

Bottom-Only Leaf Growth: A Homeowner's Ground Check

What to look at before you call an arborist, from Dragonetti Green Leaf Tree Care

Read the canopy

1 Note how much of the top is bare

Lower third bare is concerning; more than half is serious.

2 Scratch test branches you can reach

Green and moist means alive; brown and dry means dead.

3 Watch for woodpecker activity

Heavy pecking can signal borers feeding under the bark.

Check the trunk and base

1 Find the root flare

The trunk should widen into the ground, not go straight in like a pole.

2 Look for a girdling root or old ties

Roots circling the trunk or leftover straps choke the flow upward.

3 Inspect for decay clues

Mushrooms, soft wood, peeling bark, frass, or exit holes; photograph them.

Decide your next move

1 Do not cut the low sprouts yet

They may be the healthiest growth the tree has left.

2 Call a certified arborist for any hazard sign

Decay, a lean, or a tree over your home or the street needs a pro.

Tree concern in New York City and the surrounding counties? Our certified arborists can help.

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