

Oak Wilt Fact Sheet for Northern Wisconsin

WHAT IS OAK WILT?

Oak wilt is a fungal disease that affects the water conducting system within oaks. Red, black and pin oaks are highly susceptible to oak wilt. Once infected, they can die within a few weeks. There are only a few northern Wisconsin counties that are not yet known to have oak wilt (see the WDNR oak wilt page for further information: <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/Fh/oakWilt/>).

WHAT DOES OAK WILT LOOK LIKE?

Oak wilt is identified by rapid leaf discoloration and wilting. Often a subtle off-green color is visible in the upper portion of the tree crown (June to early July in northern Wisconsin). Shortly after this initial color shift, leaves take on a "bronzed" appearance or wilt and then fall off the tree, usually from the top of the crown downward. **Infected trees are almost entirely defoliated within a few weeks of symptom onset.**

HOW CAN OAK WILT BE PREVENTED?

1. Do not cut, prune or otherwise wound oaks from April through July. If an oak is wounded during this period, immediately apply pruning sealer over the wound. Torn branches or roots should be cut clean and the cut surface painted. For additional protection, cover treated roots with soil.
2. If oaks are cut down from April through July, **immediately** apply pruning sealer in a 1"-wide band around the edge of the cut surface.
3. Do not bring oak firewood onto your property that is less than 2 years old.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE OAK WILT?

1. Make sure the tree has oak wilt. **Red oaks with oak wilt literally go from 100% healthy to dead in one growing season**, and the wilted leaves are not chewed up by insects. Other problems on oak (e.g. drought, wood boring and defoliating insects) usually kill them over the course of several years.
2. For trees in a forested setting, let your local DNR forester know. Consult a forester for control options since they are complicated and require in-depth knowledge of the disease.
3. For trees located in yards, contact a certified arborist or send a sample to the University of Wisconsin Plant Disease and Diagnosis Lab for testing.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

DNR Oak Wilt Website: <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/Fh/oakWilt/>

Oak Wilt Forest Management Guide: <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Oak-Wilt-Management/What-Are-the-Options-P466.aspx>

Oak Wilt Diagnosis: <http://pddc.wisc.edu/>

Find a Forester: <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/private/assist/>

Find a Certified Arborist: <http://www.waa-isa.org/>