

Is My Tree Dead or Dormant?

Quick Reference Guide - Greenleaf Tree Care

3 TESTS TO CHECK YOUR TREE THIS SPRING

TEST 1: THE SCRATCH TEST

- Choose a pencil-thin branch
- Scratch a small patch of bark with your fingernail
- Green or white inside = ALIVE and dormant
- Brown and dry inside = dead branch
- Test 3-5 branches at different heights

TEST 2: THE BUD TEST

- Look at branch tips in early spring
- Firm, plump buds = tree is dormant and alive
- Shriveled, dry, absent = dead section
- Deciduous trees should show buds by late March

TEST 3: THE BEND TEST

- Bend a thin branch gently
- Flexible = alive
- Snaps cleanly with no green inside = dead

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR TREE SHOWS DEAD AREAS:

1. Do NOT immediately cut the whole tree
2. Wait until late spring to confirm which parts leaf out
3. Call an arborist if more than 30% of canopy is affected
4. Dead trees near structures need professional assessment