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When to Publish: Upon Receipt

Wilt Disease Threatens Oak Trees *Don't Prune Oak Trees from Bud Break to Leaf Drop*

Oak Wilt is a serious and often deadly vascular disease of oaks. The fungal pathogen, *Ceratocystis fagacearum*, is believed to be native to the United States and has been reported throughout the Midwest and Texas, including Ohio.

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Oak Wilt

Ceratocystis fagacearum (Bretz) J. Hunt

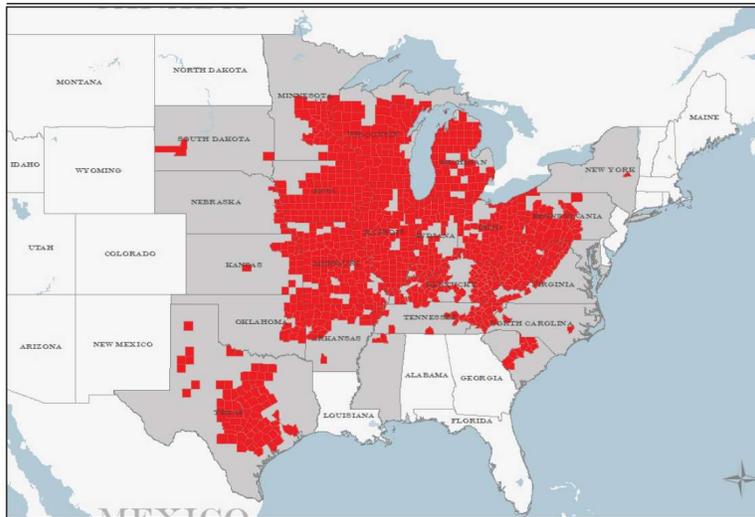


Photo Credit: Dave French

Date created: 25 August 2016

The Alien Forest Pest Explorer maintains spatial and biological information for 89 non-indigenous pests to the United States forests. Some of these pests are widely known, but a great number of them are obscure and relatively unknown. Because of this disparity, information for this site is generated from a variety of sources and depicts a geographic range at the county scale. For some of the regulated forest pests, we collect data from Forest Health Protection (FHP) and its partner's Insect and Disease Survey (IDS) Dataset. For the other pests, information is annually updated using peer-reviewed articles, gray literature, museum specimens and communications with experts. We strive to generate maps that reflect the best of our current knowledge for each species; however, a degree of error is inherent in all maps. The maps are distributed "AS-IS" without warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, including but not limited to warranties of suitability to a particular purpose or use. The Forest Service and its partners shall not be held responsible for missing or inaccurate data. An accuracy assessment has not been completed for this dataset. Maps and data may be updated without notice. For the most up-to-date maps, please visit the AFPE mapping tool at <http://foresthealth.fs.usda.gov/portal/Flex/APE>.

Please cite this map as follows: USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station and Forest Health Protection. "Alien Forest Pest Explorer - species map." Database last updated 28 July 2016. <http://foresthealth.fs.usda.gov/portal/Flex/APE> (access date).

Source US Forest Service

Which Trees Are Affected?

Oaks in the red oak group – Black Oak, Northern Red Oak, Northern Pin Oak and others with pointed leaf edges – are most easily infected by this disease. Oaks in the white oak group – White Oak, Swamp White Oak, Bur Oak and others with rounded leaf edges – are less susceptible.

What to Look For?

Leaves of oak trees usually begin withering in the upper canopy, producing "flags." Flags are whole branches or crown portions turning red-brown. Leaves of red oaks typically show yellowing and browning of the leaf margins.



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Photo by John Palmer, BCMA

Control and Management of Oak Wilt Disease

To properly manage Oak Wilt, it is essential to understand its life cycle. The pathogen spreads from diseased to healthy trees in two ways: above ground and underground. The above ground disease is spread mainly by sap-feeding beetles, known as Picnic Beetles (*Coleoptera: Nitidulidae*), on fresh pruning cuts.

While insect spread is one mechanism for infection, it is estimated that 90% of new infections occur between neighboring trees through root grafts. It is essential that Oaks not be pruned during crucial months of disease transmission. While the high risk of infection occurs from April-July, research states it is prudent to avoid pruning Oak trees from just prior to bud break to leaf drop. This means **DO NOT PRUNE** from April to November.

OAK WILT RISK METER



Photo source MichiganOakWilt.org



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Avoid Wounding Oak Trees

New Oak Wilt sites have been traced to spring and early summer wounds from tree-climbing spikes, rights-of-way pruning, nailing signs on trees and accidental tree-barking; a wound created when the bark is removed via impact from equipment, falling trees and other causes. If you suspect your Oak trees have this disease, the Ohio Chapter International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) recommends you work with an ISA Certified Arborist for diagnosis and treatment strategies.

What if you need to prune oak trees during the growing season?

Trees that must be pruned during the growing season, like storm damage, should be immediately treated with a tree wound dressing or latex-based paint to seal the wound. It is imperative that the fresh wounds be treated immediately because the insects that carry spores of the pathogen are often attracted to these wounds within a very short time. Tree paints usually are not recommended for general use but using these products in this situation can help protect trees from oak wilt.

If whole trees are removed during the critical period, the stumps should also be treated with tree paint.

Over 1,000 Ohio Certified Arborists Ready to Help!

There are over 1,000 qualified tree experts in the state of Ohio that have been designated by the ISA as Certified Arborists. These tree care profession have experienced rapid growth over the past decade and there is a significant amount of knowledge required to perform at the highest level. To find one in your area, visit www.treesaregood.org.

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For more information or if you would like to **interview a tree expert**, please call the chapter office at (614) 771-7494 or email info@OhioChapterISA.org.

ABOUT US: The mission of the Ohio Chapter International Society of Arboriculture is to advance responsible tree care practices through research, technology, and education while promoting the benefits of trees.