

# design NJ

**Q** What kinds of potential landscaping problems should I beware of when buying a new home?

**A** When evaluating the outside of a home, consider several critical factors to save thousands of dollars and much aggravation. Here are five key areas:

## 1. SHADE

How many times do you walk into the woods and see spectacular color? You don't. A dense overhang of trees or a shaded lot will drastically reduce the selection of colorful plants that will grow underneath. If you are an avid gardener who likes colorful, sun-loving plants, you will have to undertake the expense of trimming back tree branches or risk the health of improperly planted material.

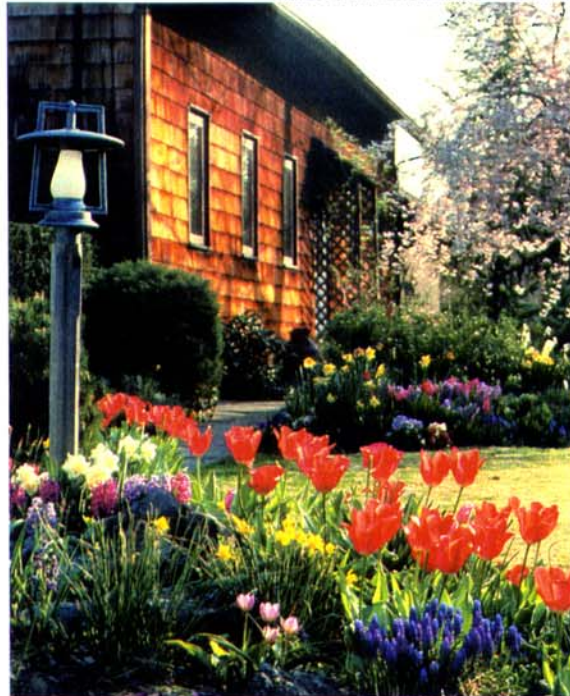
## 2. ROOTS

Be cautious of large trees planted too close to the home's foundation, driveways, patios, walks, and other hardscape. Tree roots are strong and can cause these structures to heave and crack. In the case of the foundation, this could allow water into the home.

## 3. DEER

If you buy a home in an area populated with deer, expect added expense to protect trees and shrubs. A landscaper can plant material that deer don't love, but you can still expect damage if a bad winter forces them to forage in populated areas. There are alternative solutions, though many are quite expensive.

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When looking for a new home, it's wise to choose a property that can be landscaped easily.

## 4. GRADE

Take a close look at the pitch of land at the front, back, and sides of the home. If you see a steep pitch toward the foundation, come back and examine the home on a rainy day to see whether water collects there. You may need to regrade the property or install a drainage system, either of which can be quite costly. Also, it's important to visualize how you intend to use the backyard. If the grade is too severe, it may be expensive to install pools, patios, or a grassy area for kids to play.

## 5. ROCK

Visualize two nearly identical properties. One has a tremendous amount of rock in the ground and the other does not. When the time comes to plant or build a patio, walkway, pool, or other structure, the homeowner with the rocky earth will pay much more for the work.

A beautiful outdoor living space can add significant value to your home and allow for hours of enjoyment. If you analyze these aspects of a property first, you can make a more educated determination of pitfalls to avoid. Shop the outside, as well as the inside, of a home when making one of the biggest decisions of your life. **DN**

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