

# FIRE BLIGHT

Fire blight is a bacterial disease spread from tree to tree during blossom by pollinating insects, birds, and raindrops. Fire blight infects apple trees, ornamental crabapple trees, pear trees, mountain ash, cotoneasters, and other various ornamental trees.



## SYMPTOMS



Symptoms of fire blight include die back of branches from the outer tip inward. The leaves appear to have wilted and dried on the branch and remain attached (twigs, leaves, and fruit give the appearance of being scorched by fire). The twigs and branches will be discolored, blackened, and dying. Symptoms start to appear shortly after petal fall and continue until mid summer. Fire blight bacteria will over winter in infected twigs and branches.

## CURATIVE

Upon diagnosing fire blight, the infected twigs and branches must be pruned out of the tree. Infected branches need to be pruned approximately six inches into the uninfected part of the branch. Pruning tools must be disinfected between each cut (a 2% Clorox solution or other quality disinfectant will work). Pruning is the only solution for trees bearing edible fruit. Ornamental trees should be pruned after being diagnosed with fire blight in the summer.

## PREVENTION

Trees that are susceptible to fire blight can be treated for prevention of the disease. Homeowners can apply an application of streptomycin sulfate every five to seven days throughout the blossom period. Correct timing of this application is critical to its overall success. Or, prevention of fire blight can be obtained with a systemic application by a professional arborist. A spring or fall application of Oxytetracycline or Arbor Fos will provide excellent suppression of fire blight.

A quality fertilizing program is recommended for ornamental trees in late fall or early spring to increase the health and vigor of the tree.

Always select fire blight resistant varieties when purchasing plant species that can be infected with fire blight.



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