



# Timber Talks



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## DAMAGE IN POPLAR PLANTATIONS

No. 23

Damage and loss is minor in British Columbia from the poplar-and-willow borer, but the increasing prevalence of this weevil on ornamental trees and in plantations is causing concern. Severely attacked trees are riddled with holes that results in mortality from girdling and weakened stems that break. Willows are the preferred host for this insect, but most concern in British Columbia is for the damage to poplars.

Evidence of a current infestation is irregular splits and holes in the tree bark, through which sap and moist boring dust exudes. Initially the dust is reddish-brown, later becoming speckled with white particles as boring penetrates the bark to the wood. Previous attacks can be recognized by stems that are honey-combed with dark coloured weathered tunnels and by tree deformities resulting from callusing of injured areas.

Eggs of this insect are most abundant in summer and early fall although some may be present in the spring. Newly emerged larvae achieve their first stage of development, then overwinter in the tree and eventually attain full maturity the following year. Transformation to the pupal stage is usually in July and August and most adults emerge in the fall. The adults, black and mottled with tiny black and either grey or pink scales, live until the following spring and sometimes through a second winter.

The adults are most active during evening and early morning, but only rarely do they fly. To facilitate feeding and egg-laying, the weevils gnaw small holes in the bark at bark lenticels, branch bases and at the edges of damaged bark. Holes for feeding and egg-depositing are indistinguishable, but the former are usually on twigs of the current year and the latter in older stems that are within 4 ft. from the ground. Newly emerged larvae enlarge the egg niches, but do only limited mining until the following spring, when they encircle the tree with borings in the bark. Mining progresses inward to the wood and then upwards through the wood or pith.

Control of this pest is difficult because of the secretive habits of the adult and its protected habitat in the immature stages. An aqueous solution of D.D.T. or emulsions of either BHC or dieldrin are effective to control adults, and spraying with an emulsion of lindane will kill larvae that are still within the bark.

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REPORT: The Poplar-and Willow Borer, Sternochetus (=Cryptorhynchus) lapathi (Linnaeus) (Coleoptera: Curculionidae), in British Columbia. J. W. E. Harris, Forest Research Laboratory, Victoria, B. C. and H. C. Coppel, Department of Entomology, Univ. of Minnesota.