

Borer Prevention & Control

Most borers are secondary invaders, meaning they usually are able to grow and complete development only in plants which are under physiological stress. Factors which can induce stress include crowding, stem and trunk diseases, defoliation by insects and disease, too much or too little heat, sunlight, fertilizer and water. ***Keeping trees and shrubs in good health is an excellent way to reduce borer problems.***

In general improving the vigor of your trees will reduce the chance of borer attacks. Things to consider include proper location, soil quality, amount of water and other disease and / or pest problems. Also, removing the damaged and / or infested wood during the dormant season can help reduce the borers from spreading.

Plants susceptible to borers

- Birch (mainly European white):
 - Bronze Birch Borer
- Ash, Lilac, Privet & related plants:
 - The Ash / Lilac Borer
- Aspen, Poplar, Cottonwood & Willow:
 - The Poplar & Cottonwood Borers

Bronze Birch borer (BBB)

- The (BBB) adult emerges from holes in the branches and trunks during June and July. They lay their eggs in cracks in the bark and the larva create a series of tunnels under the bark. This tunneling often girdles branches, causing the tips to die back to the point to the girdling. Infested trees die from the top downward.
- The best control is prevention. Keeping the plant vigorous is very important. To reduce existing infestations prune below the visible damage and destroy the branches showing symptoms of attack. Do this between November and March. To prevent breeding and spreading remove and destroy dead or dying trees.
- Chemical control is also of a preventive nature. Using a labeled insecticide such as Lindane or Dursban, spray the entire trunk and all branches each year. Thorough coverage is essential. Spray 3 times, 3 weeks apart beginning in late May. A

good rule of thumb is to make the first application within 2 weeks after VanHoutte Spirea has been fully blooming and when Snowmound Spirea is in the early bloom stage.

Poplar and Cottonwood borers

- The adult borer lays eggs in the trunk at the soil surface in July. Larva tunnel beneath the bark and in the wood, exuding considerable frass. The tunneling may completely girdle the base of the tree, killing it.
- Wrapping paper or burlap around the base of a young tree will help prevent the adult from laying eggs in the bark. Keeping the tree growing vigorously will also help reduce attacks.
- Chemical prevention is accomplished by spraying the lower trunk and saturating the soil around the tree base early in July. Use a labeled insecticide such as Lindane or Dursban product. This should be sprayed once monthly through the summer.

Ash / Lilac borer

- Most attacks occur at branch crotches between 5 and 8 feet from the ground, mostly on young trees. The larvae bore into the wood creating holes in the trunk and branches. Heavy infestations cause branch dieback and can kill trees and shrubs. The boring holes also create an entrance for secondary infestation by other insects and disease organisms.
- Control of infested trees is difficult to achieve. Removing infested trees will help protect nearby healthy trees. An excellent preventative measure would be to choose a tree that is less prone to serious insect problems.
- Chemical control is difficult but can help prevent borer injury. Labeled insecticides such as Lindane and Dursban can be sprayed on the entire trunk and all branches within 10 feet of the ground (especially the branch crotch areas and any wounds). The residual should be applied during the start of the adult flight period. This is generally about 10 to 14 days after the first flowers start to open on lilacs. Reapply at 14 day intervals two more times. Pheromone traps may be used to pinpoint when to apply the first spray.