

Fruit Tree Borer *maroga melanostigma*. Document by ElmSavers 2007

A serious pest is in regards to ornamental and native trees, with a preference for black wattles, it has quickly adapted to the softer and sweeter wood of exotics. With damage to prunes first mentioned in 1948 its damage was limited to small limbs, but damage is now seen on large and small limbs as well as on the trunks. It is a known pest of over fifteen species of trees and vines with damage now seen in Golden Elms, Oriental Plane trees and a number of Maple species.

Life cycle

Although *M. melanostigma* follows a typical moth life cycle, its number of instars and flight times of adult moths are not fully known.

The adult moths are difficult to find, as they are nocturnal, but have been reported as readily coming to light.

Larvae can be identified by a *Frass* (sawdust) covering over their tunnels, the *Frass* is woven together with silk forming an effective cover keeping out predators such as birds etc..

Control

The longest period of its life cycle is in the larval stages, is thought to last up to two years (Lloyd, 1972).

During this time, though, the larvae are sheltered in tunnels; control by tree injection using newer systemic insecticides that are *Lepidopteran* toxic is the only practical solution in a non crop situation.

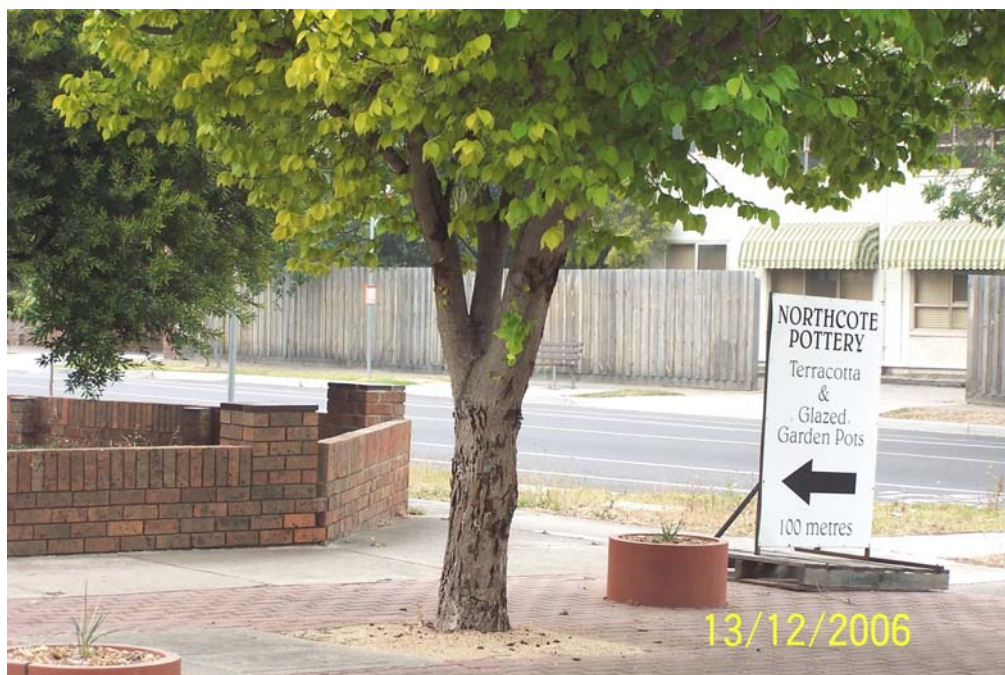
Caterpillars feed in the sapwood through too the outer bark, injected insecticide placed into the sapwood (xylem) will kill new larvae quickly as they bore in, breaking the cycle. Established larvae may take longer to succumb as they mainly feed on the outer bark, eventually they will penetrate the cambial tissue and die accordingly.



Adult Moth

Larvae

Larvae actively feeding on an Oriental Plane Tree.



Fruit tree borer damage in Golden elms can be very extensive to the point of ring barking the entire trunk and killing the tree.

This tree and all others in this street have been micro injected by Elmsavers for The City of Darebin.

The healing process is already evident, new callous tissue is beginning to cover some of the honeycombing.

Darebin is trialling tree injection treatments for badly effected Elm and Plane trees; this will be monitored over the coming years.

This Golden Elm is located in Balwyn North in the City of Boroondara.



Damage such as this is mistakenly attributed to the Elm Bark Beetle, standard treatments such as soil injection and canopy spraying have been ineffective in controlling this pest.

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