



Q: What is oak wilt?

A: A fungal infection caused by *Bretziella fagacearum*. It causes a response in the tree that clogs the water-conducting tissues, resulting in a lack of water to the leaves. It was first identified in Wisconsin in the 1940s and later identified in Texas in 1961.

Q: What can I do to protect my trees from oak wilt?

A: Stay informed about where oak wilt is in your community. When a live oak tree shows symptoms of oak wilt and that is within 150 feet of your live oak trees, it may be time to treat with a preventative fungicide injection. An [Oak Wilt Qualified Arborist](#) can help you decide which trees need treatment and when. Plant diverse tree species to reduce the impact from any host-specific insect or disease.

Q: My tree has oak wilt. Am I required to do anything?

A: No, there is no ordinance requiring neighborhoods or homeowners to take action. The City of Austin encourages neighborhoods and homeowners to be informed consumers and work with an [Oak Wilt Qualified Arborist](#). They can help you make the decision that is right for you based on your budget, landscape goals, and tree health. Ideally, you should inform all your neighbors so they can take proactive steps to preserve their trees.

Q: If I inject my trees will that stop the spread?

A: No, the fungus can still move through inter-connected root systems even if a tree is injected. The treated tree may appear healthy, but the fungus can still appear in adjacent, untreated trees.

Q: My neighborhood has oak wilt. What can we do to reduce the spread?

A: Designate a person or committee in your community who can share information about oak wilt infection areas and [best practices to manage oak wilt](#) every year. Maintain a record of where oak wilt has been confirmed. This can help with diagnosis since it can be hard to recognize oak wilt if trees have been preventatively treated with fungicide. Neighborhoods can also coordinate proactive inspections every two years.

Q: When should I prune my oak trees?

A: You can prune your trees anytime, especially if you need street or sidewalk clearance. It is recommended that you avoid elective pruning from Feb-June, when an insect may carry oak wilt fungal spores. Anytime you prune your oak trees, paint the wound immediately. It does not matter what type of paint. Generally, the best time to prune trees is when they are dormant and when fewer insects and diseases are present (Nov - Jan).

Q: My neighbor pruned their trees and did not paint the cuts. Will their tree get oak wilt and spread it to mine?

A: Very few trees in Austin are infected by an insect carrying the fungal spore to a pruning cut, and it is impossible to prove any given wound is the source of an infection. Most of the time, when new trees are infected, it is through root grafts.



Q: Does oak wilt die out or go away?

A: Once an area is infected with oak wilt, the disease will be present until the host tree(s) die. If a property owner has treated with fungicide, the disease may be suppressed and the tree may appear healthy; however, the disease can flare back up. Any tree diagnosed with oak wilt should be monitored by an Oak Wilt Qualified Arborist on an ongoing basis.

Q: What should I do if I have a sick red oak tree?

A: Red oaks die very quickly from oak wilt, usually within 8-10 weeks. It is best to remove infected red oaks as quickly as possible to limit the formation of fungal mats and spores. Texas A&M Forest Service has a cost share program to subsidize the cost of removing red oak trees that die from oak wilt. If you think you have a red oak tree infected with oak wilt, contact Keith Babberney ([keith.babberney@austintexas.gov](mailto:keith.babberney@austintexas.gov)) to schedule an inspection.

Q: What does the City of Austin do to help neighborhoods and homeowners deal with oak wilt?

A:

- The City maintains a map of areas at increased risk of oak wilt due to oak wilt symptoms observed in the area and the presence of susceptible trees: <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/oak-wilt-suppression>.
- A neighborhood can apply for a grant from the Urban Forest Grant Program to contract with a qualified vendor to monitor for oak wilt symptoms and leave notification at homes with oak wilt symptoms or elevated risk. Upon application approval and completion of the work the Urban Forest Grant Program can pay for the neighborhood level oak wilt monitoring and notification.
- We partner with Oak Wilt Qualified Arborists to learn about the location of oak wilt infected trees.
- We preventatively treat high value, public live oak trees with fungicide to preserve tree canopy.
- We contract with TreeFolks (a local non-profit organization) to provide free trees to neighborhoods.
- We provide information to the public and work with tree care professionals to improve general urban forest health so neighborhood tree canopy is not as vulnerable when an oak wilt infection does occur.