



Mountainash sawfly

Pristiphora geniculata

Order Hymenoptera, Family Tenthredinidae;
common sawflies
Introduced pest

Host plants: American and European mountainashes

Description: Adult sawflies are approximately 9 mm long, black and wasp-like. Larvae are pale green-yellow with black spots and are 16–20 mm long when fully grown. The head may be either black or orange.

Life history: Adults emerge to deposit eggs over a six-week period, beginning in early June. There are two generations a year. First generation larvae are active from mid June through early August. Second generation larvae are usually found from late August to September.

Overwintering: Prepupae in the soil.

Damage symptoms: Larvae feed in groups and eat entire leaves, leaving only the mid-veins. They defoliate an entire branch before moving to another. Trees usually survive even when completely defoliated. However, repeated heavy defoliation reduces tree vitality, number of flowers, and may cause death.

Monitoring: Look for signs of defoliation and for larvae feeding in aggregations on leaf margins.

Physical control: Prune small populations that are accessible

Chemical control: Horticultural oil sprays are most effective, against young larvae. If larvae are nearly full-grown, treatment should not be undertaken. Chemicals will not be as effective and most of the damage that the plant will sustain will already have been inflicted.

Biological control: No reports of natural enemies

Plant mortality risk: Low

Biorational pesticides: azadirachtin, horticultural oil, insecticidal soap, pyrethrins, spinosad

Conventional pesticides: acephate, bifenthrin, carbaryl, chlorpyrifos (nursery only), cyfluthrin, deltamethrin, fluralinate, imidacloprid, lambda-cyhalothrin, malathion, permethrin



Leaf damage caused by mountainash sawfly. When larvae are disturbed, they tend to rear up into an S-shaped position. (170)
Photo: E. Bradford Walker, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, The Bugwood Network, University of Georgia



Leaf damage caused by mountainash sawfly. Larvae consume all but mid-veins on leaves. (169)
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