

FIREBLIGHT AWARENESS PROGRAM

During this past season we have noticed a sharp increase in the incidences of fireblight. This is a bacterial disease that mainly attacks apples, crabapples, flowering crabs and Mountain Ash. In lesser cases it will move to roses, hawthorn, pear and cotoneaster.

We would appreciate all residents who have these types of trees to look for any symptoms of this disease. The easiest symptoms to spot would be shriveled flowers and leaves that have stayed on the branches, long black streaks on the undersides of branches, or sunken areas (cankers) in the bark with or without cracks. The new growth is most susceptible, although many of the cankers appear on older wood, even down the trunk.



There is no cure for fireblight, only a control. The best way is by proper pruning. Less trauma occurs if the pruning can be done while trees are dormant and weather is not too cold (anything warmer than $-15^{\circ}\text{C}/6^{\circ}\text{F}$).



Remove infected branches 12 inches below the last visible point of affliction and burn them. If left lying around, insects can still spread the disease in spring.

Please disinfect all cutting tools after each cut to avoid spreading the disease yourself. Use bleach mixed $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ with water.

Fireblight can spread rapidly in the correct conditions - warm and wet - and may kill a tree in just a few years. Most times it moves slowly and infected trees may live 10-15 years. Bear in mind that all infected trees can

aid in infecting others because insects carry the disease from tree to tree. Control measures should be taken as soon as possible. Chemical controls are available but have limited value.

This is a very small portion of what fireblight is all about. For those interested in more information, please contact the County office.