fuel, fertilizers, pesticides, water, and time. Sustainable landscapes provide many benefits such as reduce energy bills, improve air and water quality, restore wildlife habitats, protect and enhance soil, and create value through significant economic, social, and environmental benefits.

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I am sure many of you have had a so called "Tree Guy" or two knock on your door and offer to prune or remove your trees. Please beware of these individuals going door to door, claiming to be arborists and offering bargains for performing tree work. Many of them have no professional tree care credentials and may perform unnecessary work that can be detrimental to your tree's health. They may not even have insurance. Would you hire someone who randomly knocked on your door, claiming to be an electrician, to wire your unfinished basement or an addition you were planning? Most likely not. Driving through Lake Ridge, I have seen many examples of poor tree pruning that ultimately results in tree decline and then removal.



Arborists specialize in the care of individual trees. Hiring an arborist is not a decision that should be taken lightly. Proper tree care is an investment, which provides a substantial return and can add considerable value to your property. Most people spend more money on maintaining their grass than on maintaining their trees and landscaping. This is unfortunate since properly maintained trees often contribute about 15 times more to their property value than well maintained turf. When looking for the right arborist for the job, I suggest checking for membership in professional organizations such as the ISA, the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), or ASCA. ISA Certified Arborists and ASCA Registered Consulting Arborists are both experienced professionals who have passed at least one extensive examination covering all

aspects of tree care. Certified Arborists are typically the type of arborist you would hire to do tree pruning, removals, plant health care, or tree planting. If you are not sure what type of tree care you may need or just want unbiased advice on how you should be managing your landscaping, I recommend hiring a Registered Consulting Arborist. To find an ISA Certified Arborist in your area or for additional tree care information please visit www.treesaregood.com. If you are looking for a Registered Consulting Arborist in your area, please visit www.asca-consultants.org.

