

# ZIMMERMAN PINE MOTH

## What are They?

Pine moths, *Dioryctria Zimmermani*, 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 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 pinkish-white, soft pitch masses on the trunk or branches. These pitch masses are formed where larvae are feeding beneath the bark 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 larvae are in their tunnels from late April through July, and adult moths begin emerging in mid to late July. They are most abundant in August and 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 wintering over under a bark scale. Generally in mid April the larvae begin tunneling into the tree, causing those pitch masses seen in these photos.



## Products to Control

Pine moths can usually be controlled with insecticides applied as trunk and branch sprays. A heavy coating of *Horticultural Oil* on the branches and trunk in March when the temperature is above 40 will help kill the larvae wintering under the bark scale. Two more applications of *Bonide Eight* or *Hi-Yield 38 Plus* (with *Spreader Sticker*), between April 7 and 15 should give good control. Another application in mid-August will help kill newly-hatched larvae before they winter over. All spray treatments should be applied to the trunk and branches in a way that the bark becomes thoroughly wet.

Systemic implants, can be used instead of sprays and should be applied in April. The implants are intended for emergency treatment or on an occasional-use basis.

