

# Black Knot



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What is it?



Can we prevent it?

200 year old problem

Fungal infection

In Alberta most aggressive on Maydays  
and Schuberg chokecherries

Common on plum, apricot and cherry  
trees





Spreads in the spring.

Fungus causes rapid growth of plant cells until they distort and stunt the tree.

The fungus releases spores which are carried by wind and splashing rain.

Symptoms (galls) start 20 months earlier than they are seen.

Initially they look like swellings, similar to cork.





Knots develop after winter into the second season.

Can continue to spread lengthwise every year, won't stop spreading if left unchecked.

# Controlling Black Knot

*Do not ignore this – it will not go away!*



The only reliable treatment is pruning



- Not in spring or in wet, warm weather
- Ideally between Halloween and the end of March



# Pruning

Cleanly cut off 6-10 inches from the knot

Better to prune back to a healthy collar, rather than leaving a stub

For knots on scaffold branches or trunks that can't be removed, use a knife to cut away diseased tissue down to good wood and at least 1/2 inch beyond the edge of the knot





# Pruning

After every cut,  
sterilize your  
pruners with a  
solution of 70%  
rubbing alcohol



After you've cut off the infected branches, treat them like **HAZARDOUS WASTE** - they can still spit out spores for 4 months.

### *Destroy immediately*

They will destroy growth beyond them.



Wrap them in a plastic bag



Put them in the trash



Burn them in winter time-not in spring



Bury them



Remove them from the site



DO NOT compost them

# Prevention

Clean it from your yard

Educate neighbours and hope they do the same – work together on the problem

Fungus thrives in moisture – don't water if you don't need to

Water with a drip hose instead of spraying water into the air



# Prevention

Prune regularly – clear out old wood to keep good air circulation

If you have critters nibbling on your bark, wrap it in the winter. Black Knot spores love to live in fresh scar tissue.



# Thank you!

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