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## EC1515 Revised 1950 Controlling the Peach Borer

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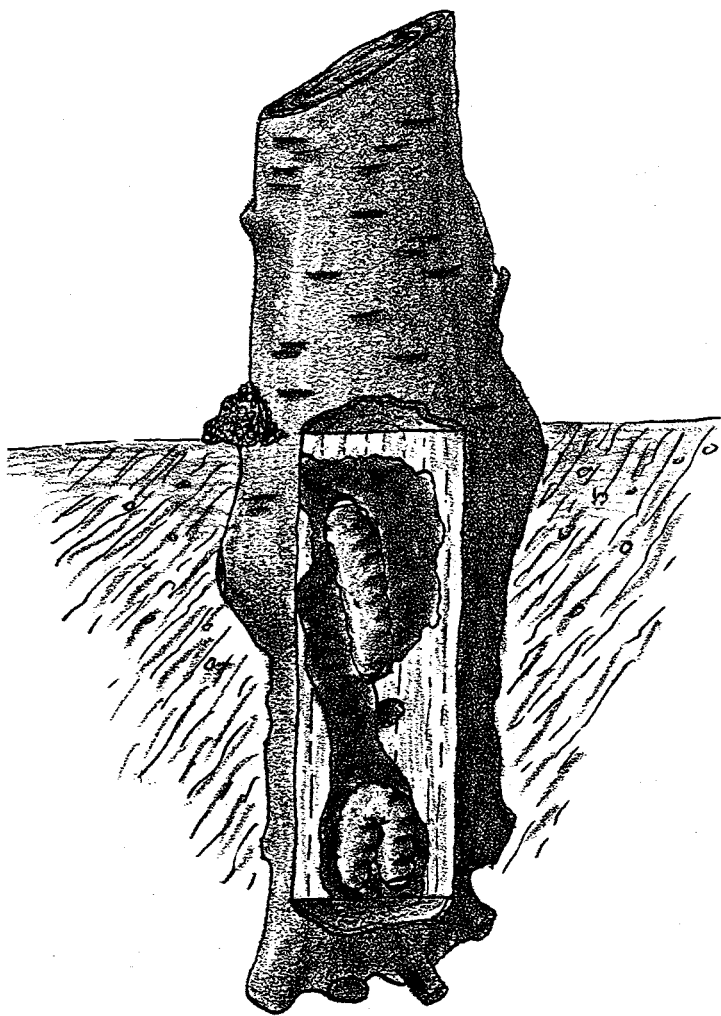
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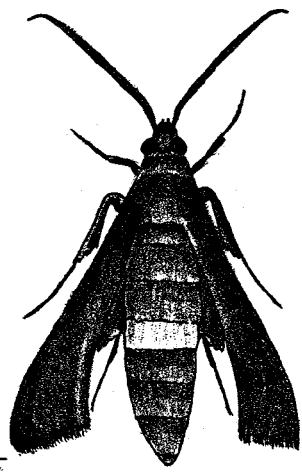
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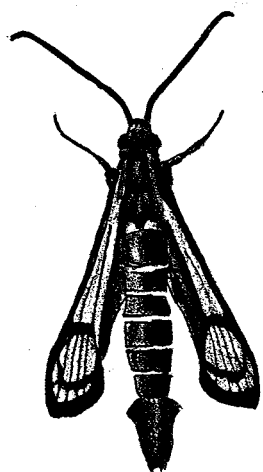
# CONTROLLING the PEACH BORER



LARVA AND DAMAGE



FEMALE



MALE

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, AND THE UNITED  
STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING, H. G. GOULD ASSOCIATE  
DIRECTOR, LINCOLN.

## CONTROLLING THE PEACH BORER

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### Description and Life History

The peach borer is the worst insect enemy of the peach in Nebraska. The adult is a clear-winged moth that may be mistaken for a wasp. The body is bluish with a wide orange or several narrow yellowish bands, depending on sex. It appears during the summer and lays eggs on the bark or in the soil near the base of the tree.

The eggs hatch in about ten days and the tiny borers bore into the bark or enter through a wound or crack. They feed on the inner bark near the base of the tree or along the larger roots, and weaken or kill the tree. The borers feed until cold weather stops them, but again feed in the spring until fully grown. They are then about an inch long, yellowish white in color, and have dark colored heads. When fully grown they pupate in silk-lined cocoons and three or four weeks later emerge as adult moths.

### Control Measures

Preventing infestation by use of a DDT spray in July and August is the most satisfactory control. A .25% DDT suspension spray applied first during the first week of July and repeated about July 25 and August 15 is highly effective. The spray should be applied only to the lower two feet of the trunk and to the soil within a few inches of the base of the tree. If the lesser peach borer is a problem, it is advisable to spray also the larger crotches and bases of the main branches. A .25% DDT suspension spray is made by mixing one pound of wettable 50% DDT powder in twenty-five gallons of water or three level table-spoonfuls in a gallon.

If the DDT treatment has been neglected and the trees have become infested, an ethylene dichloride emulsion is probably the safest and most effective material that can be used. Such an emulsion, requiring only the addition of water, has been placed on the market and should be available from insecticide supply houses in all peach growing regions. One should follow the directions on the container regarding the amount and strength to use. In Nebraska the best time to apply this emulsion is from September 15 to October 31, but if fall treatment has been neglected, fair results may be secured by treating in April or the first half of May.

The diluted emulsion may be poured evenly on the soil around the tree base, and on the lower part of the trunk or it may be applied with a sprayer. No preparation of the soil is required if the ground is level and loose. If hard or not level, the soil should be loosened and cupped slightly toward the tree. After the emulsion has been applied, several shovelfuls of dirt should be placed against the trunk to prevent loss of fumes. No further attention is required but it is advisable to scrape away the mounded earth during late spring.

Paradichlorobenzene crystals may be used to control peach borers but may damage young trees, and they should be used only during a rather short period in the fall. In Nebraska this period is from September 15 to October 5. These crystals resemble coarse salt and should be obtainable from any drug store. Before using this material, excessive accumulations of gum and trash around the base of the tree should be removed, but the soil should not be dug up nor the tree roots exposed. The crystals should be applied in a circular band about an inch and a half wide, with the inner edge of the band an inch to an inch and a half from the tree. For large trees, six years old or more, use one to one and a half ounces of the chemical. For trees four or five years old use three-fourths of an

ounce. For trees one to three years old use one-fourth to one half ounce. Cover the crystals with a few shovelfuls of earth, banking it up around the tree to a height of three or four inches, and pack it well. After about three weeks the mounds should be raked away to prevent chemical injury to the bark. Spring treatments are not very satisfactory, and should not be made until soil temperatures reach about 60° F. The earth that is mounded around the trees when spring treatments are made should be scraped away in about two weeks.

Handworming in the fall or early spring is a fairly effective control for peach borers if only a few trees are involved. It is best done with a sharp pointed knife and a wire probe. The earth should be removed from around the tree to a depth of four or five inches and the loose bark and dirt scraped from the base of the trunk. Most of the borers can then be located and removed or killed. All cuts should be made vertically and the number kept as low as possible. After worming has been completed, the earth should be replaced.