

## **Avoid Door to Door Tree Trimmers**

### **AGRI-VIEWS**

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

A couple of weeks ago we had a situation where a tree trimmer(s) was going door to door asking homeowners if they needed their trees trimmed. One of the homeowners called me because the individual had made it sound like a tree was about to fall on the house. The price quoted was basically double what a local firm would charge to remove it. Fortunately this homeowner didn't succumb to the pressure, subtle as it may or may not have been, but called me instead. While one never knows when any tree might fail, this one did not appear to need to be removed immediately!

First of all, never, ever hire someone who is going door to door to do any kind of work and certainly not tree trimming. Many of these folks do not have the proper licenses to be going door to door and conducting business in Junction City. We have several good local firms to do tree trimming and they won't come knocking on your door unless you call them first! The prices local businesses quote on tree trimming jobs will also be more realistic than the door to door people will quote. The added bonus is that these local arborists are people that live here in the community just like you. They were here yesterday and they will be here tomorrow!

Proper trimming of trees is something that is part science and part art. It's learning how a tree grows and ages. It's learning to read the structure of the tree and tell tale early signs of problems. Most trees, if we pay attention, give us indicators of their health. Arborists learn to look where new growth has originated. They look at the base of the tree for proper root flares or funny looking flat spots on the trunks. Reading a tree is something that you learn to do from years of practice.

Arborists know the proper way to remove branches and not remove branches. Leaving a long stub will result in proliferation of new growth that is only attached to the bark, not the heartwood of a tree. Large pruning cuts also don't heal properly allowing plenty of opportunity for decay organisms to enter the tree and start rotting it from the inside out. Arborists know what a bark ridge collar is and why you want to stay just on the outside of it. They also know how to cut a branch so you don't wind up with bark being torn down the side of a tree.

Local arborists, and local businesses, will give you local references to check with. They will be licensed, bonded and insured and can provide you proof of that. They will likely be members of the Kansas Arborist Association which means that they've likely also been certified by the KAA and have completed the arborist training course. An arborist isn't going to try to scare you into making a quick decision. I've known arborists who have even told homeowners that a tree doesn't have to be cut down, it just needs to be trimmed a little bit.

If all else fails, give me a call to come and inspect your tree. I've completed the arborist training course (just don't ask me to do your tree trimming or tree removal though), and I attend regular updates on tree health. If a tree needs to be pruned or removed, I will tell you without scare tactics. I'll explain the options and what level of concern I may have about a certain tree. If you need an arborist, I'll give you the names of some Junction City/Manhattan professionals that have done business here for many years.

It seems so often that the victims of these so called businesses are the older members of the community. Don't let yourself or your neighbors be duped by these folks. If you're concerned about your trees, call me first!