

# Ask An Arborist™ Quick Reference: Zimmerman Pine Moth

## A Sticky Situation: Zimmerman Pine Moth

When you think of pine trees, you may imagine evergreen needles and a nostalgic fragrance...or you might think of something stickier. The presence of pitch oozing from a pine tree – particularly on Scots or Austrian pines – suggests a Zimmerman pine moth (*Dioryctria zimmermani*) infestation. This unfortunately common pest causes considerable damage that results in weak points prone to breaking in strong winds.

Zimmerman pine moth larvae hatch in August and spin cocoons in bark crevices. In April, the caterpillars emerge before tunneling into the tree to feed on the cambium layer of the trunk and major branches. Weak points form when the larvae's feeding girdles a branch. By the summer's end, the caterpillars exit the tree as adult moths. Although the nocturnal moths are rarely seen, the effects of the larvae's feeding are more obvious. Small masses of glossy pitch mixed with sawdust-like shavings begin to appear in late summer and continue to form in the following spring. Even after treatment, old masses of pitch remain on the tree, eventually hardening and turning white in color.



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