

# Birch Leafminer

## An Insect that Causes Damage to Birch Leaves

The Birch Leafminer is the larval stage of a small wasp known as a sawfly. This larva feeds between the upper and lower layers of the leaf. As it continues to feed, signs of browning and drying become evident. Repeated defoliation by leaf miners can affect the long-term health of trees.

## Infested Birch Trees Can Be Treated For Control

All types of birch trees are susceptible to the Birch Leafminer and require a systemic insecticide treatment for control. Once damage is obvious, it is usually too late to treat for the season. However, treatment can be timed to coincide with early larval feeding before damage becomes apparent. Birch Leafminer is easily controlled and rarely life threatening.

## What To Look For

- Large blotchy mines in the leaves.
- Leaves will turn brown and wilt.
- Canopy damage caused by high populations of the leafminer.
- Leaf miner defoliation is correlated to Bronze birch borer attacks.

## Life Cycle

- Young leafminers live in the ground through the winter.
- Adults emerge in spring and mate.
- Mated females lay eggs in leaf.
- The eggs hatch and become larvae.
- Larvae mine the inner tissues, leaving brown blotches on the leaf.
- Larvae then drop to the ground where they enter the soil layer.

## Treatment and Prevention

- Water trees during dry season.
- Plant in shady, cool, moist areas.
- Reduce fertilization (trees with high nitrogen levels are more attractive to leafminers).
- Treatment timelines are dependent upon your tree, landscape, insect infestation levels, time of season, and available treatment options.

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A heavily infested birch tree.



Brown blotching on leaves.