

Insects



Maple Petiole Borer

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The maple petiole borer, *Caulocampus acericaulis* (MacGillivray), was first introduced into the United States from Europe. This sawfly is wasp-like in appearance and is rarely seen because of its small size. Although several species of maple are subject to attack by this insect, sugar maples are preferred.

Life Cycle

Adult sawflies emerge in early to mid-April. After mating, the female uses her ovipositor (egg-laying structure) to puncture the petioles and lay a single egg near the leaf blades. The larvae are yellowish and smooth with brownish heads. Larvae are weevil-like in appearance because the abdominal legs are very small. Full grown larvae are 1/3 inch long. After hatching, larvae tunnel and consume the contents of the petioles about 1/2 inch from the leaf blade.

Early larval activity results in discoloration of the upper portion of the petiole. This area later becomes black and shrunken. The attached leaf shrivels and changes color. After a short period of time, the petioles break and damaged leaves fall to the ground (during late April to May). Larvae continue to feed in the portion of the petiole remaining attached to the twig for seven to ten days. Larvae drop to the ground, burrow down 2 to 3 inches into the soil and overwinter. In the spring, mature larvae pupate and emerge as adults in early to mid-April. There is one generation a year.



Petiole hollowed out in sugar maple, larva
Charles D. Pless, University of Tennessee, www.forestryimages.org

Control

Defoliation seldom exceeds a third of the total foliage. Damage of this type causes considerable concern to the homeowner. However, the leaf drop seldom causes injury to the tree and control recommendations are usually not warranted.

Some of the maple petiole borer damage can be prevented in the residential landscape by applying cyfluthrin (Advanced Garden Lawn and Garden Multi-Insect Killer) or imidacloprid plus cyfluthrin (Advanced Rose & Flower Insect Killer) sprays to the foliage in mid-April.

For commercial outdoor use: See <https://tiny.utk.edu/ag/insectandmite>.



Leaves severed from petioles in sugar maple
Charles D. Pless, University of Tennessee, www.forestryimages.org

Always refer to the insecticide label to make sure that the insecticide can be legally applied on ornamental plants at your site, such as residential landscape or commercial nursery.

Disclaimer

This publication contains pesticide recommendations that are subject to change at any time. The recommendations in this publication are provided only as a guide. It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. The label always takes precedence over the recommendations found in this publication.

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