Black Knot
FACT SHEET

GREEN DROP Tree Care





What it is:

Black knot is caused by the fungus Apiosporina morbosa, which infects trees in the spring, around the time of bud emergence. It is most commonly found on plum, cherry, and other trees of the genus Prunus. Spores of this disease are released following a period of warm, wet weather. New growth, previously wounded tissues, and trees that are stressed are most commonly infected.

Symptoms:

The characteristics of Black Knot is the presence of thick, black, irregular swellings on twigs and branches. These “fungal stroma” are the hardy fruiting bodies of the fungus, and are more noticeable in the winter when leaves are not present. The disease is difficult to notice during the early stages of infection, and appears initially as small, light brown swellings on current or previous season’s growth. The following year, the swellings appear olive green with a velvety texture. By the end of the season, the knots darken and harden – these knots are hardy to environmental changes, and are how the fungus overwinters. Numerous knots may be present on one tree. They enlarge every year, and may range from a ½ inch to 1 foot in length! Often the branch beyond the knot will either fail to leaf out, or will wilt, suddenly. The fungus continues to grow internally and externally, then the branch eventually becomes girdled and dies back.

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Prevention:

Complete eradication is currently not possible. There is no effective chemical control for this disease, and pruning of the afflicted areas is recommended if the disease is not present in the main stem, and if the tree in question is of high value. Pruning out the infection is a labor-intensive procedure as cutting tools require sterilization between each cut, but it can slow the progression of the disease.

Once the infection gets out of control in a tree, the only option is to remove the tree.

Watering & Fertilizing

- Proper watering and fertilizing is always good for your trees

Pruning

- Prune off infected branches 2-4 inches below each "knot" and dispose of them in a landfill.
- Between each cut, sanitize your tools with a bleach□water solution (25% bleach, 75% water). □
- The best time to prune is during late winter, as the fungus is dormant and the abnormal “knotty” growths are easy to see. □ Avoid pruning in the spring when the fungus is active.
- The fungus is transported by spores so the proper sanitization of pruning tools is very important to limit its spread from plant to plant

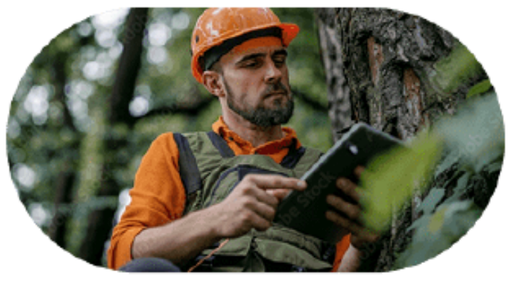






Contact

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