

BLACK KNOT

Black knot is a fungal disease native to North America. It is found on Schubert chokecherry, western (native) chokecherry and mayday trees. If diseased tissue is removed from affected trees each year, a tree is unlikely to die from this disease. The disease is easy to see in the fall and winter when the trees have lost their leaves. Watch for swellings on branches that are hard, brownish black lumps. An annual inspection is needed to keep the disease under control. The best time to prune off the diseased swellings is in the fall or winter before spores are released in the spring.



Prune out the diseased branch below the infection. Pruning the infected areas and disinfecting tools between trees and / or cuts may also help prevent spreading the fungus. It is strongly recommended to use a certified arborist to do the pruning because they will ensure your trees are pruned following ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) guidelines. All diseased material should be disposed of by either burying (garbage dump) or burning.

Other methods to prevent black knot involve good plant health care practices. Put mulch around trees to provide nutrients and conserve water. Be sure the tree receives enough water during dry periods, and fertilize if the tree is looking weak and has poor growth. Always remember that healthy plants resist diseases and insects better.

The Town of Okotoks manages black knot by pruning susceptible species in manicured areas yearly and by planting alternate species such as tree lilac, Ohio buckeye and Amur maple. Black knot in natural areas within the town is not removed as the fungus is native.

Be sure to inspect your trees for **black knot** and talk to your neighbors with infected trees. If there are any questions or to obtain a copy of pruning instructions and procedures, contact the Urban Forester at 403-938-8958.