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Leaf Miners

GENERAL

Numerous species of insects live and feed inside leaves. These specialized feeders, called leaf miners, feed between the two-epidermal layers of the leaf. Leaf miners are the larvae stage of insects belonging to the wasp, fly, moth and beetle families. Miners are usually voracious feeders and eat almost without interruption. Vigorously growing trees are able to withstand the attack of these insects for several years before showing symptoms of decline.

SYMPTOMS AND CAUSES

For most leaf miner species, eggs will be laid in the spring when leaves are half-grown. Eggs are laid singly in the new leaves and may be easily seen if the leaf is held up to the light. After the eggs hatch the larvae begin to mine the leaf and cause separate small brown blotches across the leaf. With time the mines begin to coalesce to form a single, large, hollowed-out blotch on the leaf. By late spring every leaf of a tree may be mined, giving it a brown color. Later, after a new crop of leaves develops, a second generation of egg-laying adults appears and the cycle is repeated.

WHAT TO DO

In most cases the infested trees are not killed, but the damage can weaken trees and result in more serious attack by other insects, such as the bronze birch borer. For this reason, it is important to control leaf miners on an annual basis.

COMMENTS



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