



BLACK KNOT



Black knot (*Apiosporina morbosus*) is a fungal disease that attacks fruit trees of the genus *Prunus*. It is primarily found on plum, but can sometimes infect cherry, peach, and apricot trees. Once established, black knot is easily identified with its hard, uneven, black swellings that encircle twigs and branches. Black knot takes a season to develop before it's visually apparent and begins spreading via spores. If left to grow, it can strangle new growth, girdling branches and weakening the tree, resulting in poor fruit production.

Month	Tasks	Observations & Dates Completed
Jan - Feb	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prune fruit trees during dormant period to open up tree to sunlight and air circulation. Check out the POP Pruning Guide for more information on winter fruit tree pruning. Remove prunings from the area because they may still be an active source of inoculum. 2. Inspect your plum and cherry trees (the only fruit trees susceptible to black knot) carefully for cracks, discoloration, swelling, black swellings, or other signs of infection. Check carefully around twig and leaf axils. 3. Remove all knots and swellings by pruning 3-4 inches below the knot, down to healthy wood, during the dormant season. Sterilize tools with 70% rubbing alcohol between each cut to limit the spread of the fungal disease. 	
Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lime sulfur fungicide sprays may be helpful when dealing with heavily infected trees. Sprays won't work unless used alongside pruning and proper sanitation. Fungicides against black knot should be generally applied at bud break and every week to two weeks until bloom period when flowers emerge. Make sure to coat all of the branches and trunk. Don't spray on a windy or rainy day. 	
Apr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to remove all knots and swellings by pruning 3-4 inches below the knot, down to healthy wood, during the dormant season before April 1st. Sterilize tools with 70% rubbing alcohol between each cut to limit the spread of the fungal disease. Remove prunings from the area because they may still be an active source of inoculum. application information and mixing compatibility. 	



Month	Tasks	Observations & Dates Completed
<p>May - Aug</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue monitoring for black knot and pruning out any infected branches at least 4" below any signs of it. Early infections will appear olive green and gradually grow and darken over the course of the season. Shoot tips on infected branches may also die back. 	
<p>Sep - Dec</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove any wild cherry and plum trees around the property. They can harbor the disease and release spores that are easily carried to your fruit trees. 	

Resources Used:

[Monthly Orchard Task List](#) — [Black Knot on Cherry and Plum Trees](#) — [Black Knot \(University of Minnesota Extension\)](#)
[Black Knot Disease of Cherry and Plum \(Cornell Cooperative Extension\)](#)