



A Wood-boring Beetle

The flatheaded borer is a metallic wood-boring beetle that can do major damage to your trees, even killing young trees. The adult borer lays eggs in crevices or injured areas of trees. The larvae that hatch immediately start to bore tunnels in the wood just under the surface of the bark, which is what they feed on. As the larvae grow they continue to tunnel through the tree, digging deeper and deeper to reach fresh moist wood.

Recognizing an Infestation

The borer beetle is identified by its metallic appearance, but their larvae do the most damage. The larvae's body has a flat enlargement just behind the head, and are light in color. The tunnels made by the flatheaded borer larvae injure the tree and are filled with finely powdered sawdust. Their digging causes sap to flow and the affected area will appear wet. As these wet areas dry they may crack and expose the borers' tunnels. The tunnels they create are winding and flattened looking with oval shapes at intersections. When the adult beetle emerges from the bark or wood it leaves a characteristic oval shaped hole.



Flatheaded Borer larvae. Inset: Adult Flatheaded Borer beetle

Protecting Your Tree Asset

The best way to protect your trees is to prevent an infestation. By creating a healthy growing environment for your trees, you remove the opportunity for the borer to lay eggs. Proper pruning and care are essential to having and keeping strong, sound trees that can fight infestation.

If you do have an infestation, prune away as much of the infected area as possible and spot treat it by applying insecticide to the surrounding area. Insecticide will only kill the larvae if the chemicals can reach them just below the surface, but it will help to prevent any future invasions. Bayer Tree & Shrub Insect Control is an example of an insecticide that can be purchased at Home Depot to treat a borer infestation.



Damage done by the Flatheaded Borer larvae

References: 1. Artistic Arborist, Inc., www.artistic-arborist.com, 2003-2004.

2. Forestry Images, www.forestryimages.org, 2007 3. Urban Pest Control Research Center, www.upcrc.com 4. Virginia Cooperative Extension, www.ext.vt.edu, 1996.

5. University of California Integrated Pest Management Program, www.imp.ucdavis.edu, 2006

