

I am excited to announce the Extension office has an intern for the summer. Her name is Angie Johnson from Galesburg. She has just completed her second week and will be interning at the Extension office until August 8th. She grew up on a family farm and was an active 4-H member in Traill County. She is currently a senior at NDSU majoring in Animal Science with a minor in Extension Education and is anticipating to graduate in the fall 2014. After this article, she will take over writing the Extension Notes articles for the next couple weeks.

A common couplet of birch trees is the bronze birch borer. Bronze birch borer adults emerge from under the bark of birch trees in early- to mid-June, leaving a characteristic D-shaped hole. Adult insects are bronze with a greenish hue and measure less than ½ inch in length. Before maturity, the insects live under the bark for one or two years in the form of larvae. These grubs are about 1 ¼ -inch, are cream colored and have a flat head. The larvae create meandering holes as they eat crucial tissues in the tree responsible for moving nutrients and water. As the larvae encircle branches, they strangle the branch and it dies. The infestation of beetles grows with each year as branches die from the top of the tree downward due to larval feeding, until the entire tree is dead.

In addition to dieback at branch tips, some commonly observed signs of bronze birch borer infestation in many of the infected trees included bumpy and swollen limbs (indicating the trees attempt to form callus over insect galleries), D-shaped exit holes, and very commonly small holes where woodpeckers have excavated larvae from the tree.

Stressed birch trees are most attractive and most susceptible to the bronze birch borer. Maintaining tree vigor by providing adequate water (but not overwatering late in the growing season), properly mulching trees, and applying supplemental nutrients in spring and early summer are the best ways to prevent pest infestations.

Treatment for bronze birch borer includes pruning out dead, infested branches and destroying them (adults can still emerge from removed wood). Insecticide drenches containing imidacloprid have been proven as effective chemical controls. Remember to always read and follow the pesticide labels.

For more information, contact the Steele County Extension office by phone 701-524-2253, e-mail alicia.harstad@ndsu.edu, or Facebook at www.facebook.com/steelecountyextension. NDSU is an equal opportunity institution.