

TREE PEST GUIDE

Use our guide to identify some of the most common tree pests and how to protect your trees from their damage.

Many tree pests are non-native species that arrive to our area as stowaways on cargo and find no natural predators to stop them. The results can be devastating for individual properties and entire ecosystems. Other tree pests proliferate when environmental conditions change.

Fight Tree Pests With A Healthy Tree

Trees are under constant attack by nasty insects and pathogens. A healthy tree can withstand most of these pests, but if the environmental conditions worsen or an infestation becomes severe, the tree can be robbed of its vigor and even its life. Remember that the best way to protect a tree from disease and insects is to start with a healthy tree. Water and fertilize appropriately, and mulch regularly.

Take time to inspect your trees for signs of poor health or stress, such as dying limbs, bleeding cankers, visible fungi, and drying, curled leaves.



Common Tree Pests

Mites

Minute in size but mighty in their foliage-chomping abilities, mites can cause serious damage to your trees. Mites are miniature arachnids that usually colonize on the underside of leaves. They feast on leaf tissue and suck nutrients and fluids from the plant. As feeding continues, a tree's leaves will turn yellow, and may curl up and fall off. Other signs of a mite problem include:



- Speckled foliage.
- Leaf drop.
- Tiny web-like structures.
- Mottled or discolored needles on conifers like pine, spruce, and hemlock. (In severe cases, needle loss can occur.)

Ultimate Lit-Mite Test

If you suspect a mite problem, confirm it with the white paper test. Shake a branch or some leaves over a white sheet of paper. Any tiny black or brown specks that shake out and then begin to move are probably mites. Count a dozen or more, and you've got a serious problem.

Controlling Mites

Naturally present predatory insects usually take care of mites and save you the hassle of treating the tree. Depending on the mite species infesting the tree, you may need to introduce ladybugs or other predatory species to take care of business. Be careful with chemical pesticides. They can actually encourage the spread of mites by killing off its predators. For heavy infestations of mites, use a miticide that is safe for your tree. Contact your trusted tree professional for guidance on the best treatment for your type of tree. Mites love hot, dry climates, so keep your landscape well watered and use insecticides sparingly to keep mites away.

Emerald Ash Borer

This beetle, originally from Asia, has killed millions of trees — including green, black, white, pumpkin, and blue ash — and it continues to devastate tree populations throughout North America. Infected trees usually die within a few years. Female emerald ash borers lay their eggs on the bark of the tree. When the larvae hatch, they feed beneath the bark, choking off the flow of nutrients and water to the upper and outer limbs of the tree. Signs of an infestation include:



- Crown dieback, aka yellow, wilting leaves and thinning branches at the top of the tree's canopy.
- Vertical splits in the bark where larvae have hatched. Peel back the bark or wait for it to split, and see the S-shaped, serpentine galleries left behind by larvae.
- D-shaped holes left behind in the trunk, where mature beetles have emerged.
- Woodpecker activity on your trees due to ample supplies of tasty larvae.

Controlling Emerald Ash Borers

Preventing an infestation with emerald ash borers is simpler than eradicating one. Heavily infested trees should be removed and destroyed by a professional to prevent the further spread of this invasive species. A good rule of thumb is to treat a tree that still has half or more of its canopy. If your tree is worth saving, apply a systemic insecticide that contains the ingredient imidacloprid into the soil, near the tree's roots. You also can inject a pesticide with imidacloprid directly into the trunk of an infected tree to destroy larvae colonies.

In the meantime, do your part in controlling the spread of these invasive beetles. Use only local firewood. Emerald ash borer eggs are hidden under bark, and therefore can hitchhike long distances unnoticed and infest new areas.

Common Tree Pests

Tree Scale

Scale insects comprise over 1,000 species of oddly shaped, largely immobile bugs in North America that feed on plant sap. They appear as small shell-like bumps on the foliage, twigs and branches of trees. Scale populations can explode after just a few seasons of infestation. Your trees might be literally covered with scales before you notice a problem, because the pests are so inconspicuous. As youngsters, scale insects are referred to as "crawlers." Crawlers are highly mobile, six-legged, have no protective covering, and are tinier than a pinhead. At maturity, however, scale insects are immobile, have no visible legs or antennae, and in the case of armored scale insects, are covered with a waxy, protective shell that ranges from 1/16 to 3/8 inches in size.

Controlling Tree Scale

Because of their protective shells, adults are impervious to most insecticides. That's why insecticide applications must be focused on the immature crawlers that lack these waxing coverings. Timing is critical and depends on the species of scale insect.



Woolly Adelgid

Ninety percent of eastern hemlock trees in the United States have been affected by the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). Native to Asia, the tiny, aphid-like pest has no known natural predator in the U.S. and has devastated hemlock populations in Eastern states. The insect sucks nutrients out of hemlock and spruce trees, halts their growth, and causes their needles to discolor and drop prematurely. They spread easily from hemlock to hemlock by wind surfing and by catching a ride on an animal. The most obvious sign of an HWA infestation is a cottony mass on tree twigs, near the base of the needles, in late winter or spring. In springtime, you may see brownish-orange eggs in this fluffy white mass. Look who had more babies!

Controlling Woolly Adelgid

Chemical insecticides are most effective in controlling HWA on individual hemlock trees. If the infestation is light, or if adjacent trees are infested, it is best to start applying insecticide proactively to keep the tree from going into decline. Treating HWA aggressively while the tree is still healthy is the best way to maintain a vigorous tree. A one- to five-year treatment course is usually necessary to eradicate the pest. Horticultural oils and insecticidal soaps are other options, but they should not be used near water sources. Consult a tree service professional for advice on the right way to combat this devastating tree pest.

Japanese beetles

First introduced to the U.S. a century ago via a shipment of plants from Japan, the Japanese beetle is damaging in both its adult and larval (grub) stages. They feed on the leaves of over 300 different plant species. They seem to enjoy dining in large groups, and a pack of them can quickly skeletonize leaves and devour flowers and overripe fruit.



Controlling Japanese beetles

Pesticides are effective in protecting plants from adult feast sessions. This will need to be reapplied, depending on the chemical. Beetle traps are usually a bad idea. They can entice beetles to fly into your garden. To destroy future generations of beetles, apply "Grub Guard," a mixture of microscopic, parasitic nematodes that eat beetle larvae. Another natural killer of the Japanese beetle is the milky disease organism ("Milky Spore"). Apply this to your soil in the summer or early autumn to kill large numbers of grubs. It can take a year or more to get established, but it keeps working for over a decade.

About Elite Tree Care

Elite Tree Care, LLC is family owned and operated. A close-knit team of professional members of the International Society of Arboriculture, PA Certified and Licensed Applicators and with over 30 years of experience, Elite Tree Care has grown into one of the most well-respected tree care services in the Southeast Pennsylvania Region.

At Elite we are committed to continuing education and state of the art equipment to provide expert care for the trees and shrubs on your property. Guided by the belief that good service means respect for the customer as well as the tree, Elite Tree Care is a client-focused company striving to provide excellent service and develop long-term relationships within the community.

Get a FREE Quote Today! Visit:
www.elitetreecare.com



\$175 Off Tree Care Service

Order service from Elite Tree Care and get \$175 off any service over \$1,000!

Or **\$275** off any service over \$2,000! See the difference a local, family owned and operated tree care provider can make in the care of your home and property. All of our professional arborists are trained to handle the unique conditions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania region in order to optimize results.

Not to be combined with any other offers.

Please mention this offer when you call or speak to a representative about your quote.