



URI COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND LIFE SCIENCES (CELS) OUTREACH CENTER

3 East Alumni Avenue
Kingston, Rhode Island 02881

For more information:

Call:

In RI: URI MGA Hotline
1-800-448-1011
Mon.-Thurs. 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

In MA and CT: 401-874-2900

Outside New England please contact Cooperative Extension in your county.

Websites:

URI Master Gardener Association
www.urimga.org

CELS Outreach Center
www.uri.edu/cels/ceo



ARBORVITAE LEAFMINER

There are four species of arborvitae leafminers in the Northeast; *Argyresthia thuiella* is the most common. The adults are small, silvery-tan moths; larvae are 1/8-inch long caterpillars with a light green body (sometimes with a reddish or yellow tinge) and a shiny black head.

Adults are active from late May to early June. Eggs are laid on the inner edges of arborvitae leaves from which larvae soon hatch. The young larvae enter the leaves and mine, or excavate, between the leaf surfaces. The larvae overwinter in the mines and resume feeding briefly the following spring. Pupation occurs in late May and the adults emerge soon after.

Browning of the foliage from the feeding activity of arborvitae leafminers will not appear until late January or February and is therefore often misdiagnosed as being winter injury. Browning foliage tips that are hollow, contain frass (the dried, brown pellets of the caterpillar's excrement), and perhaps a living larva are the key telltale signs of leaf-miner presence. On the other hand, if the brown tips are not hollow, then the cause is due to winter injury, disease or some other factor.

Even though arborvitae can withstand heavy defoliation from this pest and still live, the aesthetic value of the planting may be greatly reduced to unacceptable levels. One strategy is to control the adults prior to egg-laying when they appear, starting around mid-June into July. During the known flight period, gently shake the foliage, if adults are present they can then be observed in this forced flight. Chemical cover sprays can be applied at this time. Check for currently registered insecticides. One application should be made in early June, with a second application in July when adults are active or 7 to 10 days after adult activity is observed. Follow manufacturer's directions carefully when using any pesticide. Once the larvae are in the foliage, systemic pesticides may be necessary.

Adapted from: Cornell Cooperative Extension , 1999; UMass Extension

PESTICIDES ARE POISONOUS!! Read and follow all safety precautions on labels. Handle carefully and store in original containers out of reach of children, pets, or livestock. Dispose of empty containers immediately, in a safe manner and place. Pesticides should never be stored with foods or in areas where people eat.

When trade names are used for identification, no product endorsement is implied, nor is discrimination intended against similar materials. Be sure that the pesticide that you wish to use is registered in the state of use.

The user of this information assumes all risk for personal injury or property damage.

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Rhode Island Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities. U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.



Note: The Hotline is open Monday—Thursday, 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m. from March 1 to November 1.

