

# Local arborists say winter is the time to get work done

**Annette McGee Rasch**  
*IVN Senior Contributing Writer*

With substantial wildfire season pretty much a sure bet each year, it's the winter months that provide property owners the opportunity to remove hazard or dead trees, prune live trees and clear brush to minimize threats to their homes and lands. And, last winter clearly reminded residents of another potential hazard, after snow-weighted trees and branches fell onto buildings after several early January storms.

While many people like to save a few bucks by hiring friends or amateurs, when it comes to projects that can cost thousands in damages - or worse, end someone's life - it's advisable to hire licensed, insured and bonded professionals to take those risks.

"The concept of dropping a tree is very easy, but the reality is that it can go very good or very bad," said Sam Beeler of Beeler's Tree Service. "The difference between a complete win or an epic fail is in a half-inch of hinge wood and it all happens extremely fast. Once it starts to go, that's all your eggs in one basket, especially if you're falling dead trees."

"We specialize in hazard tree removal," added Beeler's wife, Erika, who helps in the business. "We have the experience to get the job done right, quickly, and most importantly, safe. With uninsured individuals if there's an accident, they can walk away and leave you with the damages. You'll be hoping your

personal homeowner's insurance will cover the incident. And that deductible could be pretty high."

Beeler's Tree Service has operated locally for over two years, though he's worked in the industry much longer, initially gaining "great experience" working at his father's Grants Pass excavating company: Beeler's Small Tractor Works.

"We did a lot of right-of-way clearing for the gas company, so I got my base there," Beeler said. "I also trained with other arborists, including Heath Spangler. That was a huge benefit - an invaluable resource. Heath taught me to do things from the stump - specialty techniques to get the tree down without climbing it, which saves time and money."

A professional climbing arborist, Beeler also does work with "heavy rigging" and has even shimmed up over 100 feet to rescue cats stuck in trees!

Sometimes Beeler, and Spangler, who owns and operates Spangler Tree LLC, work together. They once utilized a 160-ton crane to remove a 12-foot diameter multi-stem oak tree (with a rotten central cavity) near buildings and power lines.

They also did substantial tree work at the Siskiyou Community Health Center - after the buildings were constructed and the parking lot and landscaping were finished. And even with removal of numerous large dead trees, the work was accomplished without any damages.

With live trees, Beeler does "shaping and health restoration. I also deal with a lot of leaners. Sometimes we can hook one tree to another to re-stabilize. There's a lot of factors, like where is the branch weight? Is the root system stable? Does it have support from other trees? We like to save the trees, but sometimes you have a really good tree in a really bad location."

Beeler also does large-scale pruning to remove fire hazards and preserve the integrity of buildings. "With large trees next to the house, a good rule-of-thumb is to keep branches at least 10-15 feet from your roof. And we shape the tree the best way for the long term. Many problems can be avoided by proper pruning, but you must understand the right technique for the right species to prevent trees from getting stuck growing the wrong way."

Beeler said people can check out [www.beelertreeservice.com](http://www.beelertreeservice.com) to watch videos that demonstrate "exactly what we can do." He also provides tree health advice and tips on his site and on Facebook.

"Call us for free estimates and tree inspections," he said. "Dying trees are dry trees that become fire hazards and they can transfer bugs to healthy trees nearby. We're available 24/7 for storm damage and other emergencies. We have the skills, equipment, and personnel to conquer all obstacles and to clean up all the debris." He also works with people with varying budgets - and said prices come down when clients handle their own debris. Reach Beeler at 541-660-5963.

Beeler's mentor, Heath Spangler, has operated in the Illinois Valley for many years. In addition to providing the same full range of hazard tree removal, pruning and other arborist-related services as Beeler does, Spangler also specializes in selective logging.

"We can look at what timber you have, create a plan and give an approximate price according to the market," he said. "We can clear land, say for a home site."

Spangler also has a 13,000 pound excavator that can accomplish a wide range of projects, including clearing brush out of ditches. "And we have a mower head so we can also recover fields from blackberries and remove other brush to help people with their wildland urban interface areas," he said.

At 14, Spangler began learning his trade from his father, Julius Spangler, an experienced logger who still falls trees. And now, during wildfires, Spangler is one of those daring timber fallers who goes in ahead of fire crews to create safety zones. He'll often cut large trees on slopes, dropping them back onto burnt areas, to ensure safety for crews who



(Courtesy photo for the Illinois Valley News)

**Sam Beeler working on a very tall tree.**

then go in and create a fire line.

You can see a startling photo of Spangler on his website, [www.trippingtrees.com](http://www.trippingtrees.com), with saw in hand, carefully jogging away from the huge burning tree that he'd just cut - as it was starting to fall. It's all in a day's work.

Spangler's wife, Tonya Spangler, who assists him on jobs, said, "He has an intuition about trees that's just incredible to see. He got that from his dad. He's done some amazing stuff."

"For many people I know that money is tight and that sometimes we do things only when we have to," Spangler said. "However emergency tree service is a lot more expensive than getting ahead of the trouble. We give free estimates and if there's a threat to your house, and it's more than you can afford, we're going to look for solutions. We try to work with people according to their circumstances, to make everyone safe."

Spangler is also well-insured, both for arborist work like hazardous tree removal, and he has "Loggers Broad Form" insurance for his logging operation. Contact Spangler at 541-659-8789.



(Courtesy photo for the Illinois Valley News)

**Heath Spangler works to fall a tree.**

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