

Eastern Larch Beetle

The Insect

Eastern larch beetle (ELB) is a native bark beetle infesting tamarack (eastern larch) at high levels. Adult beetles bore into the trunk to feed, mate, and lay eggs. After eggs hatch, larvae tunnel throughout the phloem of the tree. This process eventually cuts off water and nutrient flow, which kills the tree¹.

Signs & Symptoms

- The tree often looks reddish in the winter as woodpeckers remove the outer bark to eat the beetle.
- The beetle creates a vertical gallery in the tree that is very visible upon inspection¹.

Positive Identification

Galleries or tunnels in the bark, as well as exposed reddish inner bark, are signs of infestation. Beetles are small and brown; eggs and larva are white³.



Adult beetles (3).



Vertical galleries with perpendicular branches (1).

Implications for Minnesota

Due to a lengthened growing season in Minnesota the beetle has been infesting more and more acreage. Currently there are over 440,000 acres of infested tamarack, and the outbreak is only increasing¹.

Management & Control Considerations

- A best practice for landowners trying to control the spread of the larch beetle is to cut all visibly infested tamarack as well as several rows of adjacent trees. Remove and process wood during winter².
- Encourage species diversity within the stand whenever possible.

Sources

- 1) https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/treecare/forest_health/elb/index.html
- 2) https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/treecare/forest_health/elb/management.html
- 3) <https://tidcf.nrcan.gc.ca/en/insects/factsheet/2820>