

Cypress Tip Moth

By: Arthur L. Antonelli, Extension Entomologist and
Carrie R. Foss, Community IPM Coordinator

Several species of the genus *Argyresthia* (collectively known as cypress tip moths or cypress tip miners) mine the one and two year twigs of juniper, arborvitae, cypress, and occasionally redwood. The larvae are the damaging stage of this insect. Their feeding causes discoloration of the twigs—first yellowing and then browning and ultimately twig dieback (Fig. 1). Discoloration may not be noticeable for several months. Exit holes in the bracts of the twigs become noticeable also as the duration of the infestation goes on.



Fig. 1. Cypress tip moth damage.
By A.L. Antonelli.

The tiny silvery-tan moths become active in the spring and early summer.

The exact time is really dependent on the plant's exposure to the sun and subsequent accumulation of heat units. The moths mate and lay eggs that hatch giving rise to the burrowing larvae. These in turn feed within the leaf tissue through the growing season until winter or even the spring of the following year. When the light-colored larvae become mature, they leave the twigs and spin white, paperlike cocoons amongst the foliage and pupate within. After a few weeks, moths emerge and begin the one-year cycle all over again.

Johnson and Lyon (1976) published a list of host plants that had been evaluated in California for levels of susceptibility in their book. *Insects That Feed on Trees and Shrubs*, Cornell University Press. This list is presented here.

High resistant to infestation

Juniperus chinensis cv. Kaizuka
J. chinensis var. *sargentii* cv. Glauca
J. scopulorum cv. Erecta Glauca
Thuja plicata

Moderately resistant to infestation

J. chinensis cv. Pfitzerana Aurea
J. sabina cv. Arcadia
J. sabina cv. Tamariscifolia
J. virginiana cv. Prostrata

Highly susceptible to infestation

Chamaecyparis lawsoniana cv. Allumii
J. chinensis cv. Pfitzerana
J. chinensis cv. Robust Green
J. virginiana cv. Cupressifolia
T. occidentalis

Managing this pest with chemicals can be difficult. Applications must be timed to control young larvae. For our area, this is generally late June. Several applications at 10-day intervals may be necessary. Names of registered products can be found on the WSU Pesticide Education's Hortsense website (<http://pep.wsu.edu/hortsense/>)