

Spot Red Flags Before You Buy

Take this checklist with you when house hunting—because what’s happening in the yard can cost you big after move-in. This quick guide will help you assess whether the trees and landscape are safe, healthy, and worth the investment.

Are large trees located close to the home, driveway, or power lines?	
Are trees leaning toward structures or driveways?	
Are branches overhanging the roof or chimneys?	
Do you see dead limbs, large cracks, or hollow trunks?	
Are leaves discolored (yellowing, spotting) or unusually sparse?	
Are there signs of fungus, mushrooms, or rot at the base of any trees?	
Are there exposed roots, pooling water, or signs of soil erosion?	
Do you see mulch volcanoes or bark damage at the base of trees?	
Are trees planted too deep or smothered by compacted soil?	
Do any plants have visible pests or sticky leaves?	
Are there aggressive vines (like English ivy) climbing trees or fences?	
Is there visible damage to bark, leaves, or branches?	
Does the lawn show bare patches, excessive weeds, or moss buildup?	
Are shrubs and ornamental trees well-pruned and spaced?	
Is there evidence of regular landscape maintenance?	

0–4 Checks = Yard is in good shape! Consider a professional walkthrough to be sure.

5–9 Checks = Moderate concern. Budget for some maintenance or tree care work.

10+ Checks = High risk! Schedule an inspection before committing.