

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET

CORNELL

Cooperative Extension
Nassau County



Nassau County
Horticulture Program
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Bronze Birch Borer

Agrilus anxius Glory

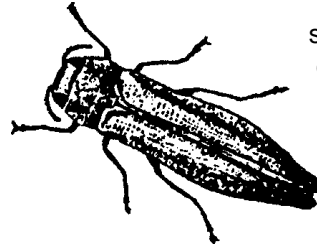
White birch is a short-lived tree in New York, all too often because of bronze birch borer attack. Any weakening of birch (drought stress for example) attracts the borer. Birches of many kinds are attacked: European white birch, paper birch and gray birch are common ornamentals affected. The white, legless, flat-headed grubs, which are up to 3/4 of an inch long, mine in the cambium just under the bark. This often causes girdling. Dying branches, particularly on the crown, are the first noticeable signs.

The grub winters in its tunnel under the bark. In spring the pupa is formed in the tunnel and in late May or early June, the adult beetle chews its way out through a "D" shaped hole in the bark. The beetles feed mainly on poplar foliage, but return to birch to lay eggs on the bark. The grub soon bores in and tunnels under the bark until winter.

Management Options

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Considerations

IPM is a common sense approach to pest control and plant care. It employs a number of measures to prevent, control or reduce plant problems. These include using resistant plant varieties, proper plant selection and placement, good aftercare and biological and/or mechanical controls. As a last resort, after all other remedies have been explored, a pesticide* that is least toxic to people and natural predators, can be considered. Prior to using any pesticides, plants



should always be monitored for the degree of infestation and a sensible control measure considered.

* A pesticide is a substance that kills, or attempts to kill, a particular pest, e.g. **insecticide, fungicide, herbicide, etc.**

IPM Considerations

The bronze birch borer seldom attacks trees in a healthy, vigorous condition. Therefore, the best control is watering during dry seasons and providing necessary fertilization, pruning and control of leaf feeding insects such as birch leaf miner and aphid. Take particular care of newly transplanted birch, including adequate deep watering. Do not dig around birches or any tree. This destroys vital surface roots. Avoid trunk injuries by lawnmowers, wires, dog chains, knife wounds, etc.

Controls

Homeowners should have trees sprayed by a certified pesticide applicator. The materials should be directly sprayed to the bark of the trunk in June between 440-880 GDD when the Kousa dogwood and mock orange are in bloom. In new plantings, use resistant varieties:

Betula nigra 'Heritage' is an upright 50' tree with cream-pink-tan, peeling bark and lustrous, leathery leaves.

Betula platyphylla japonica 'Whitespire' is a large tree with chalk-white; non-peeling bark.

Monarch birch, *Betula maximowicziana*, reaches 45' to 50', has white bark and a graceful habit.

E-1-3 DWM reviewed RT 1/03

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