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LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY



## Press Release

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## Strain: Hire Licensed Horticulture Professionals

**Baton Rouge, LA (April 14, 2015)** – It's that time of year when people will be working in their yards and doing some landscaping. While many find that work rewarding, Louisiana Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) Commissioner Mike Strain, D.V.M., is urging Louisiana homeowners to use only licensed landscape horticulturists, arborists and landscape irrigation contractors when there is a need to hire out for these services at their homes or businesses.

“Not everyone who claims to be a “yard specialist” is actually a landscaping professional which requires training. All arborists, landscape horticulturists and landscape irrigation contractors must be licensed by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry,” Strain said. Oversight of these professionals is through the LDAF's Horticulture and Quarantine Programs division.

Strain advises that homeowners ask to see a license issued by LDAF before allowing any work to be done on their property. Homeowners should also ask arborists, landscape horticulturists and landscape irrigation contractors for references before engaging their services and should follow up by checking those references.

“Licensed arborists and landscape irrigation contractors must also have current liability insurance before a license is issued. Homeowners should ask for a copy of their insurance,” Strain said.

Strain added, “They can then call the contractor's insurance company to verify that the policy is current or they can contact our office. These are basic steps homeowners should take to be sure that they are hiring a licensed professional.”

Strain said horticulture professionals must pass an exam to ensure that they have the training necessary to do the work. Arborists and landscape irrigation contractors are required to attend continuing education training to renew their licenses. In addition, licensed horticultural professionals are required to display their LDAF license number on their vehicles when advertising their services. A written contract also is required to do arborist or landscape irrigation contract work.

Call the Horticulture and Quarantine Programs division at 225-952-8100 if there are any questions about whether a landscape horticulturist, landscape irrigation contractor or arborist is properly licensed. A list of licensed horticulture professionals is also available at [www.LDAF.la.gov](http://www.LDAF.la.gov).

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