

Boxwood Leafminer

Boxwood leafminer is a destructive insect pest affecting boxwood plants.

- The larvae of this fly feeds on the tissue between the outer surfaces of the leaves, resulting in blotch-shaped mines.
- The infested leaves appear blistered from late summer through the following spring.
- New leaves do not show signs of mining until late summer when the larvae are larger.
- By fall, or in the subsequent spring, premature leaf drop may result from heavy infestation.

Life cycle

- Adult leafminers emerge during late May in Southern Ontario. Depending on weather, this typically coincides with the blooming of Weigela shrubs.
- The adults are small (3mm), orange, mosquito-like flies.
- After mating each female inserts approximately 30 eggs in the surface of new boxwood leaves.
- The larvae hatch within a few weeks, and feed on the the leaves from June through early fall.
- They spend the winter in the leaves and pupate the following April. There is one generation each year.

Management options

- Prune the affected boxwood by removing the top third of the stems with infested leaves, reducing the population of this pest. Dispose of the clippings. This should eliminate the need to use an insecticide.
- It can be difficult to control the adult leafminers due to their short life stage. Beginning in late May, shake the branches of boxwoods to detect flying adults. If present, thoroughly spray the plants with a registered insecticide, such as an Insecticidal Soap.
- Fertilize Boxwood in late May and mid-October to encourage plant health and growth.

