

**Problem:** Ash/lilac Borer - *Podosesia syringae*



**Hosts:** Lilac, ash, mountain ash, and occasionally privet.

**Description:** Lilac: Canes or stems wilt suddenly. The base of infested stems are swollen and the bark separates from the wood. A fine sawdust-like material is present around holes in the canes. Ash: Trunk and portions of the major branches show exit holes of insects. Sawdust may accumulate under the tree.

Ash/lilac borers overwinter as larvae in infested trees and shrubs. Pupation occurs in the spring. Moth emergence generally begins in mid- to late-April, peaks in May, dwindles by mid- to late-June and ends by the first week of July. The moth has clear wings and resembles a wasp in appearance. It is about 1" long and has a wing span of about 1½ inches. Moths deposit eggs in cracks and crevices of bark. They hatch in 10 to 14 days. Larvae immediately bore into wood. Frass accumulates around holes. Swelling and cracking of the bark are associated with repeated infestations and branches may be severely weakened at the feeding sites. During dry periods in late summer, terminal shoots of infested plants wilt. There is one generation per year.

**Recommendations:** Borers often attack plants that have been under stress. Providing water during dry weather will help plants resist attack. Weakened trees may need protection until healthy enough to resist attack.

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Public and commercially managed properties often use pheromone traps to determine the presence of adults. Spray treatments are started seven to 10 days after the capture of the first moths. Sprays can also be timed using phenology, the practice of

timing one event by another. The first spray for ash/lilac borer should be applied when the Vanhoutte spirea is in full to late bloom, often about May 1 in central Kansas. A second spray should be applied four weeks after the first. Thoroughly treat the trunk and larger limbs of ash or the lower portion of the stems of lilac or privet. Heavily infested ash should be cut and burned during the fall and winter. Infested stems of lilac or privet should be removed as well. Permethrin (Hi-Yield Garden, Pet, and Livestock Insect Control and 38 Plus Turf, Termite & Ornamental Insect Control) are labeled for control. Though there are a number of homeowner products that contain permethrin but most do not provide instructions on treating for borers. The two mentioned above list ash lilac borer specifically and provide good instructions for use.

### **References:**

1. Insects That Feed on Trees and Shrubs, Cornell University Press, pg 224
2. Life Histories of Common Insects, Mites and Nematodes Infesting Ornamental Plants in Missouri, Missouri Department of Agriculture, pg G-12
3. [Lilac Borer/Ash Borer](#), Virginia Cooperative Extension, Publication Number 444-278

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