

## FIRE BLIGHT DISEASE

Our arborist, Dianne Hutton of Branches Tree Care visited our community on August 22<sup>nd</sup> to consult with homeowners on tree care issues. During her visit, Dianne found that the fire blight disease damage that was first identified in a few trees in our community last year, is now more extensive.

Named for the scorched appearance of infected leaves, fire blight is a destructive bacterial disease (*Erwinia amylovora*) which affects trees in the apple and pear family, mountain ash trees and cotoneaster shrubs. The disease enters the tree at the tips of the branches and then travels down the stems causing dieback. It attacks soft new growth first, so you would usually notice dieback at the top of the plant.



Most infected leaves and branch tips wilt rapidly turn brown or black; the leaves die but do not drop off. Trees will also develop reddish water soaked lesions on the bark. On warm days, these lesions ooze an orange-brown liquid. Fire blight kills blossoms, shoots, limbs and often, the entire tree.

As soon as fire blight is discovered, infected branches should be pruned off one foot below the diseased sections and removed from the area in order to prevent further infection. When pruning the branches it is essential that the pruning shears be disinfected between each cut by dipping them in a bleach solution or spraying them with Lysol so as to avoid transmitting the disease from one branch to another.

On September 30th Dianne will be back in the community to prune affected trees and to remove several that have extensive fire blight damage. If you wish her to tend to your trees on that date, please advise Ray Rohr, Chair, Tree Committee Chair at 780-915-6972 or [rayrohr@telusplanet.net](mailto:rayrohr@telusplanet.net).