

# I Have Fire Blight in My Pears And Apples - Recommendations for Home Gardeners

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## As soon as possible:

Get a can of spray disinfectant (e.g.: Lysol)

Start cutting out the infected shoots and wood.

Keep cutting back until you find clean wood with no sign of infection – even if you have to cut into a large limb.

After finding clean wood, sterilize the shears or pruning saw with the disinfectant and cut off six more inches of wood.

All infected wood must be buried, burned or taken from the vicinity of the apple and pear trees so it cannot serve as a source of re-infection.

## Next spring:

When the very first blossom opens, spray the tree with a pesticide containing copper as an active ingredient. Follow label instructions.

Spray every five days until the very last blossom has dropped its petals.

You may need to spray three or four times depending upon how prolonged the bloom period is.

## Variety Selection:

Ask your dealer for varieties that are less susceptible to fire blight (FB).

Fruiting varieties: Asian pears are more susceptible to FB than standard European varieties.

Flowering varieties: Aristocrat is very susceptible. Red Spire and Capital are moderately susceptible. Bradford is the least susceptible of the flowering varieties and is a good choice for the Central Valley.

## Branch & Twig Borers:

Damage from the branch and twig borer *Polycaon* can look very much like fire blight strikes. Adults bore into small twigs and branches, commonly at the axil of a bud or fruit spur. One branch or spur may die resembling fire blight strikes. Carefully examine the branch with a magnifying glass for a small hole.