

Now is the time to control borers in your trees and shrubs  
By Rick Heflebower, Shade Tree Board

With the heat and stress of summer approaching it is time to talk about borer control again! If you are concerned about borers getting into your trees it is time to apply chemicals to help control them.

I was recently reading an article in a trade publication written by the University of Nevada Extension Service. It clearly defines the flat-headed borer problems that we experience here in the desert. I have paraphrased some of the information from the article.

“Two of the most important borers prevalent in this arid region include the Pacific flat-headed borer and the apple tree borer; both are metallic wood borers in the genus *Chrysobothrus*.

The larvae (known as flat-headed borers) feed just under the bark of infested plants by chewing through the cambium, creating meandering tunnels packed with sawdust. A typical life cycle for this type of borer is one year from egg to adult in this hot arid climate. Adults emerge from infested trees anytime from April through August, but mostly from May through early July.”

This supports the theory that we have held concerning the timing of when to spray for borers. The chemical application for most products, that protect trees and shrubs, must be made prior to injury in order to be effective. An example of this type of chemical is Carbaryl, or “Sevin” . When applied to the trunk just before the adults become active, it gives fairly good control by killing the young larvae (just after hatching) or the (adult just prior to egg laying). Another approach is to use the systemic chemical Imidachloprid, also know as “Merit” . There is some concern that the type of borers mentioned here are not being controlled with this systemic product. Trees and shrubs we have found flat-headed borers infesting include; flowering plum, flowering pear, bird of paradise, mesquite, fruit and nut trees, as well as junipers, cypress, and pines. Trees suffering from sun scald and or drought are especially vulnerable.

**Now is the time to apply chemicals for borer control!** As in any pest situation, keeping plants happy and “stress free” is the first line of defense. When you need to use chemical means to control borers be sure to read the label before buying and applying them. Not all trees appear on every chemical label. Take special care when treating fruit trees that you know which chemicals can be used and how closely they may be applied to harvest

Rick Heflebower is the Extension Horticulture Agent for Utah State University in Washington County. He is a member of the St. George Shade Tree and Beautification Board. He may be reached at rickh@ext.usu.edu.