

Pest Profile



Photo credit: Libby Avis, BugGuide.net

Common Name: Douglas-fir Pitch Moth

Scientific Name: *Synanthedon novaroensis*

Order and Family: Lepidoptera: Sesiidae

Size and Appearance: The Douglas-fir pitch moth's eggs are about 1.5mm in diameter and are reddish brown ovals that are somewhat flattened. They can be found on the bark or in the crevices around injury sites on the tree.

The pitch moth's larvae are 12-25mm in size. The youngest larvae are white, pink, or yellowish with a brown head. The mature larvae are dark gray to black in color.

The pupae of the pitch moths are dark brown to black in color and are about 19mm long. The pupae will sit in the chamber of the mass for about a month.

The adult pitch moth is about 19mm long with its forewings expanding 10-12mm. The males have a wingspan of 24-30mm while the females have a wingspan of 30-34mm.

	Adult	Egg	Larva/Nymph	Pupae (if applicable)
Length (mm)	19-25mm	1.5mm	12-25 mm	19mm

Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Day moths -Wings are mostly clear with blackish margins -Head, legs, and thorax are black and yellow -Abdomens are covered with black and yellow hairs in alternating bands - Female wingspan is 30-34mm -Male wingspan 24-30mm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reddish brown -Oval -Somewhat flat -Found on the bark or in crevices around injuries on trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Young: White, pink, or yellowish in color - Mature: Dark gray to black in color -Head is brown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Dark brown to black in color -Found in the chamber of the mass
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Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Chewing

Host plant/s: Englemann or Sitka Spruce, Shore Pine, Western White Pine, Western Yellow Pine, or Douglas-fir.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): The pitch moth's larvae feed and bore into spruce and pine trees. While feeding, the trees will produce profuse amounts of resin that form globular masses on the bark. These masses are small, glisten, and are gray, pink, reddish, or yellowish in color and protrude from the infested trunks and limbs. As the larva continues to feed and grow the mass will become larger, turn dark gray or brown, and will harden.

The hardened mass will hold the pupa until it has matured and then the adult will emerge, leaving being the empty pupal case. The old masses may remain on the bark for several years as they are attractive spots for the egg-laying females.

References:

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