

Pest Alert : Linden Bark Borer Moth

By: Andrew Miller, Master Horticulturist at Designs by Sundown

Insect pests in the U.S. have a recurring tendency of introduction at the populous East Coast ports of entry. Japanese Beetle, Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, Spotted Lanternfly, European Paper Wasp, *Amauromyza pleuralis* and Emerald Ash Borer are but a handful of species that have followed this trend. Naturally these introductions have led to establishment and range expansion westward. Colorado's Front Range landscapes provide enticing conditions for continued progression. It is not uncommon to see Eastern pests 'jump' to the Front Range before reports are made in other midwest states. Could this leap be a geological or climatic trend? Could it possibly stem from our seemingly strong desire to bring Eastern landscaping practices to life in a semi-arid desert? Is it more simply the population density needed to detect incoming pests? The question remains to be answered, however the Linden Bark Borer Moth may be the next insect added to a long list of newly establishing pests along the front range.



Description: Adult moths emerge May - July as temperatures begin to warm. After mating, females lay their eggs along bark crevices, specifically targeting European Linden Trees (*Tilia x europea*). The larvae will feed within the bark layer causing a 'honeycombing' effect. The larvae are small and pale white in color. The adults can be seen gathering in large aggregations around infested trees and are identifiable by their neon orange coloration. Their wingspan is small, only measuring 10–13 millimeters. The common name recognized in Europe is Linnaeus's Spangle-wing, named in honor of Carolus Linnaeus.

Diagnosis: By late August - October, extensive feeding by the larvae on the bark produces rusty-colored frass (sawdust-like excrement). This is often seen along bark crevices at all heights along the tree. If feeding is extensive enough, a ring of frass may be seen around the base of the tree. The larvae feed on the external bark layer and damage to tissues responsible for the movement of water and nutrients is likely minimal. Current knowledge suggests they target Linden trees regardless of health and size but prefer the deep crevices of established Lindens. Multiple years of extensive feeding may cause poor bark structure and expose the tree to stressful environmental conditions.

Location: Current known infection area is contained to the Denver Metro surrounding Cheesman Park. There have been unconfirmed reports in surrounding counties. Expansion will only occur where host trees are planted.

We would love your help in tracking the establishment of this pest in Colorado and surrounding states. If you wish to share sightings or need assistance with diagnostics, feel free to contact:

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Additional Resources & Moth Photo Credit:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/364095-Chrysoclista-linneella>

<https://bugguide.net/node/view/26402>

<http://www.microleps.org/Guide/Agonoxenidae/index.html>

