

# Unique Garden Centre

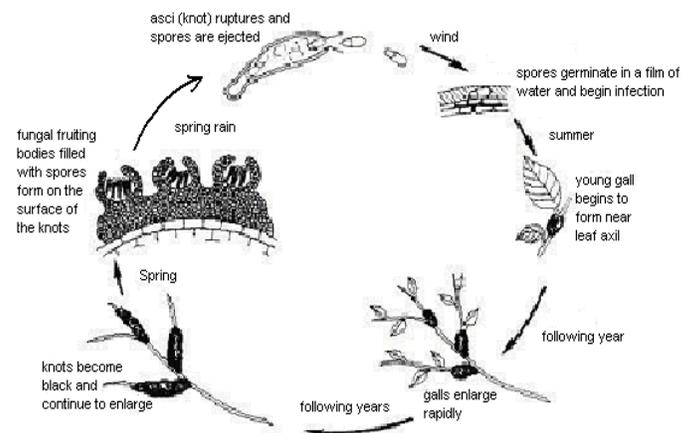
Broad St. & 6th Ave. N., Regina, Sask.

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## BLACK KNOT

**Symptoms:** If you have seen ugly black rough swellings showing up on your cherry or plum trees, then they've probably been infected with the fungus known as black knot. The cylindrical or spindle shaped knots may vary from ½ inch to a foot or more in length and up to 2 inches in diameter. As well, small knots may emerge from larger knots to form extensive galls. The first signs of this fungus are seen as swollen areas of the stems, usually on the younger growth. As they enlarge, the swellings will rupture, producing the familiar black growths. In late spring the following year, the rapidly growing knots will have a soft pulpy texture and become covered with a velvety, olive-green growth. In summer, the young knots turn darker and elongate. By fall, they harden becoming brittle, rough and black. These knots will continue to grow in each growing season and unless effective control measures are taken, you may lose your tree to the disease. Eventually the black knot fungus usually dies and becomes a host to secondary fungi which gives the knots a white or pinkish color during the summer. Smaller branches may die within a year after being infected. Larger branches may survive for several years before the fungus girdles the branch causing it to die.

**The Disease:** Black knot is caused by the fungus *Dibotryon morbosum* (another name for the fungus is *Apiosporina morbosus*). The fungi will overwinter in the knots on twigs and branches or in the infected wood immediately surrounding them. In the spring, the fungus produces spores on the surface of the knots. These spores are then either wind blown or rain splashed from the knots. The succulent new growth of the current year is the most susceptible to infection, especially if the branches remain wet for a significant time. Infection can occur anytime from bud break until new growth stops for the season. Weather conditions play an important role in providing the right conditions for infections to occur. Normal growth is disrupted in the infected regions, causing the plant to produce tumor-like growths. By late summer these swellings become visible, but may not be noticed until the following spring when they start to enlarge rapidly. Sometimes the growths mature and burst that spring to release new spores and sometimes the growths continue to grow through the second season and burst the following spring.



DISEASE CYCLE OF  
BLACK KNOT

**Control:** Pruning the infected branches out of the tree and destroying them as soon as possible is the most reliable means of control. Precautions must be taken to disinfect your pruning equipment before and between each and every cut made to the tree to reduce the accidental spread of the disease. Along with an active pruning program to control the disease, chemical fungicides can be applied to the tree. Their effectiveness is limited due to the length of the potential infection period and therefore the costs are not usually warranted. For more information on current chemicals available and when to use them, please contact our sales staff.