RESEARCH LABORATORY TECHNICAL REPORT

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Conifer shoot miner

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Identification, Biology & Management

Conifer shoot miner (*Argyresthia dilectella*) is a small moth, with a wingspan of about 8 mm. This is one of several related species of *Argyresthia* that are becoming more widespread throughout the UK because of extensive juniper (*Juniperus*) and cypress (*Chamaecyparis*) plantings.

Symptoms

The moth can cause severe and highly visible damage (shoot tip dieback and foliar scorch, Figure 1) to infested trees. Damage commonly occurs on hedges and individual specimen trees in urban settings.

Figure 1: Symptoms of shoot miner damage

Causal Agent

Damage caused by the early instar larvae (mined scale leaves) usually goes unnoticed. Late instar larvae hollow out entire shoot tips (Figure 2). Infested trees appear scorched, and the dead hollowed out twigs are easily broken off. Heavy feeding will injure leaf cells and reduce leaf tissue area leading to a loss of plant vitality. If complete defoliation occurs the plant may die.

Figure 2: Conifer shoot miner damage

Control

Application of appropriate plant protection products can manage this pest. Cultural practices, such as fertilisation and mulching, can increase host resilience to pests and diseases.

Unfortunately, no biological control agents currently exist.

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