



Lilac Borer/Ash Borer

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Description: The adult has clear wings and is wasp-like in appearance. Size: The moth is about 1 inch long with a wingspan of 1 1/2 inches. Color: The fore wings are brown or chocolate color and the hind wings are clear with a dark border. The larvae are pure white worms with brown heads. Order: Lepidoptera Family: Sesiidae Species: *Podosesia syringae* (Harris)

Habitat: Both lilac and ash are known hosts.

Life Cycle: As winter passes, the immature larvae is in the stem of lilac and ash near the surface of the soil. Feeding and continued development begins in early spring and is completed by early summer. It then pupates in the stems and in three weeks emerges as the adult (early May through early July). Oviposition occurs shortly after emergence and mating. The eggs are laid about the base of lilac canes or on ash stems. The hatching larvae bore into the host and become half grown by cold weather. There is one generation per year.

Description of Damage: The base of infested branches becomes swollen and the bark cracks and breaks away from the wood. Canes suddenly wilt and show fine sawdust-like borings exuding from holes in the bark. Plants may be completely destroyed if the pest is not controlled.



Citation: Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University

ash borer (*Podosesia syringae*) Feature(s)

Remarks: A closely related borer on ash is called the banded ash clearwing. It is similar to the ash borer, but emerges in August. The timing for control is for late summer applications of insecticides. An introduced pest, the emerald ash borer occurs in most of Virginia and has different biology and control. See the VCE fact sheet on this pest. If you suspect that you have emerald ash borer and you are a resident of Virginia, please submit a sample to the Virginia Tech Insect Identification Lab through your local Extension office.

Control Methods: Non-chemical: Heavily infested plants should be cut and burned during the fall and winter periods. Chemical: Completely cover the main trunk by spraying with an insecticide labeled for borer control in early May and again in about six weeks often provides good control.