Oregon Pest Alert

Old House Borer

The Oregon Department of Agriculture detected the old house borer, *Hylotrupes bajulus* (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) during a woodborer survey conducted in 2013 in The Dalles. A single beetle came to a funnel trap that was placed under the high-tension wires in a cherry orchard. None have been documented anywhere else in Oregon.

Old house borer
Gyorgy Csoka, Hungary Forest Research Institute, Bugwood.org

What does it do?

The old house borer is a long-horned beetle. Most long-horned beetles attack dead or stressed trees. The old house borer is unique in the group because it attacks dry seasoned wood including lumber. It prefers softwood/conifer lumber, but it won't attack wood that is painted or varnished. The beetles can re-infest the same piece of wood until it is weakened. The Pennsylvania State University Extension fact sheet states, "The old house borer is one of the most injurious wood-boring insects inhabiting Pennsylvania." In Europe, structural timbers are chemically treated to prevent infestation.

Larva tunneling in wood.
Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org

Where is it from?

The beetle is originally from North Africa, but is widely established in Europe, the eastern US and many other places around the world.

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How did it get here?

We don't know. One beetle was found in the middle of a cherry orchard. Cherry wood isn't typically attacked, and we could not find evidence of infestation in the orchard. The beetles can be moved in all kinds of softwood products including furniture, firewood, building materials, dry logs, and lumber, both new and really old.

How do I identify it?

If you see softwood lumber, furniture or other material with circular to slightly oval holes about 1/8 to 1/4 inch (3-6 mm) in diameter please notify the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Be aware that wood articles from the eastern US can include wood boring pests. The adult beetle is an unremarkable black or dark grey beetle and looks similar to a number of native species. The beetle is 5/8 to 1 inch (15-25 mm) in length. A visible character to distinguish it from natives is a faint light grey band of hairs about a third of the way down the wing covers (elytra). They also have two raised shiny areas on the segment behind the head, which may be mistaken for eyes.

Carpenter ant damage is most likely to be confused with old house borer damage. Carpenter ants typically leave thin partitions of wood between large smoothly chewed chambers (see image). Old house borer will leave tunnels tightly packed with sawdust. The round to oval tunnels are approximately ¼ inch in diameter and will reach the exterior surface of the wood.

What should I do if I find it?

If you suspect that you have found old world borer please contact the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Insect Pest Prevention and Management at: gypsymoth@oda.state.or.us or 1-800-525-0137.

Carpenter ant damage.
From http://goo.gl/ovxicV

Old house borer damage.
Image by Vít Švajcr on Wikipedia commons
at http://goo.gl/HAO6up

Old house borer damage.
Image by Gyorgy Csoka, Hungary Forest Research Institute, Bugwood.org

For further information please contact:

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