Pales weevil

Hylobius pales
Order Coleoptera, Family Curculionidae; snout beetles
Native pest

Host plants: Loblolly, pitch, Scotch, shortleaf and white pines are preferred, but Douglas-fir, fir, hemlock, juniper, larch, northern white cedar, and spruce are also susceptible.

Description: Adult weevils are 7–12 mm long, reddish-brown to black, with a prominent snout, patches of light colored scales on the wing covers, and a line or patch of yellowish-white scales on the head. Larvae are legless and C-shaped, with white bodies and brown heads.

Life history: Adults become active between late April and early June, feeding on the bark of twigs. After a short feeding period, they move to cut, dead or dying pines, mate and lay eggs in the roots. Larvae construct long tunnels under the trunk bark and root bark, and pupate in the sapwood. There is one generation a year. A related species is Northern pine weevil (*Pissodes approximatus*). This weevil causes similar injury, has a similar life cycle, and control. It is smaller than Pales weevil and has two white marks on its elytra.

Overwintering: Adults in the debris under conifers.

Damage symptoms: Adults chew a series of small holes in the bark, which then become covered with white, crystallized resin. If populations are sufficiently high, these areas may merge, girdling and killing plants up to 1 cm in diameter. On larger trees, adults feed on twigs and terminals and may cause dieback and deformed limbs.

Monitoring: Pales weevil feed during the day and hide at night. Where trees are showing the typical signs of weevil damage, check for adult presence during the day in the debris under the trees. Monitor for adults by placing 5–15 cm pine discs under trees. The adult beetles will cling to the underside of these discs during the day. Also look for bark damaged by chewing and for dried resin marking older damaged areas.

Cultural control: Delay replanting of trees for one to two years where trees have been cut. Remove stumps or treat stumps with insecticide. Leave some live branches on a stump to make the live stump unattractive to weevils.

Chemical control: Spray trees in late April through June and again in August and September to kill adults.

Biological control: No reports of natural enemies

Plant mortality risk: High (seedlings)

Biorational pesticides: None

Conventional pesticides: chlorpyrifos (nursery only), permethrin

Dieback on pine caused by Pales weevil. (186)
Photo: John Davidson

Pales weevil adult attracted to fresh cut pine disc in Scotch pine Christmas tree plantation. (187)
Photo: Cliff Sadof

Pales weevil adult. (187)
Photo David Laughlin