

# Tree protection and utilization

## Unseen borers kill trees from below

COLLEGE PARK, MD - It's not always the bugs you see on leaves that are damaging your shrubs and trees. Sometimes, a group of internally feeding insects—known collectively as borers—destruct from beneath the ground, working chiefly on the vital cambium, or "living bark" of trunk and root systems.

May and June are the months for borers to be active—and this is also the time to take control measures, says Dr. R. Lee Hellman, Extension insect specialist and associate professor of entomology at the University of Maryland.

Dr. Hellman reports that insect traps indicate an especially high number of lilac borers throughout the state this year. Sample counts also indicate fairly high populations of dogwood, peachtree and rhododendron borers.

Fruit and shade trees, as well as several kinds of ornamental shrubs, suffer severely as the borer larvae eat the succulent tissues of the swelling cambium layer.

The borer larvae emerge during May and June from eggs laid at the base of trees and shrubs. As they begin feeding, they are tiny white

worms, about 1/16 of an inch long, with brown heads. They immediately begin tunneling through the bark to the trunk and root system. Mature larvae reach about one inch in length.

The borer larvae return to the outer bark surface in about three weeks to pupate and emerge as moths. Some species may produce more than one generation per year.

The adult borer is a clear wing moth, wasp-like in appearance. It is the larval stage, however, (when the borer is under the bark and unseen)—that this pest causes the most damage to shrubs and trees.

"If a tree or shrub looks unhealthy, check its base," recommends Dr. Hellman. Symptoms include small leaves, dead limbs or large areas dying out.

Signs of borer activity include loose bark, sawdust, or telltale tunnels and chambers under the loose bark. If you spot such evidence, cut or dig until the larvae are exposed.

It may be that the tree or shrub in question is beyond saving; but other plants in your yard may still be treated successfully. So check them, too. A preventive approach

— before borer damage occurs — is really the most effective, the Maryland Extension specialist maintains.

Recommended insecticides for borer control vary with the type of plant to be treated. All such chemical materials should be sprayed or painted on trees or shrubs in accordance with label directions. Here are some examples:

—For dogwood borers, apply Thiodan (endosulfan) or lindane to the trunk in early May, early June and early July.

—For Lilac borers, apply Dursban, Thiodan or lindane on the bark, trunk, large branches and wounds at 3-week intervals from early April to early June.

—For peachtree borers, apply lindane from mid-May through mid-July, wetting the trunk and ground thoroughly.

Additional information on pest control in yards and gardens is available from county offices of the Cooperative Extension Service.

## Carpenter bees are out in force

NEWARK, Del. — "This is the worst year for carpenter bees I've ever seen," says University of Delaware extension entomologist Frank Boys. These pests always become active in spring, but they are especially bad this year.

People are finding carpenter bees flying erratically near the eaves and gables of their homes. These bees tend to nest in porches, garages, shed ceilings, railings, roof overhangs and outdoor wooden furniture. Often the same nesting sites are used over again.

Carpenter bees are often mistaken for bumblebees, but there are differences. Like bumblebees, carpenter bees are large (one-half inch to an inch long), but bumblebees have black and yellow or black and orange body markings, while carpenter bees are entirely black and shiny.

Male carpenter bees are unable to sting, and the females rarely do. Still, that doesn't mean they are harmless. These bees damage wood rather than people. They don't eat the wood; they tunnel through to build homes in which to rear their young.

While a single carpenter bee can't do much damage, a number of bees are certain to cause con-

siderable structural damage over a period of years. You know the situation is serious when you begin to notice a number of holes about half an inch in diameter in exposed wood trim.

Any wooden structure is fair game to carpenter bees, especially if the wood is old. The surest control method, of course, is to select alternative building materials such as aluminum or asphalt. Keeping wooden surfaces painted is also a deterrent to attack.

A five-percent Sevin dust directed into the nest opening side aids in control. Treat openings after dark on a cool evening when the bees are less active. A battery filler, plastic squeeze bottle, or other device can be used to apply the dust. If you are unable to reach the hole to apply dust, wasp and hornet aerosols — which project the spray several feet — are effective and easy to use.

Do not plug up holes! Allow the bees to pass freely through the gallery entrance. They will contact the dust and distribute it inside the tunnels. Also, the newly matured bees will contact the dust placed there. Holes can later be filled with plastic wood or caulked and then painted.



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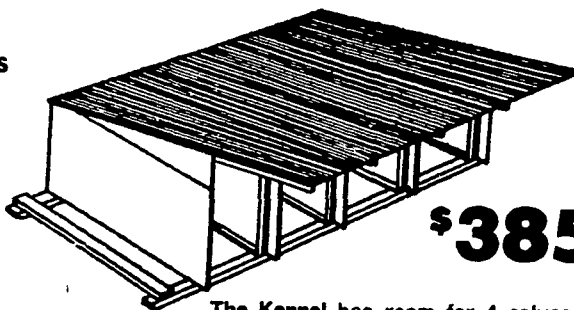
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