

# **Oak Wilt in Travis Settlement & Bee Creek**

Residents have reported Oak Wilt in the Bee Creek watershed on the south side of Bee Creek. This document is intended to provide some limited education on Oak Wilt and provide answers to a few basic questions.

## **What is Oak Wilt?**

**Oak Wilt** is a fungal disease affecting oak trees caused by the fungus *Ceratocystis fagacearum*.

## **Which types of Oak trees does it impact?**

Oak Wilt affects all oak species but in Travis Settlement the primary problem is with Red Oaks and Live Oaks

## **How do I know if my trees are infected?**

Symptoms vary by tree species, but generally consist of leaves turning brown along the veins or at the tips. If a large number of leaves show these symptoms it is very likely that your tree has Oak Wilt. Dying leaves will spread across all branches of the tree and eventually lead to defoliation and death. Once infected a tree will typically die within 6 months.

## **How does Oak Wilt spread from tree to tree?**

The fungus spreads from diseased to healthy trees in two ways

### **1) Via the transmission of fungal spores**

Spores can be transported from tree to tree by man or by sap feeding insects (the Nitidulid beetles). Beetles carry the spores from infected trees and deposit the spore on an open wound on a healthy tree. This is occurs mostly in the spring, hence the recommendation to avoid Oak trimming from January to June. Tree trimming tools can also transport spores if they are not properly cleaned after use.

### **2) Via the root system**

Oak trees, especially Live Oaks, grow in clusters connected via their root system. Healthy trees that share a root system with infected trees will eventually become infected. Transmission via the root system is much slower than spore transmission making it possible to treat healthy but interconnected trees before the disease spreads.

## **How do I prevent Oak Wilt?**

The easiest first step is to always follow proper pruning guidelines for healthy trees. If adjacent trees are already infected then to prevent the further spread of the disease you must cut down all infected trees, remove and burn all debris and then

trench four feet deep around the tree to sever any underground root connections. You may also consider treating the remaining healthy trees with a fungicide. Injecting fungicides is not a simple activity. It can easily cost over \$1,000 per tree so fungicide treatment is reserved for your most valuable Oak trees

### **How do I treat Oak Wilt once a tree is infected?**

Once infected, trees are nearly impossible to treat. Fungicide injections can work but only if the disease is caught very early. The best treatment is to remove the infected trees immediately, remove and burn all debris and trench around any remaining healthy trees to cut off access to the infected roots.

### **For More Information**

Location of Oak Wilt Infection: <http://www.google.com/maps/@30.3457459,-98.0395383,1325m/data=!3m1!1e3>

Pictures of diseased leaves: <http://texasoakwilt.org/gallery/symptoms/>

Pruning Guidelines: <http://texasoakwilt.org/2011/pruning-guidelines-for-prevention-of-oak-wilt-in-texas/>

*"How to identify and manage oak wilt in Texas" (PDF). Texasokwilt.org. USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station. June 2003. Retrieved June 12, 2017. Leaves on diseased live oaks often develop chlorotic (yellow) veins that eventually turn necrotic (brown)*  
[http://www.texasoakwilt.org/Documents/Stewardship/OakWilt\\_English.pdf](http://www.texasoakwilt.org/Documents/Stewardship/OakWilt_English.pdf)

### **Other Sources:**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oak\\_wilt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oak_wilt)

<http://texasoakwilt.org/>

<http://texasoakwilt.org/find-a-vendor/>