

## Black Knot

Black knot is a native fungal disease that infects members of the cherry family. It appears as a rough black gall that encircles the branch of the host tree, usually towards the end of the branch. Occasionally it can be found on larger branches or trunks, where it causes a rough black gall that covers only part of the circumference of the branch.

Spores formed in mature black knots are spread by wind and rain to young twigs where infection can take place at wounds. The majority of infections occur on new green shoots. Infection occurs in early spring but symptoms don't appear until the following spring. An olive green swelling forms and then turns black and hard. The fungus grows both around and along the infected branch.

The most common hosts are mayday, chokecherry, cherry and plum trees. The only control is pruning out knots as soon as they are noticed. Cut at least 8 inches (20 cm) below the knot, preferable back to the base of that twig/branch. Be sure to sterilize your pruners between every cut. Use rubbing alcohol **or** a household disinfectant (ex Lysol) to sterilize pruning tools. Be sure tools are clean and dry before storage to prevent corrosion.

Be sure to destroy the infected wood immediately – never store diseased plant parts. Once the disease is in the main trunk of your tree, little can be done. The best thing to do would be to remove and destroy the tree.



Examples of black knot infections on chokecherry and mayday trees.