

Fire Blight

What is Fire Blight?

Fire Blight is a contagious disease that affects pear, plum and apple trees as well as other members of the Rosaceae family (flowering trees). If not maintained it can destroy hundreds of trees in a single growing season. The symptoms are water-soaked appearance then a sudden wilting of succulent shoots, followed by the shriveling of infested leaves, blossoms and fruit. Infection typically spreads from the flower to the leaves and then to the woody tissue. Tips of limbs are generally the first to show symptoms. Yellow bacterial ooze may also occur on the leaf. Diseased fruit will turn brown or black. The disease can also weaken branches and cause limbs to break/fall from the tree. Early detection is important for strategically managing this deadly disease.



Wilted shoots affected by Fire Blight



Infested orchard

Dissemination and Disease Development

This disease is particularly hard to manage because it can spread in so many ways. It can be disseminated by rain, birds, rodents, insects, and even air. Humans are also at fault for spreading this disease by using unsanitized pruning tools. Furthermore, once infected there is no cure for this disease. The only solution is to prevent it from spreading to other parts of the tree (or other plants) by carefully removing the infested limbs.

Fire Blight thrives in warmer weather. Humidity is also a factor. Epidemics often occur following a rain storm. Injured or distressed trees are more susceptible to this disease. Precipitation promotes development as well as inadequate irrigation, high nitrogen fertilizers and severe pruning especially in the warm season.



Photinia tree with fire blight

Center Cut Management Strategies

Early detection is key! Center Cut has multiple certified arborists and plant health care specialist doing routine checks on all our properties to catch diseases such as Fire Blight during the early stages. Center Cut carefully removes the infested branches/twigs and disinfects pruning tools after every cut to avoid additional spread of the disease. Center Cut has a team of certified spray technicians who can apply chemicals such as *Pseudomonas fluorescens* which can be used as an antibiotic that may reduce the infestation by 40-50 percent.

Contact your local Center Cut representative for a consultation today!