

Problem: Peachtree Borers



Hosts: Peaches, plums, cherries, nectarines and apricots

Description: The larvae of these insects can be a major pest of peach orchards and trees in home orchards by feeding under the bark of the trees. Healthy bark is attacked from the lower 12 inches of trunk to slightly below the soil line. Borers feed on the inner bark and can girdle and kill young trees. Bark eventually loosens and falls off. Older trees are weakened and become more susceptible to other stresses, pests and insects. A gummy mass mixed with sawdust is a sign that borers are active.

The adult is a moth that resembles a wasp. Individual females emerge over a long period in the summer and lay eggs on rough bark or under bark scales. Eggs hatch in 8 to 10 days and the larvae bore into the tree.

Recommendations: Trees that have not been bothered the past should not need pesticide applications. Trees that exhibit signs of attack should be protected. In small plantings, larvae can be killed by inserting a wire into holes and puncturing the larvae. This is most commonly done as the trees are breaking bud in the spring but also can be done in late fall.

Pesticide applications can be made to provide a protective layer that will kill newly emerged larvae as they try to bore into the tree. Therefore, these applications must be applied before the larvae hatch. These applications are most critical with young trees up to 5 years old. Spray should be heavy enough to run down the trunk and into the soil at the base of the tree. Use a pesticide labeled for peachtree borer such as permethrin (Hi-Yield Garden & Farm Insect Control; Eight Vegetable, Fruit & Flower Concentrate). Apply two applications at 3 week intervals starting in early July.

References:

1. [Greater Peachtree Borer](#), Utah State University Extension, ENT-103-07
2. [Peach Tree Borer](#), Colorado State University Extension, Publication No. 5.566

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