



# Timber Talks



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## WILL PINE STANDS BE DAMAGED?

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Limited numbers of European pine shoot moth have been observed in British Columbia for more than a quarter century, but within recent years has become more widespread. Infestations have caused malformations such as spiked, forked and bushy tops but seldom resulted in tree mortality. These insects attack the immature shoots of indigenous and non-indigenous two- and three-needle pines, but all infestations have been confined to ornamental trees and to trees in nurseries and plantations. Danger exists that the infestations will spread to natural stands, and if so, the extensive and commercially important stands of lodgepole and ponderosa pine would suffer considerable damage.

The adult lays its eggs in June, either singly or in clusters, on twigs, needles and buds of the hard pines. Within one or two weeks tiny larvae emerge and feed on needles or buds until fall and then overwinter under hardened pitch on the buds. Mature larvae—light brown caterpillars with black heads—emerge in the spring and continue feeding within the shoots after which they pupate and eventually emerge as adults. The adult is a small orange-brown moth with silvery markings.

Although this insect attacks both lodgepole and ponderosa pine when planted, it has not been observed in natural stands. Possibly the stress sustained by the plant from planting makes it more susceptible to attack or the natural stands may be too distant from focal centres of infestation.

The dormant insects are extremely difficult to detect and there is little doubt that this pest was introduced into British Columbia on imported nursery stock. Distribution of the infested plants from the nurseries to various localities within the province has facilitated expansion of the infestation. An effective means of preventing the spread of this pest is to fumigate the lifted nursery stock with methyl bromide before the plants are distributed. When it has become established, spraying with either dimethoate, diazinon, Sevin or D.D.T. is a good control measure.