

Flowering Cherries with Black Swellings

Gardener Question:

My flowering cherries are looking very stressed. There seems to be some kind of black swelling on some of the branches. Do you know what this could be and what could I do to help the situation?

1. Observed or Reported Symptoms

- Knobby, swollen black galls on branches and stems.
- Galls start olive-green in early summer, turn black and hard by late summer.
- Infected branches may bend to one side.
- Leaves wilt, turn brown, and die on branches with galls.
- Trunk galls may crack and ooze.

2. Likely Diagnosis

Probable issue: Black Knot

Cause: Fungal pathogen **Apiosporina morbosa** (biotic)

3. Management & Recommendations

- Prune infected branches in late winter (Feb–Mar), at least 4 inches below the gall.
- Remove and destroy infected branches (burn, bury, or dispose).
- Inspect and prune annually to manage spread.
- Consult a certified arborist if trunk galls are cracked and oozing.

4. Resources to Share with Client

- University of Minnesota Extension – [Black Knot](#)
- Iowa State University Extension – [Black Knot](#)



Black Knot images from University of Minnesota Extension website, Link above