



OAK WILT

Do Not Prune or Remove Oaks from April 1st - July 31st

What is Oak Wilt?



Oak Wilt is a fungal disease (*Ceratocystis fagacearum*) that plugs water-conducting cells and prevents water movement in oak trees. This will cause the tree to wilt and the leaves to fall off. The Red Oak group (black, northern red, and northern pin) is highly susceptible to Oak Wilt. The leaves of these oak trees (pictured at left) have pointed lobes which are different from the rounded lobes of the White Oak group (pictured below right).

Wilting of red oaks occurs rapidly, and once infected a red oak can die within a couple of weeks. The wilting typically will occur from late June thru August, starting at the top of the tree first and work down from there, dropping leaves as it progresses.

The White Oak group (white, swamp white, and bur) is less susceptible to Oak Wilt than the Red Oak group is. Wilting of white oak will typically occur a branch at a time, in no consistent pattern on the tree. The tree may take months to years to die or may recover from the disease completely. Sometimes it is possible to prune the diseased branches out and stop the spread in white oaks.



How Does Oak Wilt Spread?

Overland - To a New Site:

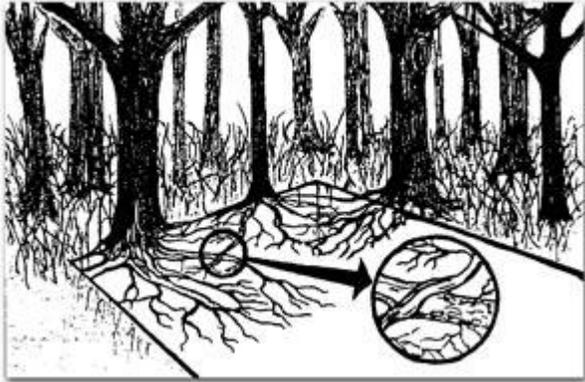


Oak Wilt is spread by sap feeding beetles (pictured at left) that feed on diseased trees and then feed on healthy trees. To prevent overland spread, the oak pruning and removal ban has been established from **April 1st to July 31st** within the Village of Howard. This is the period of time when fungal pads are present for the beetle to pick up fungal spores and transport them to a healthy uninfected tree, via open wound (such as pruning cuts). Thus by not pruning during this period, there are no open wounds to attract the beetles to the healthy trees.

Removing the tree during this time can also attract the beetle, infecting the stump, which in turn can transport the disease to nearby trees via root grafts.

In late fall and winter, prune oak trees with poor structure or broken limbs to prevent spring storms from breaking branches and opening wounds that would attract the beetles.

Underground - Through Functional Root Grafts:



Once Oak Wilt is established on a site, it can move to neighboring trees through the roots that have become interconnected (root grafts) between these trees. Red oak roots tend to graft more than white oaks and grafts between the two different groups is very rare.

What To Do If You Suspect Oak Wilt.

If you see any of the symptoms described above you can collect 3 twigs from 3 different branches on the tree that show signs of wilting (1/2" diameter x 4" in length). These twigs must still have live tissue, determined by scraping the bark on the twig which should be light in color (white or light green). If the wood is dark colored (brown) the twig is too old to be sampled. The twigs should then be wrapped in wax paper, kept cool, and mailed to:

Brian Hudelson

Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic
Department of Plant Pathology
University of Wisconsin - Madison
1630 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706-1598
(608) 262-2863

There is a fee for this service.

Once you have a tree diagnosed with Oak Wilt, do not remove it immediately. Removing the infected tree could speed up the spread to surrounding healthy trees. Consult a forester to determine the best method to stop the spread of the Oak Wilt on your property.



If you have any other questions on the condition of your oaks, please call the Forestry Division at 434-4640 or look on the WDNR website <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestHealth/OakWiltGuide.html>