Pest Profile

Photo credit: H C Ellis, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org; Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org

Common Name: Peachtree (or crown) borer

Scientific Name: *Synanthedon exitiosa*

Order and Family: Lepidoptera, Sesiidae

Size and Appearance: The adult female has a steel blue body color with an orange band on the abdomen and has opaque forewings that are covered in blue scales and clear hindwings. The male has a bluish black body and has three to four narrow yellow stripes on the abdomen. Females live only 6-7 days and can lay 200-1200 eggs with most of the eggs being laid in the first few days. Eggs are laid on lower tree trunks or in the soil. The eggs hatch in 7-10 days, then larvae immediately bore into the tree. Larvae form galleries and feed on inner bark and cambium of the tree. Larvae feed the whole summer, then overwinter at the base of the tree as first to fourth instar larvae. When it is warm in the spring, they begin feeding again and pupate in May to August. Pupation occurs in the soil or lower portion of tree bark. Emerge after 2-4 weeks.

	Length (mm)	**Appearance**
Egg	0.5x0.7mm	Oval, reddish brown in color; hard; laid on lower tree bark or in soil; hatch in 7-10 days; females can lay 200-1200 eggs.
Larva/Nymph	1.6-38mm	Pinkish-white or cream in color with a brown head; 7 instars.
Adult	35-38mm, Female; 27-30mm, Male	Female has steel blue body color, orange band on abdomen, clear hindwings, opaque forewings with blue scales; male bluish black body color with 3-4 yellow stripes on abdomen; appear wasp like; one generation per year.
Pupa (if applicable)	14mm	Light brown to dark brown in color; pupa is inside cocoon made of silk, soil, and gum; pupate at base of tree in soil or on lower part of tree; emerge after 2-4 weeks.

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Larvae: chewing

Host plant/s: Peach, nectarine, apricot, plum, prune, cherry, and chokecherry trees.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): Peachtree borer larvae burrow into the lower portion or base of the tree and cause gouging wounds and girdling damage. Larvae can also feed on large roots. The larvae damage trees by feeding on the inner bark of the tree as well as the cambium. Larvae can girdle trees, weakening them and resulting in death, especially if they are young. Damage to trees can include loose or dead bark, masses of gummy sap, wilting and yellow leaves, and dieback. At the base of the tree there is often a jelly like substance mixed with frass (waste) that is exuded from small holes in the lower portion of the tree.

References:

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