

Timing Preventive Sprays for Maple Shoot Borer

Maple shoot borer, also known as maple tip moth and maple twig borer, is a key insect pest of [young maple trees in nurseries](#).

Damage

Larvae cause [tip dieback and flagging](#) by tunneling into young growing shoots. Destruction of the terminal leader causes [undesirable forking](#) and requires establishment of a new central leader.

Active Period

Adult moths are active from [mid-March to early May](#), with peak activity in early to mid-April. During this time, females lay eggs, most likely on twigs near green-tipped or opening buds. Following egg hatch, the caterpillar burrows into the young shoot where it feeds until late May or early June.

Apply a single insecticide treatment any time shortly before bud break until shoots have two pairs of leaves.

Management

Trees become infested with eggs shortly before leaf bud break. [Preventive control](#) can be achieved with a single spray application of a pyrethroid insecticide any time from [just before bud break](#), which typically occurs in mid-March until most shoots have flushed their first two pairs of small (< 1" long) leaves in April. This management strategy provides as much as 96–100% control of the pest.

Always Read and Follow Label Directions for Safe Use of Any Pesticide!

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EXTENSION



Flagging first appears in late April or May.



Each infested shoot has a small hole near a leaf petiole axil with a small mass of expelled frass (sawdust-like fecal matter) mixed with silk.



Throughout most of May, infested shoots can be sliced open to find the tunneling larva.

Photos: B. Seagraves and R. Bessin

For more information, see the attached EntFact publication:

“Maple Shoot Borer: Biology and Management of a Prominent Nursery Pest”