

WHAT DOES AN OAK WILT QUARANTINE DISTRICT MEAN FOR YOU?



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Oak wilt, a serious disease that kills oak trees, has been confirmed in several towns across New York State. Infected oaks in the red group (leaves with pointed tips as in scarlet oak, pin oak, red oak, etc.) typically die within a few weeks. Oaks in the white group (leaves with rounded tips as in white oak, swamp white oak, bur oak, etc.) are also killed, though it may take years. DEC has issued emergency orders that establish quarantine districts around the infected areas to help prevent the spread of oak wilt.

What is an oak wilt quarantine district?

It is a restricted area put in place around a neighborhood, town or county after oak wilt is confirmed there. Oak wilt quarantine districts have been established in the towns of Middlesex, Canandaigua, South Bristol and Glenville, the borough of Brooklyn, and all of Suffolk County.

Why are the oak wilt quarantine districts in place?

The goal of an oak wilt quarantine district is to prevent the spread of the disease by prohibiting the movement of potentially infected oak wood. Oak wilt can be spread by beetles that come into contact with fungal spore mats which form under the bark of trees killed by the disease. These spore mats can attract several kinds of beetles which pick up the spores as they crawl around. When these beetles fly to new trees, they bring the fungus with them, potentially spreading the disease to new areas. Infected oak firewood, logs, and branch debris can also contain spore mats, so moving these materials contributes to the spread of the disease.

Prohibited from leaving the quarantine district

- Oak logs or branches
- Wood pieces less than 29 inches long, no matter the species

Allowed to leave the quarantine district

- Chipped wood (must be 1" by 1" or smaller)
- Wood pieces 29 inches long or greater from trees other than oak.

Why can't I move firewood out of a quarantine district?

Once wood is cut to firewood size, it is difficult to tell one species from another. To account for the difficulty in identification and make sure no infected oak wood is moved out of the quarantine district, wood pieces less than 29 inches in length are prohibited from leaving the area, regardless of species.



Oak wilt-killed tree



Spore pads, like the black area shown in this photo, may be present in infected trees and firewood.

What is DEC doing about oak wilt in my neighborhood?

Monitoring

DEC will conduct aerial surveys over and around the quarantine districts in July and August to locate trees showing symptoms of oak wilt. Field crews will check these, as well as neighboring oaks, through ground surveys and sampling to determine if they are infected with oak wilt. When symptomatic trees are located on private property, owners will be contacted before ground surveys or sampling take place. Field crews will also check trees reported by the public.

Management

After surveys have been completed, DEC will develop site plans and activities to manage oak wilt dependent on the extent of the infected areas.

- Isolated, small infection centers will be treated with the goal of eliminating the disease from the area.
- In larger infection centers, plans will focus on control and limiting the spread of the disease.

Activities will include establishing quarantine districts, and may also include the removal of infected trees, removal of nearby non-infected oak trees to prevent the spread of oak wilt through tree roots, and/or the installation of trenches to sever root connections. As with surveying, property owners will be informed of the management strategy for oak wilt at their site prior to conducting any activities.



Aerial and ground surveys will help locate new infected trees

What can I do?

- Follow the quarantine regulations and don't move infected oak or firewood out of a quarantine district.
- Visit DEC's website at www.dec.ny.gov/lands/46919.html to learn about the symptoms of oak wilt.
- Take pictures of trees showing symptoms and/or make note of the location.
- Report symptomatic trees to DEC (see below).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Updated March 03, 2020



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