

Control Zimmerman Pine Moth



What Are They?

Pine moths are serious pests of pines. Larvae (caterpillars) damage trees by tunneling just beneath the bark of the trunk and branches, most commonly on the trunk just below the branches. The tunnels they make can girdle the trunk or branches and physically weaken them so they are easily broken by wind or snow.

What to Look For

The first signs of infestation by pine moths are the appearance of soft pinkish pitch masses on the trunk or branches. These pitch masses, which form where larvae are feeding beneath the bark, may be found anywhere from the top to the bottom of the tree and commonly look like masses of bubble gum. After the larvae finish feeding, the pitch masses may remain on the tree for many years and may not be noticed unless the tree is closely examined.

The *Dioryctria Zimmermani* is present as larvae in their tunnels from late April through July. Larvae reach a length of about one inch when mature. Adult moths begin emerging in mid to late July. They are most abundant in August and present into September. The adults are a reddish brown moth with a prominent white W shape near the middle of the body. Eggs are laid soon after adults emerge. Larvae begin appearing in mid August. Young larvae feed for a short time on the bark before constructing cocoon-like hibernacula under a bark scale where they will spend the winter. Generally in mid April the larvae become active again and begin tunneling into the tree.

Products to Control

Pine moths can usually be controlled with insecticides applied as trunk and branch sprays. Two spray applications of Acephate or Permethrin between April 7 and 15 should give good control. If only one application is possible, the August treatment is more effective. All spray treatments should be applied to the trunk and branches in a way that the bark becomes thoroughly wet.

Systemic implants, ACECAP 97, should be used instead of sprays and should be applied in April. The implants are intended for emergency treatment or on an occasional use basis. Another alternative is a yearly root zone application of liquid Merit insecticide. The liquid is taken up by the trees roots and distributed throughout the tree.



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