



PEST NOTICE

A non-native weevil called the Sitka spruce weevil (SSW), *Pissodes strobi*, was recently detected in a shipment of trees from the Pacific Northwest, where the weevil is native. SSW infests and kills the tops (Figure 2) of young spruce and pine trees and could pose a threat to our native and ornamental trees.

Purchase information:

Colorado blue spruce and ‘Vanderwolf’s Pyramid’ limber pine purchased from Costco Wholesale in Anchorage (Debarr and West Dimond locations) during the 2015 growing season (May-June, 2015).

Weevil description:

Adult SSW (Figure 1) are about ¼ inch long and brown with tan and white spots on their backs. Immature stages live and feed within the stem of the tree and are rarely seen.



Figure 1: Adult Sitka spruce weevil. Photo credit: Natasha Wright, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Bugwood.org

Damage:

Immature weevils feed beneath the bark near the top of the tree, causing the top to wilt, droop, and eventually die (Figure 2). By late summer, adult weevils chew their way out of the stem. The adult emergence holes (Figure 3), approximately 1/10 inch in diameter, may be observed along the upper main stem of the tree.

Hosts:

Common hosts of SSW include native species such as Sitka spruce, white spruce, and black spruce and several popular ornamental species, including Norway spruce, Colorado blue spruce, Scots pine, and limber pine. SSW is primarily a problem in seedlings and young trees.

What will happen to the trees:

Under normal circumstances, SSW does not kill trees, but it can limit growth and deform trees. Several years of attack may result in a bushy looking tree and may make the tree more susceptible to other pests.



Figure 2: Left-Damaged top of a SSW infested tree. Photo credit: Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org. Right-Healthy top of a spruce tree. Photo credit: Tom DeGomez, University of Arizona, Bugwood.org.

What to look for:

Now: Look for wilted, drooping, or dead tops in trees and adult weevil emergence holes.

Later: If you did not see damage in the top of your trees this year, chances are good that your trees were not affected. To be sure, you should monitor your trees next spring for excessive sap along the upper main stem in the spring and wilting or drooping in the summer.



Figure 3: Adult emergence holes in spruce stem. Photo credit: Jessie Moan, 2015, UAF-CES

Who to contact:

If you observe any of the symptoms in your recently purchased and planted trees, or in any nearby established trees, please contact UAF-Cooperative Extension Service or the Alaska Division of Forestry.



Integrated Pest Management Program
Cooperative Extension Service
907-786-6300



Forest Health Program
Alaska Division of Forestry
907-269-8460