

ISA Ohio Chapter: Oak Wilt Awareness

Presented by the Ohio Chapter International Society of Arboriculture

The Ohio Chapter International Society of the Arboriculture is committed to advancing responsible tree care practices through research, technology, and education while promoting the benefits of trees. We remind those who own and manage Oak trees, that the best time to prune is between November 1—March 14.

There are over 1,000 qualified tree experts in Ohio that have been designated by the ISA as Certified Arborists. To find an ISA Certified Arborist in your area, visit www.Trees4Ohio.org.

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 under ground. 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.

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.

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.

Lower Risk

March 15—April 14
July 16—Oct. 31

Greatest Risk

April 15–
July 15

Safest Period

Nov. 1–
March 14

Oak Wilt Risk Meter



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