

Sycamore borer

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Common Name: Sycamore borer

Scientific name: *Synanthedon resplendens*. The Sycamore borer is a lepidopteran in the family Sesiidae. Sycamore borers are a type of clearwing moth that is a common pest of sycamore and will also infest oaks and ceanothus.

Identifying Characteristics: Sycamore borer adults are one of the clearwing moths that resemble a wasp. The adults are mostly yellow with a brown/black head and bands around the body. The legs are mostly yellow with black margins near the body. The wings are clear with orange-yellow margins. Males are smaller in size than females.

Host range: California, American and Arizona Sycamore trees.

Description of Damage: Sycamores have extensive boring into the bark from these insects without killing the tree.

Life History: Sycamore borer has a complete lifecycle with egg, larvae, pupae, and adult stages. The adult stage does not injure the trees and lives for only one week, which is enough time to mate and lay eggs. Pink eggs are laid in the cracks of damaged bark. Eggs hatch in one to four weeks, and the larvae bore into the tree to the cambium layer. The larvae pupate under the bark. The life cycle takes one year, and the adults will emerge to start the process all over again.

Distribution: Occurs in the southwestern U.S.

Sampling Techniques: Visually inspect bark, looking for exit holes before adults emerge. Pupal cases will protrude from the bark and can persist for months after emergence. Traps with pheromones can be used but may attract other clearwing moth species. Identification will be important. Traps can attract moths from a large distance so placement does not need to be right next to sycamore trees but should be in locations that can easily be checked. The best time to monitor is May through July on the West coast.

Management: Proper tree care including irrigation, fertilization and planting keep sycamore trees healthy and free from damage where eggs can be laid. There are several braconid wasps who parasitize the Sycamore borer. There are also beneficial nematodes who parasitize the larvae. The use of broad-spectrum insecticides will limit killing of those predators and parasites. If insecticides are used, they are applied to the bark to kill the adults before they lay the eggs. Timing is critical for success.

References:

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Species *Synanthedon resplendens* - Sycamore Borer - Hodges#2582. (n.d.). Retrieved June 07, 2020, from
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