PEACH TWIG BORER

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Peach twig borer, *Anarsia lineatella* Zeller, was introduced from Europe. It now occurs throughout the peach-growing areas of the United States. Peach twig borer is an important pest in the West. In well-managed orchards in the Southeast that make regular use of organophosphate insecticides, peach twig borer is a minor seldom-seen pest.

DESCRIPTION

Adult peach twig borers are small, inconspicuous, gray to dark gray moths with a wingspread of about 2/5 to 1/2 inch (10 to 12 mm). Larvae (Figure 1) are reddish-brown to chocolate-brown caterpillars with black heads. They often have creamy-white bands extending around their bodies and they reach 2/5 inch (10 mm) long when mature.

Figure 1. Peach twig borer larva. Image by Jack Kelly Clark.

PLANT INJURY

In early spring, peach twig borer caterpillars burrow and feed in the pith of new shoots, causing wilting and die-back similar to that caused by the oriental fruit moth. One larva may destroy several shoots. Later generations of larvae feed in fruit, often penetrating completely to the pit. Late maturing peach cultivars normally sustain more fruit damage. After harvest, larvae of late-season generations again bore and feed in terminal growth.

SEASONAL HISTORY AND HABITS

Figure 2. Peach twig borer hibernaculum, a silk-lined cell in which larvae overwinter. Image by Jack Kelly Clark.

Peach twig borer overwinters as a partially grown larva in a hibernaculum, a silk-lined cell or cavity (Figure 2). Hibernacula are usually constructed under loose bark or in the folded bark in the crotch of younger branches. Overwintering larvae become active in the early spring when new twig growth starts. About the time leaves begin to appear, overwintering larvae leave their hibernacula, move up the tree, and burrow into tender new growth. When mature, larvae exit the shoots, migrate to larger branches, and pupate in loose silken cocoons in rough places in the bark or in curled leaves. Moths soon emerge, mate, and begin laying eggs that hatch in four to seven days. Emerging first generation larvae also feed primarily on shoot growth. Fruit are apparently unattractive to peach twig borer larvae until after the pit-hardening stage. Some fruit feeding by first generation larvae may occur on early varieties. Larvae feed and grow for about three weeks, at which time they pupate and give rise to first generation moths. The life cycle repeats throughout the season. There are normally four complete generations per year in the Southeast. Larvae of the second and succeeding generations feed increasingly on maturing fruit, as long as fruit is present.

The time required for a given generation of peach twig borer to complete its development varies, depending upon weather and location. Normally, there is an overlapping of generations in late season, and fruit or

terminals may be infested by larvae from more than one generation. Overwintering larvae may also be from different generations.

CONTROL

Insecticide applications for catfacing insects and plum curculio normally provide peach twig borer control. Delayed dormant sprays for scale insects may also kill many of the overwintering larvae. Season-long control of peach twig borer can usually be obtained by insecticide applications at petal fall and shuck fall.

REFERENCES

Sorenson, C. J. and F. H. Gunnell. 1955. Biology and control of the peach twig borer (*Anarsia lineatella* Zeller) in Utah. Utah State Agr. Exp. Stn. Bull. 379. l9p.