



CHESTERMERE

Black Knot

Black knot is a fungus that causes large black tar like lesions on the branches of trees from the Genus Prunus (apricot, plum and cherry) and can be found on many of the mayday **Schubert cherry trees in Chestermere**. If left untreated it will reduce the vigor and health of the tree leading to branch death or possible complete tree failure, as well as being very unsightly and highly infectious.

Black Knot is very easy to detect after the leaves drop in the fall and should be removed before bud break in the spring. Once infected the branch may appear flattened or swollen sometimes having an olive green hue. In some cases what is called a witches broom may appear. This is where the branch swells and produces many small sucker branches from the tip giving a broom like appearance. As the fungus matures, which can take up to 3 years, it continues to grow and turns into a large black growth. Then during temperatures above 13C and periods of moisture (rain, irrigation and heavy dew) the fungus releases tiny spores into the air that the wind will then take and disperse onto other trees or other parts of the same tree. Only new growth on the tree is prone to infection, the knots however don't tend to appear until the following season so it may not always appear at the tip of the branch.



What can you do?

There are very few chemical controls for Black Knot and it is not the recommended treatment for the removal of black knot. The recommended procedure for removal and prevention is by using proper pruning techniques. If you are experienced and comfortable with pruning techniques you can remove the Black Knot yourself. Otherwise it is recommended you hire someone to remove it and do some preventative pruning for you. To remove Black Knot prune the infected branch at least 6 inches (15 cm) below the infection. Generally if it is not a scaffold branch it should be removed at the branch collar. Prevention come with the removal of Black Knot from other trees in your yard and informing neighbours if they have infected trees. Preventative pruning comes by the form of pruning to increase air flow throughout the canopy not giving the inoculating spores a place to germinate. Only prune, if you are experienced with proper pruning techniques, or it is recommended you hire a professional.

For more information on the Black Knot fungus visit the Government of Alberta [website](#).

Sources:

[Government of Alberta](#)

[Cornell University](#)

