

Oak wilt a growing problem

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Oak wilt is savaging our oak trees in this county, but I still see people pruning live oak trees without painting the cuts. I witnessed a sad site a week or so ago at a local motel/restaurant. Someone was cutting limbs off of several big, beautiful live oak trees on the property, but not painting the wounds.

As a reminder to all in this county, oak wilt is spread externally through spores carried by sap beetles or internally along root connections to healthy trees. To try to keep oak wilt from spreading via the root system takes trenching and is expensive, beyond what the average citizen can afford. But, we can help to prevent the spread of the infection by the sap-feed beetle by immediately painting all fresh wounds on the live oak trees and the red oak trees.

Once the tree is infected, the fungus may also spread to adjacent healthy trees through the root system connecting to the contaminated trees, referred to as a mott.

Pruning paint is not necessary; any paint will do, just please paint immediately any surface of a tree where there is a fresh wound. Also, it does not matter what time of year that the pruning is done. You will always need to paint the fresh wound immediately after making the cut.

If you want more information regarding pruning oak trees and/or oak wilt, you can get information from the Texas Forest Service at 830-257-7744 or on the web site at www.texasoakwilt.org.

I will have a handout from the Texas Forest Service explaining about oak wilt and suggestions on prevention and treatment for anyone interested at the Bandera Library.

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