



A severely-infected tree.

BLACK KNOT

Have you walked by a tree with dark, unsightly clumps all over the branches and wondered, "what on earth is that?!"

Well, that is a tree infected with Black Knot disease. The Town of Rocky Mountain House takes measures to control Black Knot on Town-owned trees, as it spreads rapidly to surrounding trees of the Prunus family. We ask for your assistance in keeping the disease in check on your property too.

Please review this information to better identify the disease and understand how to control Black Knot on your trees.



How to Identify Black Knot

While it is important to regularly monitor your trees for black knot symptoms, it is easiest to identify between late fall and early spring when dormant and branches are bare.

Infection points are hard to identify in the early stages of development because the small, light-brown or olive-green swellings do not stand out. As the disease matures, the infection grows and the bark ruptures into greenish brown to black galls or cankerous swellings on the branches of your trees or shrubs.

The mature galls will produce and release many spores during the blossom period, resulting in a rapid increase in infections.

What is Black knot?

Black knot is caused by a pathogen known as *Apiosporina morbosa*. The airborne fungus is very contagious.

Spores are spread to other trees and shrubs by wind and birds. It infects trees within the Prunus family, and is also known to infect shrubs in the Rose family.

If left untreated it effectively strangles new growth, which will girdle the branches and doom the tree to deterioration.

The cankerous swellings produced by the disease provide a gateway for additional disease and insect infestation which will be detrimental to the overall health of the tree.



DID YOU FIND BLACK KNOT? TAKE THESE STEPS:

Early detection and sterile pruning is the most effective way of dealing with Black Knot. Pruning infected trees in winter months is best: The lesions are more noticeable from the lack of foliage and the disease is dormant so there is less risk of spread.

- **Educate** yourself and your neighbours about black knot and how to properly manage it on your property.
- **Prune** knots by cutting back at least 15–20 cm (6–8 inches) below the swelling. It is preferable to prune an infected branch further back to a healthy collar rather than leave a stub.
- After pruning, be sure to **disinfect** pruning tools with a mixture of bleach (10%) and water, isopropyl alcohol, rubbing alcohol or Pine-Sol.
- **Burn** diseased material immediately or put infected branches in a **sealed garbage bag** and **put in your black waste bin** and put out for regular collection. Even after the knots have been removed from the tree, they can produce infected spores for up to 4 months after removal.
- **Do not** mix infected cuttings with other organic materials, including those in your green cart.

TAKE NOTE!

If a tree or shrub is severely infected tree may be best to remove it fully.

Infected cuttings are also accepted at the Eco Center. Cuttings must be in a plastic bag and are considered waste. Eco Center disposal fees will apply.

Large quantities can be hauled directly to the landfill unbagged – fees also apply.

Dispose of infected tree trimmings properly! Place them in a sealed garbage bag and dispose with your household garbage, or burn the infected branches.

DO NOT PLACE INFECTED WOOD IN YOUR GREEN BIN OR CURBSIDE RECYCLING.

