

# Kansas Insect Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants and Extension Personnel



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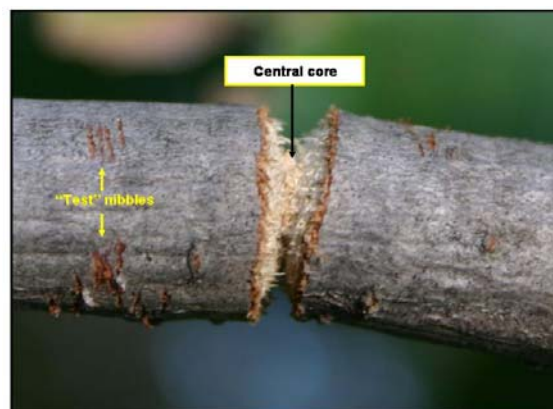
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It's happening now, but you might not know it just yet.....



To look at this tree, one might ask, “Why are we looking at this tree? There is nothing to see”. True ---- but unseen now, twig girdlers are currently doing what only they do: girdle twigs ranging from 6 – 13 mm in diameter. Although girdled branches remain attached to trees via a central core, the weight of some branches may “break” the core causing the “green leaved” branch to fall. In most instances, though, the branches remain in tact.



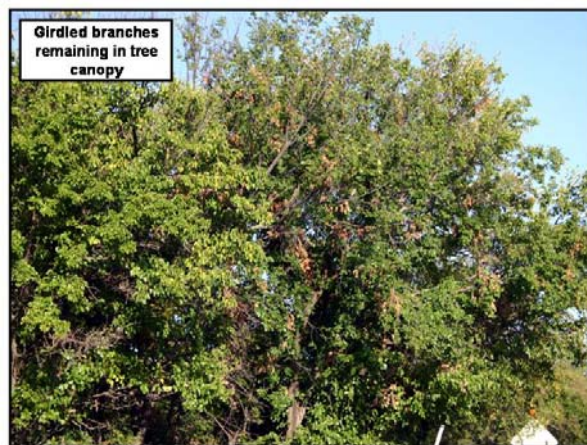
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Eventually, however, the girdled branches die as evidenced by the dead brown foliage,



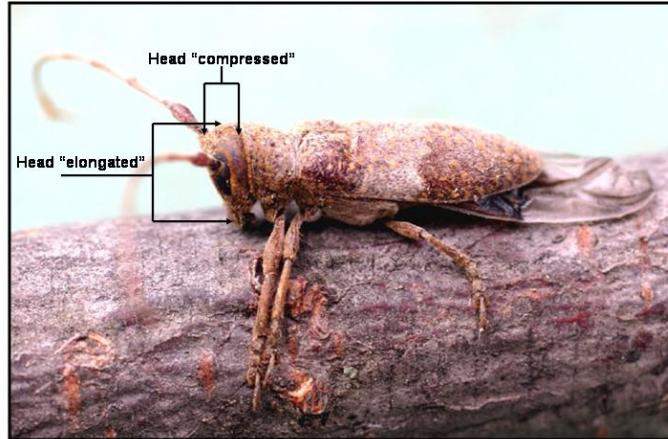
and with the winds of autumn, the dead brittle branches snap/fall and litter the ground beneath the tree.



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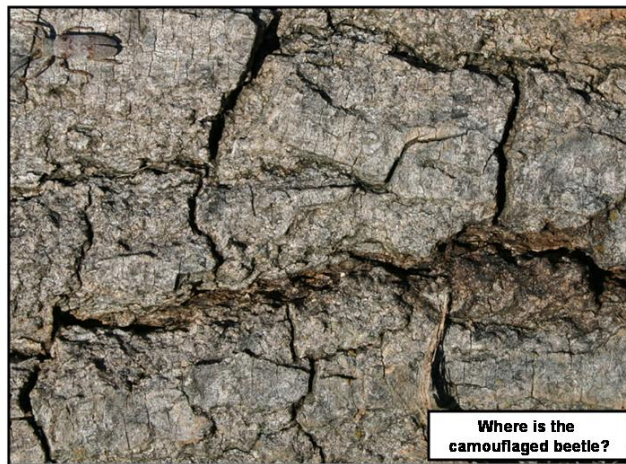
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With remarkably strong and stout mandibles, the twig girdler beetle is well adapted for its “girdling task”. The head is compressed from front to back, and somewhat elongate from top to bottom ----- just right for allowing it to fit into the V-shaped notch of the girdle

What about the twig girdler beetles, and why can't we observe them making the actual cuts? While twig girdler are of substantial size (up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  -inch in length), they generally are out-of-view high up in tree canopies.

Even if they are in viewable situations (i.e. lower branches), they may escape detection due to their cryptic coloration which allows them to blend into their immediate background.



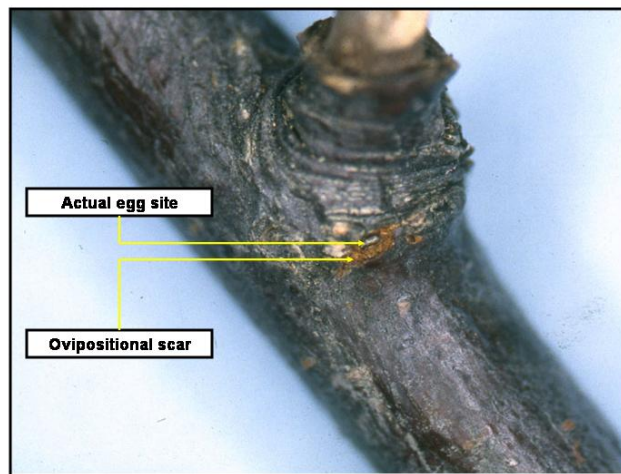
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After female beetles deposit eggs into gnawed notches near bud scars and side shoots on terminal portions of branches,



they proceed to perform the abovementioned girdling at a point below where eggs have been deposited. Thus eggs and larvae are ensured of having "dead=dry wood" in which to develop, whether in dropped branches or those remaining in tree canopies. Twig girdlers overwinter as small borer larvae, and complete their development the ensuing spring and summer after which adults again emerge in late summer to repeat the girdling activities.

For homeowners, twig girdlers are mostly a nuisance due to their causing unsightly "lawn litter" which may also interfere with lawn mowing. There is little to be done other than to gather up and dispose of downed branches. Trees themselves suffer little from this natural pruning process.

Bob Bauernfeind

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## Weekly Report from the Kansas State University Insect Diagnostic Laboratory:

The following samples were submitted to the Insect Diagnostician Laboratory from September 5<sup>th</sup> to September 11<sup>th</sup>.

September 05 2008: Reno County – Eastern Black Swallowtail caterpillars  
September 08 2008: Bourbon County – Wolf spider  
September 08 2008: Lyon County – Stink bug nymphs on Soybeans  
September 08 2008: Republic County – Indianmeal moth larvae in grain elevator  
September 08 2008: Republic County – Euonymous scale insects on Euonymous tree  
September 08 2008: Wyandotte County – Thief Ants in home  
September 09 2008: Harvey County – Winged aphids on vine  
September 09 2008: Graham County – Lilac borer larvae in Lilac  
September 10 2008: Douglas County – Bat Bug  
September 11 2008: Nemaha County – Winged aphids on tree  
September 11 2008: Sumner County – Small Hive Beetles found in hive in back yard

If there are any questions regarding these samples or about the identification of any arthropod please contact the Insect Diagnostician at (785) 532-4739 or [GotBugs@ksu.edu](mailto:GotBugs@ksu.edu).

*Holly Davis*

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**Sincerely,**

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