

CANE BORERS

Feb 2012 BAMGA Bug of the Month

by Master Gardener Jim

My morning walk to the veggie garden welcomed a light frost and frozen ground. It is 39° – brrr – warmer than average, but, at least, a hint of winter. If I was a “bug”, I’d be hunkered down in front of the fireplace sipping my favorite cup of java (or maybe hot tea with lemon and honey for those tea lovers) or, if I could get away with it, still snuggled down under the covers - regrettably, neither of which I was able to do today (had chickens to feed, paperwork to do, seeds to plant, honey-do lists and various other duties).



blog.ryanlawn.com/tag/pruning/page/2/

But, it is going to warm up, and our bug friends will begin to emerge. A reminder, it will not be long before it is time to spray dormant oil. I spray usually in the middle of February or first of March, depending on conditions. Another week or two, and you will want to start monitoring your plants. A clue passed on to me by a long-time farmer is to start looking for the first break of a leaf bud. If conditions are enough to trigger this action, then the eggs of the overwintering insects will start to hatch – an especially good idea if you have fruit trees.



rose-bushes.com

If you have roses, pruning will be coming up (generally March-April in our area) and you will want to protect them from cane borers. These borers are larvae of sawflies, some wasps (*ceratina* spp) and young carpenter bees. They lay their eggs on the freshly pruned stems. The eggs hatch and the larvae bore into the center and down the length of the cane.

If you see a small hole in the center of the pruned cane, you most likely have cane borers. This can kill and, from my experience, generally does kill the cane down as far as the borer goes. If the borer reaches the bud union, it can kill the plant. Another sign that can indicate the presence of cane borers is wilting and dying foliage at the top of the bush, with yellowing leaves that drop off. In some cases, you may notice a swelling of the cane where the borer may be feeding. As the borer hollows out the cane (pith), it will turn brown to dark brown, indicating death of the cane.

You will need to cut below the dead cane 1/8-1/4 inch or until you have fresh cane, then apply a remedy. The best remedy is to treat all pruning cuts with a drop of white glue, latex paint, wax or nail polish, especially those larger than the diameter of a pencil. You can add a drop of food coloring to the glue so you can tell the canes you have dabbed. Another help is to seal cuts when you cut the flower stems. Jim

Ref: entomology.umn.edu
Mississippi State University Extension Service



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Cane borer larvae in rose stem