

## Fire Blight

Fire blight is a destructive bacterial disease (caused by *Erwinia amylovora*) that kills blossoms, shoots, limbs, and, sometimes, entire trees. It affects many plants including apple, pear, crabapple, hawthorn, cotoneaster, mountainash, and spirea.

The most noticeable symptoms of this disease are browning of all the leaves on a branch, and wilting of the affected branch to form a “shepherd’s crook.” The blighted blossoms and leaves tend to stay on the tree instead of falling, giving the appearance of being scorched in a fire.

### Control

- Choose plants with resistance to fire blight and avoid applying high nitrogen fertilizer.
- Prune diseased branches when dormant and dry, cutting 6-8” below the visible symptoms. Disinfect pruning tools by dipping them for at least 30 seconds in 10% bleach solution.
- Treat with copper sulfate before buds open.

Provided by  
[wimastergardener.org](http://wimastergardener.org)



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## Additional Resources

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- UW-Extension Publication A1616, *Apple, Pear & Other Related Trees Disorder: Fire Blight*, at <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Apple-Pear-and-Other-Related-Trees-Disorder-Fire-Blight-P420.aspx>
- UW-Extension Fact Sheet XHT1090, *Fire Blight*, at <https://hort.uwex.edu/articles/fire-blight/>

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