



THE NORTH TEXAS FALL TREE CHECKLIST

17 things to check before winter weather arrives

Walk your property tree by tree. Check each item, photograph anything concerning, and never stand beneath a damaged or hanging limb.

START WITH THESE 3

- 1 **Dead, broken, or hanging limbs**
- 2 **Cracks, cavities, soft wood, or a new lean**
- 3 **Limbs over roofs, vehicles, walkways, or play areas**

SAFETY FIRST Keep people and pets away from unstable trees. Do not attempt risky overhead work yourself.

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| ☐ 1. Look up into the canopy
Watch for dead, broken, or hanging limbs that wind or ice could bring down. | ☐ 5. Manage fallen leaves
Mulch a thin layer into the lawn or remove heavy mats that block light and hold moisture. |
| ☐ 2. Check low-hanging branches
Note limbs over roofs, driveways, walkways, vehicles, play areas, or utility lines. | ☐ 6. Cover cold-sensitive shrubs
Keep breathable frost cloth ready for tender plants and newly planted shrubs. |
| ☐ 3. Look for cracks, splits, or decay
Check trunks and major limbs for cracks, cavities, soft wood, oozing, holes, or sawdust. | ☐ 7. Refresh the mulch ring
Maintain 2-4 inches of mulch, keeping it several inches away from the trunk. |
| ☐ 4. Protect young or thin-barked trees
Use a light-colored, breathable trunk wrap in late fall; remove it after the last spring frost. | ☐ 8. Water before hard freezes
If conditions are dry, deeply water the root zone before a freeze; avoid soggy soil. |

NORTH TEXAS OAK NOTE

Oak pruning timing matters because oak wilt can spread through fresh wounds. Have an arborist confirm timing and paint fresh oak cuts immediately, regardless of season.



FINISH YOUR FALL WALK-AROUND

Small warning signs are easier to address before winter storms.

- ☐ **9. Prune dead or risky limbs**
Address dead, crossing, or weakly attached branches before winter storms arrive.
- ☐ **10. Consider root-zone care**
Compacted North Texas clay may need attention, but test the soil before fertilizing.
- ☐ **11. Clear gutters and yard debris**
Remove limbs, twigs, and leaf buildup that can block drainage or become windblown debris.
- ☐ **12. Cut vines at the base**
Let climbing vines die back naturally; pulling them can tear bark and cause more damage.
- ☐ **13. Remove bagworm bags**
Hand-pick bags from cedars, junipers, and cypress now, then dispose of them off-site.
- ☐ **14. Check stakes and tree ties**
Loosen anything cutting into bark and remove staking once the tree is established.
- ☐ **15. Add wildlife protection**
Use a trunk guard where deer or rabbits may damage the bark of young trees.
- ☐ **16. Winterize tree irrigation**
Inspect drip lines and emitters before freezing weather damages the system.
- ☐ **17. Check weak branch unions**
Tight V-shaped forks or co-dominant trunks may need professional cabling or bracing.

CALL AN ARBORIST IF YOU SEE:

- A hanging or partially broken limb
- A new or worsening lean
- A deep crack, split, or cavity
- Soft or hollow-sounding wood

DON'T GUESS. GET A PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT.

See a crack, hanging limb, unusual lean, or hollow area? Don't guess. Schedule an assessment with Plano Tree Care.

CALL 214-502-8375

PlanoTreeCareInc.com



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This checklist is educational and does not replace an on-site tree risk assessment.