



Greenhouse & Nursery

Birch Leaf Miner

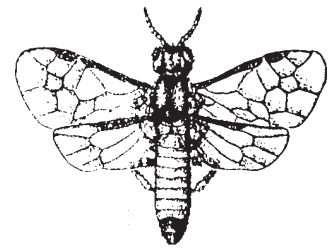
Pest
Fact Sheet **13**

Introduction

Gray Birch, Paper Birch, and European White Birch are among the favorite host plants of the birch leaf miner, *Fenusa pusilla* **Lepeletier**. This European native was introduced into the US pre-1923 and has grown to economic levels as one of the most important nursery insect pests of New Hampshire.

Description

In its damaging stage, the larva of the birch leaf miner is a translucent white color, flattened, and about 2/10 inch long. Several black spots can be found on the underside of the thorax, which is the part of the body where the legs are attached. A black spot is also found on the first segment of the abdomen. The adults are small black wasp-like insects about 1/8" long.



Adult male

Life cycle

Buried 1"-2" deep, the birch leaf miner overwinters as a full grown larva encircled by a cocoon in the soil. In May the larvae pupate, and the adults emerge in 8-15 days. After mating, the female, will lay several hundred eggs in developing birch leaves. In six to ten days the eggs hatch (1-20 per leaf). The young larvae mine between the lower and upper surfaces of the leaf.

This feeding will eventually cause large blotches, wilting and gradual leaf death. It reduces photosynthetic abilities of the tree itself. This feeding weakens the tree and causes the birch to be less vigorous and more susceptible to invasion by other insects and diseases. Sometimes the damage from the birch leaf miner can be fatal to the tree.

There are two generations of the birch leaf miner per year in New Hampshire.

Control

The birch leaf miner is controlled by either a single application of systemic insecticide in the spring before bud break, or by two foliar sprays, one in mid-late May and one in early July, to kill the larvae in their mines.



Consult your county Extension Educator (see county office telephone listing below) for specific pesticide recommendations.

Summary

Damaging stage:	Larva
Part of plant attacked	Birch leaves
Overwintering stage	Fully grown larva in a cocoon in the soil
Number of generations per year	2
Time of year when damage done	May, July
Number of spray applications	1 - 2
Damage symptoms	Leaf blotches

UNH Cooperative Extension County Office Telephone Numbers

Belknap (603) 527-5475	Carroll (603) 539-3331	Cheshire (603) 352-4550	Coos (603) 788-4961	Grafton (603) 787-6944
Hillsborough Milford (603) 673-2510 Goffstown (603) 621-1478	Merrimack (603) 225-5505 (603) 796-2151	Rockingham Brentwood, NH 03833 (603) 679-5616	Strafford (603) 749-4445	Sullivan (603) 863-9200

Stop! It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. Contact the NH Division of Pesticide Control at (603) 271-3550 to check registration status. Store pesticides in their original containers in a locked cabinet or shed away from food. Dispose of unused pesticides or empty containers safely, according to NH regulations. If you suspect pesticide poisoning, call the New Hampshire Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.



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