

A Bug's Life

Brownheaded ash sawfly

Family: Tenthredinidae; *Tomostethus multicinctus*

Fun facts

- Early season, but sporadic pest of ash trees (especially green ash)
- Overwinter as pupae at base of tree
- Adults are non-stinging wasps that swarm trees, mate, lay eggs on leaves
- Larvae feed in May and June
- Survival and damage is dependent on weather patterns (i.e. a gradual spring with no late frost could lead to outbreak years and big populations)
- 1 generation per year

Identification

Damage: Young larvae make small holes in leaves, mature larvae cause observable foliar damage feed between the main leaf veins. Frass produced by larvae fall out of trees.

Adult: 3/8" long, black, stout, wasp

Larva: Resemble caterpillars, cream-colored and slightly green; grow to 3/4" long, bead-like head with prominent eye, 7 prolegs on abdominal segments

Management

- Mature, healthy trees tolerate feeding
- Younger, stressed trees are more susceptible to long-term damage
- Forceful spray of water dislodge larvae
- Insecticide use is seldom warranted and *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Btk) is not effective on wasps
- Focus on providing and maintaining good tree care, which may include treating for EAB, a serious insect pest of ash trees

