



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oak pruning fast approaching

Don't let the recent unseasonably warm weather spell confuse you, the time to start pruning your oak trees is fast approaching.

DNR forestry experts say that due to the warm weather conditions, mid-October will be the best time to prune your oak trees. They warn to not prune oak trees between late March and early October to best prevent the spread of oak wilt.

Oak wilt has been present in Iowa for many years and is caused by a fungus. The trees in Iowa most commonly impacted by this disease are species such as red, black, and pin oak, but it can also infect white and bur oak. If black, pin, or red oak are infected by the fungus that causes this disease they will likely die within the same summer they are infected. If infected, white oak and bur oak can often take a number of years before they succumb to this disease.

A healthy tree can be infected by the fungus that causes this disease two different ways. The first is through open wounds during the growing season. The fungus is carried from a diseased tree to a healthy tree with an open wound by a small beetle.

The second form of infection is through root grafts between oak trees of the same species. For example, if a red oak is infected and there is another red oak within 50 to 100 feet there is a good chance that the roots of these trees are grafted and the fungus can move from the diseased tree to the healthy tree.

Symptoms to look for on infected trees usually include leaves turning a bronzed brown along the outer margins of the leaves. These leaves can often still have some green on them as they fall from the tree. The defoliation tends to start at the top of the tree. The best way to prevent the spread of oak wilt is to prevent any wounding to oak trees during the growing season. If a tree is wounded from storm damage or pruning is required during the growing season, treat the wounds immediately with a wound dressing such as acrylic paint. Do not purchase pruning paints or sealants as those products slow the trees ability to seal over the wound.

More information on oak wilt prevention and control can be found by visiting: www.fs.usda.gov/naspf/sites/default/files/publications/identify_prevent_an

Forestry practices topic of six field days

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Iowa State University Forestry Extension are partnering to host field days across Iowa in October to showcase practices to improve timber stands, forest health, cost share programs available to woodland owners, battling invasive species, timber market updates and more.

Those interested in attending a field day can get more information, including where to register, what to bring, and the days topics and events, at https://naturalresources.extension.iastate.edu/programs/forestry/education/field_days.

Field days are open to the public. The following forestry field days are scheduled for October.

- Oct. 3, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Yellow River State Forest, Allamakee County
- Oct. 8, 1-4 p.m., McIntosh Woods State Park, Cerro Gordo County
- Oct. 15, 12:45-4 p.m., Stephens State Forest, Lucas County
- Oct. 15, 3:30 - 7 p.m., Fairmount Park, Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County (go to www.treesforever.org/BackyardForest for information and to register)
- Oct. 17, 12:30 – 4 p.m., Loess Hills State Forest, Harrison County
- Oct. 24, 1-3:30 p.m., Rural Altoona, Polk County
- Oct. 29, 8:30 a.m.- 4 p.m., Yarmouth, Des Moines County

The Iowa Woodland Owners Association, Iowa Tree Farm Program, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Trees Forever and county conservation boards are participating in one or more of the field days.