

Fireblight in Ireland

Bacterial Disease: *Erwinia amylovora*

Photos: www.gd.eppo.int/taxon/ERWIAM/

A PROTECTED ZONE PEST THAT CAN SPREAD VERY FAST & CAUSE SEVERE DAMAGE UNDER IDEAL (WARM & HUMID) CONDITIONS.



COMMON HOSTS: HAWTHORN, COTONEASTER, APPLE, PEAR, AND ROWAN (>200 OTHER POTENTIAL HOSTS).



OOZE



'SHEPHERD'S STICK'



CANKERS

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?



Dormant infections on imported plants are a key entry pathway.



Risk to Ireland's apple and pear industry.



Well-suited to our climate. Projected 0.9-1.3°C rise in spring temps.



Hawthorn is the most common species in Irish hedgerows.

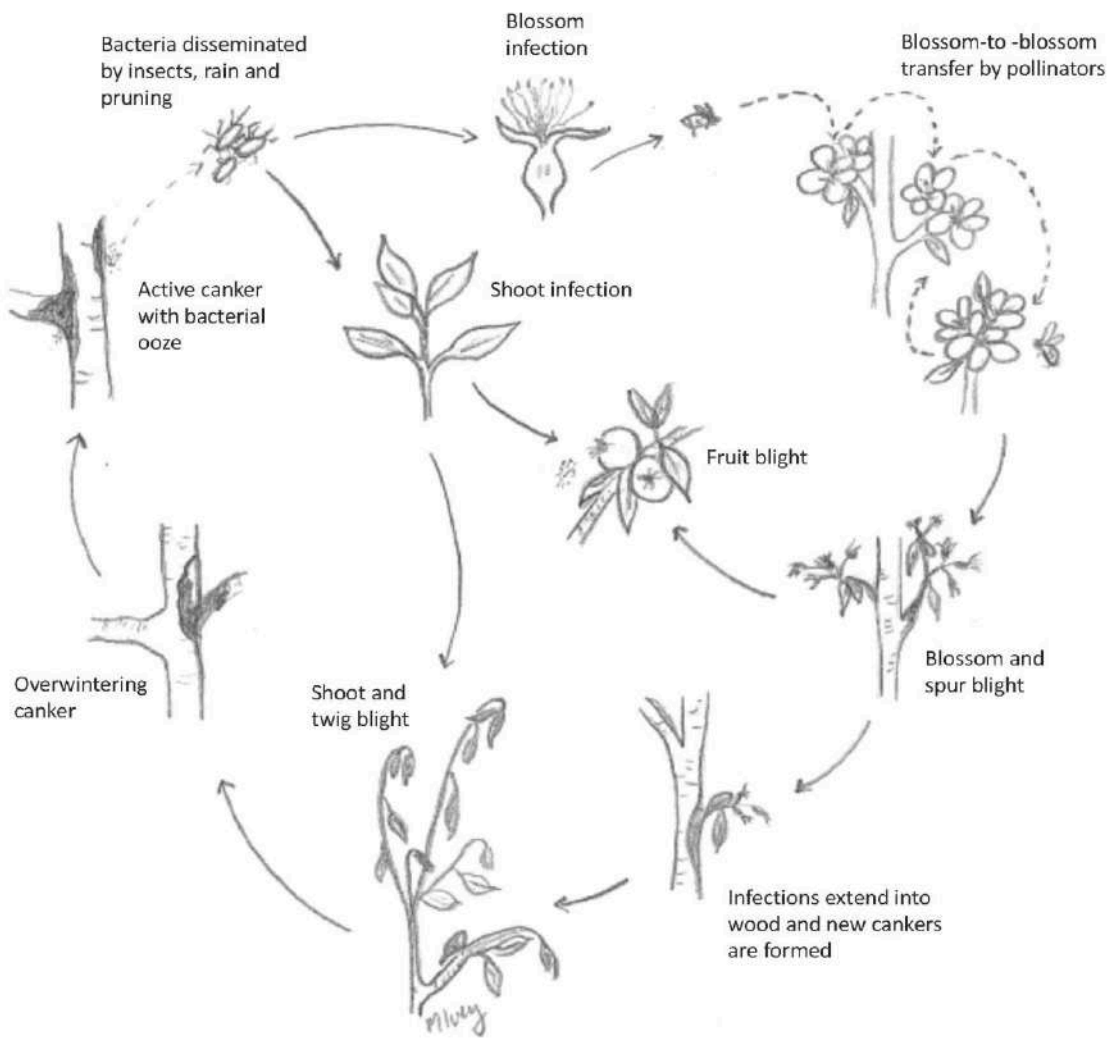


No treatment; infected plants are destroyed.



Cost of removing and replacing affected trees.

HOW DOES IT SPREAD?



Protected Zone (PZ) Pest: it is present in the European Union but not in Ireland despite favourable conditions. Its presence would have an unaccepted economic, social or environmental impact.
Implications: Host plants require a different type of Plant Passport, there is an annual mandatory surveillance period, and an obligation to eradicate any outbreaks.

1986-1992
 Fireblight first recorded in Dublin on a Cotoneaster plant. Strict eradication programme results in a PZ status for Fireblight on the island of Ireland.

2005-2013
 Unsuccessful eradication in Galway City, so this area is now excluded from PZ status.

2016
 Northern Ireland's PZ status also removed due to higher spread.

2022
 113 trees (mainly Whitebeam) felled in Ashtown, Co. Dublin.

2023
 17 confirmed outbreaks over 11 counties. ACRES Irish Provenance requirement for Hawthorn removed.

2024
 Increased public awareness. 60 new outbreaks over 21 counties. Over 1.4 million Hawthorn trees imported.

2025 →
 Possible lifting of the PZ status? What should landowners with Fireblight do?

HOW TO PREVENT ITS SPREAD?



Buy Irish Provenance Certified trees and include this requirement in agri-environmental schemes.



Plant a diverse species mix, not monoculture hedgerows.



Disinfect tools and machinery.



Submit suspected symptoms to the Plant Health Division: **plantandpests@agriculture.gov.ie**.



www.hedgerows.ie



Ivey, M.L. (2016) Fire Blight of Apples and Pears, Ohio State University