

## Peach Tree Borer

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Peach tree borer is an insect pest we are beginning to see more problems with in our area, especially in orchards west of Highway 99. This moth lays her eggs low on the trunk of almond and stone fruit trees growing on nemaguard and lovell peach rootstocks. After hatching, the larvae enter the rootstock and tunnel into the crown below the soil line. Larvae will continue to tunnel and feed in the tree for one year, damaging the cambium. Feeding injury from peach tree borer can serve as an entry site for crown gall and wood decay fungi. Infestation of several larvae can girdle and kill mature trees.

Although peach tree borer can be found anywhere in the county, I am aware of several hot spots, including West Modesto, Salida and Patterson. Growers in these areas should inspect their orchards now for small areas of frass (insect-chewed wood) and gum at the soil line. Dig soil from around entry sites and cut into the tree with a pocket knife to look for larvae. If not yet emerged, you will find a one-inch, cream-colored larvae with a reddish brown head capsule. You may find pupal casings sticking out of the frass and gum or on the ground. If a significant number of infested trees are found, treatment is warranted. A small number of peach tree borer can build to very damaging populations in a year or two. Pheromone traps can also be used to monitor for peach tree borer. The treatment threshold is ten or more moths caught per week. The day-flying moths are bluish-black and have clear wings. They are about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch long and resemble wasps

If treatment is necessary, use a hand wand to direct insecticide sprays at the base of trees. This will not adequately kill larvae already in the wood but will prevent re-infestation of newly hatched peach tree borer larvae. Because moth emergence and egg laying occurs from late April through September, at least two applications are necessary for adequate control. Orchards with high populations may require a third treatment. Be sure to monitor treated orchards next year to confirm adequate control.