

The Town of Blackfalds is embarking on a campaign to control Black Knot throughout the town. With the help of our residences, we can manage this disease within our community.

What is Black Knot?

Black Knot is an airborne fungus that infects weak, damaged and unhealthy plant material.

Hosts:

Primarily in Central Alberta, Black Knot is found on Schubert Chokecherry, Mayday and Pin Cherry. However, any plant in the Prunus genus (Cherry, Plum or Apricot) can be infected; some are less susceptible than others.

Recognizing Black Knot:

The easiest way to spot Black Knot is during the winter months when plant material is dormant and leaves are not present. Infection points are difficult to see in early stages of development, it appears as a small light brown swelling. As the disease matures, the infection grows and the bark ruptures into a hard black corky tar-like swelling that can vary in size and shape.

Why should we manage Black Knot?

Black Knot fungus spreads quickly, deforms branches, stunts growth and eventually can contribute to the death of your plant, and those in our community.

Controls:

Ensure your plant material is strong and in good health, without wounds.

If plant material becomes infected, completely remove the infected and diseased area.

- Prune infected area when the plant is dormant, in late fall or winter months, to avoid re-infection as the spores are highly active in the spring and summer.
- Prune at least 15-20cm (6-8 inches) below visible swollen area, preferably at an appropriate location, such as a healthy branch collar. We recommend that you educate yourself on proper pruning techniques or hire a certified Arborist or Landscape Horticulturist.
- Clean and disinfect cutting blades after infected areas of the plant have been successfully removed.
- Bag all diseased wood, including leaves that have fallen off the tree, and take it to the local transfer station to be burned in a timely manner.
- If an infection point is in the trunk or there are too many infection points that cannot be removed without affecting the structural integrity of the plant, the plant material must be removed in its entirety. Be sure to grind the stump down to avoid the reoccurrence of suckers.



Early stage – Pre-rupture



Ruptured stage



Mass infection

Diseased wood must be destroyed immediately by burning.

For more information about Black Knot fungus, please visit the Government of Alberta's website www.alberta.ca/black-knot.aspx