



Apple tree suddenly dying

Posted by [Karen Brindle](#)

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[Karen Brindle](#)

[Apple tree suddenly dying](#)

May 25, 2020 03:50AM

Registered: 9 years ago

Posts: 103

I'm hoping some of you can help identify what has suddenly taken hold of this 7th leaf tree in our orchard. I noticed no problems at pruning this winter, (I am always looking hard for anthracnose) nor had I seen anything wrong until doing my holistic spray yesterday. Dying from the top down, blossoms and leaves shriveling up. a canker or wound I can't identify is dramatic. Does not have the characteristic strings like Anthracnose. Whatever this is, fungal or bacteria? it hit this tree FAST! We took drastic measures, cut most of the tree down to a healthy bud. One thing I know, this tree may survive if we eliminated the disease by removing so much. Any opinions will be much appreciated!!!!

[Tree before cutting](#)

[Close up mid-trunk and branches](#)

[closeup scaffold and laterals](#)

[scaffold with withered buds](#)

And last, hard to see but the healthy bud is on the far side of the stump. I'm hoping the darkened area is black rust that rubbed off from the saw. Branches we cut from higher up had dark areas in the wood. Branches that were not yet affected had clear wood in the cuts.

[The stump we hope will survive](#)

I still can't get photos to post into my text, thanks for putting up with the individual links.

[Vista Ridge Orchard](#)

Zone 8a in Washington

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[Michael Phillips](#)

[Re: Apple tree suddenly dying](#)

May 25, 2020 06:25PM

Moderator

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 621

Looks like fire blight all the way, Karen. That nasty-looking canker makes me wonder if you had low-level infection in this tree in 2019? Or if any sign of blossom or shoot strikes on any other varieties this year? It would be an act of god if *Erwinia amylovora* bacteria drifted into place from on high and only struck this one tree. Vilberie may be one of those European bittersweets with very limited ability to resist this systemic onslaught. Time will soon reveal if that drastic pruning results in returned growth that will not be afflicted as well. Cutting 10 inches or more below where cankering is evident can work to check recent fire blight, provided the cut surface doesn't carry more bacteria inward. Just what you needed . . . another disease to learn about!

[Lost Nation Orchard](#)

Zone 4b in New Hampshire

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[Karen Brindle](#)

[Re: Apple tree suddenly dying](#)

June 01, 2020 07:36PM

Registered: 9 years ago

Posts: 103

Thank you Michael, I have also contacted the extension ag service locally to see what they think. I've never seen fireblight here, but getting a certain diagnosis will help with management. Our apple growing experience is only 12 years now, still so much to learn. It takes me a long time to prune because I'm looking closely at each tree for anthracnose or other things amiss, I saw nothing on this tree. There are healthy Vilberie trees on each side of this one. It's a darn shame, this variety adds so much great tannin to the cider mix, I hate to loose one in our small orchard that was just coming into good production. Yes, it is a huge risk to cut the tree back so far. The lowest tier of laterals that also got cut were still healthy and the wood looked clean. I'm hoping the soil and 7 year old roots are healthy enough to grow again. I also wonder if the B-118 rootstock is more susceptible than our older trees on M-111?

[Vista Ridge Orchard](#)

Zone 8a in Washington

235 Cider and heritage apple trees, 72 varieties,

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