

The Tree Sourcing Guide

Don't bring home a problem. Follow this 5-step visual story to finding the perfect tree for your property.

The Nursery Secret: 90% of trees sold in big-box stores have fatal defects hidden in the pot. Use this inspection guide to find the 10% that will thrive.

The Root Flare Test



X BURIED (No O2)

✓ VISIBLE FLARE

STEP 01

Check the Feet

The "Root Flare" is where the trunk widens into roots. It takes in oxygen. If it is buried by soil, the tree slowly suffocates.

The Test: Brush away the top inch of soil. Do you see the flare? Or does it go straight down like a telephone pole?

STEP 02

Inspect the Spine

The trunk is the highway for water and nutrients. You want a single, undamaged column.

- **No Wounds:** Avoid trees with scraped bark from shipping.
- **Caliper Ratio:** A 15-gallon pot should have a ~1 inch trunk. If it's a giant 3-inch trunk stuffed in a small pot, it is **pot-bound** and will fail.



Transport Wounds

Scrapes = entry points for fungus.
Reject damaged bark.

Dominance Check



✗ CODOMINANT



✓ CENTRAL LEADER

STEP 03

Look at the Sky

A tree should have **one single captain** (the Central Leader). If it splits into a "V" shape at the top, it will likely split in a storm later.

Topped Trees: If the main leader was cut flat, do not buy it. It will never regain proper structure.

STEP 04

The Passport Check

Local Provenance matters. Trees have genetics adapted to their birthplace. Just because a species *can* grow in your state doesn't mean *that specific tree* will survive.

Example: A Red Maple grown in cool, wet Oregon will scorched and die in the dry heat of Texas. You need a Red Maple grown in Texas.

Always ask: "Where was this tree grown?"



Local vs. Import

Does the climate match?
Oregon 🌧️ → Texas ☀️ = 💀



Health Red Flags

- Scales under leaves
- Mushrooms at base
- Circling Roots (Pot Bound)

STEP 05

The Physical Exam

Perform a final health check before loading it up.

🐛 **Pests:** Flip the leaves over. Look for tiny dots (mites) or sticky bumps (scale).

🍄 **Disease:** Check the base for mushrooms or bleeding cankers.

🪴 **Pot Bound:** Dig your finger 2 inches into the edge of the pot. If you feel roots circling like a snake, reject it. It is too big for its container.

Found a Winner?

Get a final "Sanity Check" before you dig. Upload photos of your tree selection and let us verify it.

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Book 15-Min Consult (\$90)