

## ***OAK WILT IN LAKEWAY***

### **What is oak wilt?**

Oak wilt is a lethal disease of oaks at epidemic levels in Central Texas. The oak wilt fungus colonizes the water uptake systems of susceptible oaks, causing them to drop their leaves and die. Eighty-five percent of live oaks and one hundred percent of red oaks die a few weeks or months after oak wilt infection.

The most devastating aspect of oak wilt is that the infection of one oak can lead to the death of hundreds. The fungus moves through the roots into surrounding oaks in an expanding area of dead and dying oaks called an “oak wilt center.” Lakeway has twenty-six known oak wilt centers as of September 2016.

### **Oak wilt prevention**

The beetles that carry oak wilt fungal spores are attracted to sap from wounded oaks. The following phrases sum up good oak wilt prevention practices:

#### ***Freeze for your trees or Sweat for your shade!***

Prune oaks only in winter or the hottest days of summer when the beetles are least active.

#### ***Spray right away!***

Paint all oak wounds immediately with pruning seal to prevent infection.

#### ***Never prune February through June!***

Avoid pruning oaks during the high risk season for new oak wilt infections.

#### ***Wrap your wood if you don't know it's good!***

Firewood from oak wilt killed trees can produce fungal spores.  
Firewood from unknown sources should be wrapped in clear plastic until dry.



### **The Diseased Tree Ordinance**

The Diseased Tree Ordinance holds all property owners, residents and tree trimmers responsible for oak wilt prevention. Failure to comply could result in a fine of up to \$1000 per day. Here are the key points:

- ☑ **Fresh pruning cuts, the tops of fresh stumps and wounds of all sizes on oaks must be sealed with black pruning seal immediately after creation of the wound (maximum 10 minutes)!**
- ☑ **Oak pruning is permitted from July through January.**
  - ✓ Best months to prune oaks: November and December (low risk of infection).
  - ✓ Second best time to prune oaks: July through October (medium risk of infection).
- ☑ **Oak pruning is prohibited February 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup> (high risk of infection).**
- ☑ Exceptions to springtime pruning restrictions are made only when absolutely necessary for the safety of people, property or the tree itself. Call the City Forester (number below) if you need an exception.
  - ✓ Okay to prune oaks that are rubbing on the roof or hanging low enough to hit vehicles.
  - ✓ Okay to cut broken or decayed branches and forks at high risk of failure.
  - ✓ Okay to prune prior to construction for equipment clearance.
  - ✓ Okay to remove dead oaks at any time.
- ☑ Do not purchase, sell or stack firewood known or suspected to come from the oak wilt-infected oaks.
- ☑ Do not plant oak wilt-susceptible oaks (live oaks and all species of red oaks). White oaks are acceptable but trees from other plant families are preferred (elm, cypress, fruit and nut trees, hollies, etc.)

**For more information on oak wilt, visit [www.lakeway-tx.gov/forester](http://www.lakeway-tx.gov/forester) or call 512-314-7538.**