



Our Homes



Arborists: The doctors of trees

By Abigail Albair
Editor

Trees tell a tale, just like people.

"More or less, I'm really a tree doctor," said Terry Ryan, owner of New England Arborists, LLC located in Avon. "I'm entrusted by the Department of Environmental Protection to know what is going on with a tree on an individual basis. They come down with sickness just like we do. Some are curable, some are not."

In the homes article, "Tips to protect your home from winter," in the Dec. 17, 2009 issue of The Valley Press, the suggestion was made to have trees checked by a "horticultural expert," but as Ryan explained to The Press, the Connecticut DEP considers the welfare, diagnosis and health of trees to be the responsibility of licensed arborists.

"Our motto is to protect and preserve," Ryan said. "What you have going on in the whole tree world is people who are just tree removal guys. We are the caretakers of the health of trees. Trees don't always have to come down, and we've built up a customer base of people looking for more that can be done for their trees."

New England Arborists is the only state-licensed arborist company in Avon, and Ryan does work for schools, golf courses, condo complexes and others as well as private homes to assess what may be wrong with a tree

and what treatment he can suggest and supply.

"Others have a remove first, analyze second way of doing things, but we work in reverse to see if we can salvage something and keep it safe and healthy. If you've cleared out your backyard, you can't get the beautiful hard wood species like the sugar maple back. They aren't being replaced once they're cut down."

"In the tree removal business," Ryan explained, "there is no standardized pricing. You have to assess the environment, power lines in the area, sewer lines, etc. ... Every situation is different and it can be pricey. We are looking for a cost-effective approach to preserving what you already have on your property so we have done well in this economy."

Ryan takes several approaches to curing what ails a tree. "We may use a chemical injection if it is a bug or parasite we're going after. As much as people love to fertilize their grass, it can steal nutrients from the trees, so we do deep root fertilization to help the tree flourish. Sometimes just a little bit of thinning or bracing a tree can prolong its life and make it as least hazardous as possible," he said.

Ryan also explained that even as a tree encroaches on a house, it may not need to come down. "Especially when it comes to bigger trees like the oak and sugar maple, I'm looking to save it. We want to work with the tree to help

it any way we can," he said.

When clearing trees off your land, you may want to think twice before just randomly removing them.

Ryan said, "We can tell you what the result will be of taking certain trees down and paint a broader picture of what will happen after they are gone. It can be a shock to surrounding trees once the effect of wind or sun on them changes."

He added, "For some small trees, it is as if their bigger brothers on the outside are taking care of them, so when that changes it will affect that specific tree."

Arborists in Connecticut receive a great deal of education to become licensed and, as Ryan explained, they are "always learning."

As part of the Connecticut protective tree association, arborists are routinely updated on new pests and predators in the area and new available treatments.

"There are devastating predators that just haven't reached our area yet," Ryan explained.

Arborists are also educated on the growth patterns of specific shrubs and each species of tree. "There is a real difference between what arborists do and what people who cut grass do. How you prune something will affect its health. We do a lot of corrective pruning because someone has done something wrong and now we need to reverse the damage," Ryan said.

For arborists, their work comes from a love for trees, and "It can be a long patient process. We have no miracle cure," Ryan said. "We're not for everyone, but the people that value the money

they put into their property and preserving the beautiful landscaping they naturally have will appreciate it."

New England Arborists, LLC is at 38 Westridge Drive in Avon.

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