

HOT NEWS

THE PAINTED HICKORY BORER

Annie E. Spikes and Matthew D. Ginzel, Forest Entomology Laboratory

The painted hickory borer (*Megacyllene caryae*) is a common and conspicuous longhorned beetle that emerges in the early spring and is active from April to June. The sun-loving adults have jet-black bodies encircled in pubescent yellow bands and superficially resemble wasps. There is also a distinctive white-colored W-shaped band across the wing covers of both males and females. These are rather large beetles (2-3 cm long) with reddish colored legs and black antennae. Males have longer antennae than females and are often smaller with more slender bodies.

Females lay their eggs in severely weakened or recently fallen hickories. Eggs are laid in groups as large as 50 under bark scales or cracks in the bark of weakened trees or newly cut logs. Larvae then hatch and, as they grow, feed deeper in the inner bark and sapwood. After 10-12 weeks of feeding, a larva chews a chamber in the sapwood where it will pupate and overwinter. Although the painted hickory borer prefers hickory, it will infest other hardwoods such as black walnut, hackberry, grape, osage-orange and ash. Signs of attack include large holes chewed through the bark and an accumulation of boring dust around these holes. This species commonly infests recently cut firewood and adults can even emerge from wood brought into a home during the winter. Homeowners need not be alarmed, however, as these beetles are quite harmless.



Adult painted hickory borer
(Photo credit: M.D. Ginzel)



Hickory firewood infested with painted hickory borer
(Photo credit: M.D. Ginzel)