



Sawflies

Several species
Order Hymenoptera, Family Diprionidae;
common sawflies
Native and introduced pests

Host plants: There are many species of sawflies and each prefers specific plants or groups of related plants.

Description: Sawflies are thick-waisted wasps with a “saw-like” ovipositor that they use to insert eggs into plant tissue. Their immatures are worm-like and resemble caterpillars. They have seven or more pair of abdominal prolegs that lack basal hooks called crochets. On some sawflies, like the pear slug, the prolegs may be difficult to distinguish. Some sawflies like European pine sawfly and mountainash sawflies feed in groups that can be particularly destructive and have the distinctive behaviors of swaying as a group and regurgitating a foul smelling liquid when disturbed.

Adult sawflies may be distinguished by the greater number of veins in their wings than other wasps. Larvae may be 12–25 mm long, slug-like or caterpillar-like.

Life history: There is usually one generation a year, but some species have two.

Overwintering: Eggs, prepupae, or pupae, depending upon species.

Damage symptoms: Most sawfly larvae are gregarious feeders. Some eat needles, some entire leaves, some mine leaves, and others merely skeletonize leaves. Heavy infestations can cause complete defoliation of trees and shrubs.

Monitoring: Look for signs of leaf skeletonization and/or defoliation. Look for aggregations of larvae feeding on leaves.

Physical control: Remove colonies that are accessible

Chemical control: Horticultural oil sprays are most effective against young larvae. Use a residual insecticide against older larvae when present in large numbers. If larvae are nearly full grown, treatment should not be undertaken. Chemicals will not be as effective, and most of the damage that the plants sustain will already have been inflicted. Any sprays that are made should be directed at larval feeding aggregations only.

Biological control: Many species of sawflies have egg and/or larval parasitoids, although in many cases little information exists on the importance of these parasitoids. Some species also have viruses that sometimes control populations.

Plant mortality risk: Low

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

Conventional pesticides: acephate, bifenthrin, carbaryl, chlorpyrifos (nursery only), cyfluthrin, deltamethrin,



Introduced pine sawfly adult male. (251)
Photo: John H. Ghent, USDA Forest Service, The Bugwood Network, University of Georgia



Rosy maple moth caterpillar (top) and redheaded pine sawfly caterpillar (bottom). Caterpillars have five or fewer pairs of prolegs. Sawfly larvae have more than five pairs of prolegs. (222)
Photo: David Laughlin



Parasitized sawfly cocoons. Cocoon on left shows irregular emergence hole of a fly parasitoid. Cocoon on right shows round emergence hole of a wasp parasitoid. (223)
Photo: John Davidson

fluvalinate, imidacloprid, lambda-cyhalothrin, malathion, permethrin