

Tree Inspections Should be Included with House Inspections

by Paul Markworth, Board Certified Master Arborist WI-0153B

You wouldn't think of buying a house without having a satisfactory report from a professional home inspector. You would be wise to have your future trees inspected by a professional arborist, also.

It can be a very costly mistake not to have the trees on a property inspected before buying. Treating an unsound tree can cost anywhere from \$250 for a simple pruning to over \$2,500 for a complete removal. A tree inspection and report for a typical property will usually run from \$125 to \$250. A hazardous tree can be a major expense, a legal liability, a cause for disaster, or even all of these. An inspection is a small cost compared with the potential expense.

A tree inspection isn't just for older properties. Trees are often damaged during home construction. Roots can be severed, trunks gashed, the grade changed over root systems or soil compacted over roots. All of these can mean trouble and even death for a tree, which means a future expense. Visible symptoms of tree decline may not be evident for several years, making it more difficult to stabilize the decline.

Trees needing extensive work can give the buyer a negotiating advantage.

It is a smart move for sellers to have their trees taken care of before putting their houses on the market. Trees can account for as much as 25% of a property's market value. Well-cared-for trees can give a house "curb appeal," that very important first impression those prospective buyers get as they drive up.

A professional inspection involves assessing the tree from top to bottom, analyzing everything that could affect its health and hazard potential. Some of the items a professional arborist will check for are: root problems, structural weaknesses of the trunk and major limbs, excessive deadwood, disease problems and insect infestations. The arborist will also look for any conditions that could endanger the house or utility lines.

The professional arborists at Wachtel also use a Resistograph™ to check inside suspect trees for structural weaknesses that could mean the tree is a hazard to life and property.

Considering the value of healthy trees along with the cost and hazard potential of unsound ones, it makes good financial sense to have them inspected. A tree inspection by a Wachtel Certified Arborist will help you make an informed purchase and protect your investment.