And good morning and welcome into our Friday edition of Ag Talk. This is Bill Rice along with Ed Lentz and our horticulture topic today, Ed, focuses on a pesky little thing called fireblight.

It gets that name cause it’s a blight and it just really kills the twig and it looks like it had been burned, just like it melted. And where we’re seeing fireblight, and this is where our calls generally come into the Extension office, anybody growing apples or pears and then, of course, our ornamental crab apples since they’re still an apple we’re just not eating the fruit, they’re highly susceptible or potentially highly susceptible depending on their genetics to fireblight. And what fireblight looks like, you’ll have outer twigs on the tree that will literally wilt from the tip, down the stem, and then they just turn black and there is that term fire as if somebody burned them. And it’s very noticeable and it’s really a disheartening thing to say man what’s going on with my tree today and then I come out here tomorrow and I got areas, stems just dying back. Not a whole lot you can do at this time, what we recommend that you do though, is prune out that diseased area. And the thing of it is you want to cut twelve inches below you see the last visible symptom of the disease. You want to make sure we get everything that’s in that stem. So you could be taking out a pretty good branch if it’s really effected the tree. We generally have more than one branch that will be effected so after each time you cut so you are not transferring it to another part of the tree we highly encourage you to disinfect the pruner. And that’s really not hard to do. You just take eight parts water and add one part of bleach and then you just put the tips of your pruner in that after each time you cut and that will disinfect it and you can go to the next part of the tree. As I said there is really nothing you can do at this time. Knowing that the tree appears to be susceptible to the disease, you could use a protective spray the next spring, early in there soon after the buds break on the tree and we also say about a quarter of the leaf green is showing. And something simple as just a basic copper sulfate spray will help on that. You can even do it on crab apples, too. The biggest thing though is when you’re buying any of your fruit trees, apples or pears or crab apples, you really want to look are they resistant to fireblight. Almost all the cultivars are developed are going to tell you whether they are susceptible or resistant. You are going to save yourself a lot of trouble by getting the ones that have more resistance to that. There are other plants besides apple and pears. Your quince, hawthorn, mountain ash, roses, raspberries can also get this but we most commonly see it in our apples, crab apples, and pears. So be on the lookout and be prepared to clean it up and then put preventative things in next year.

Thank you Ed. For Ag Talk this is Bill Rice along with Ed Lentz. Good morning to you.

Good morning.