

These 'miners' are unwanted in town

By Greg Huneault
the News

The Minnova Winston Lake miner is good. The Birch Leaf Miner is not.

Some residents have noticed the browning of most of the birch

leaves in the area lately, and it's all the work of a small insect.

The little bug is tagged with that appropriate name because it 'mines' through the waxy coating of birch leaves and eats the fleshy tissue inside.

Although it does not kill the tree, Derek Tirschmann agrees that it is an eyesore.

Tirschmann, the unit forester for the Terrace Bay District of the Ministry of Natural Resources, said that it is too late this year for tree lovers or township employees to combat the Miner.

Although there can be as many as three life cycles a year in southern Ontario, there is usually only one cycle of the insect in this area.

The offending bug emerges as a flying insect in the spring and flies to a birch tree where it deposits its eggs on the leaves. The larvae of the insect then burrow into the leaf and eat it for nutrition.

As with other insects, the Miner larvae then go through another phase where they pupate, or wrap themselves in a cocoon before turning into a flying insect.

The Miner will fall to the ground and complete its cocoon stage. In the spring, the entire cycle is repeated when it emerges and lays eggs on healthy leaves.

Tirschmann said the Ministry is not overly concerned with the Birch Miner infestation, so no major control measures are planned.

He said that those homeowners who would like to protect their birch trees should spray them

with commercial insecticides when the leaf buds are just beginning to open, usually from the beginning of May to June.

He recommends reapplying the insecticide at the end of June as a precautionary measure, but says that instructions must be followed accurately. "Some people don't read the labels and use the whole can," he said. "Sometimes the can will last for years if used properly."

Tirschmann said there have been no area disease epidemics or insect infestations in the past while.

Of the cyclic budworm infestation, which is costly to the forestry industry, Tirschmann says that "the population has basically collapsed."

"There are general patches of odd diseases, but nothing dramatic." The forester noted that insects cause damage which is quite visually noticeable, whereas damage from disease is harder to detect.

The Forest Tent Caterpillar is another leaf-eater which is making headway into Northwestern Ontario. Tirschmann told the News that the blue caterpillars, which feed primarily on poplar, are coming from the east and have been showing up south of Manitouwadge.

As with the Birch Leaf Miner, they do not kill the tree. They simply feast at their leisure on tender, juicy leaves, which have become blotchy brown eyesores to many residents in this area.



"Mined-out" White Birch leaves. Photo by Greg Huneault

Swimmers may get a real itching

Dr. S. S. Graham, medical officer of Health for Thunder Bay District Health Unit, advises swimmers in local lakes to take appropriate measures to prevent schistosome dermatitis, more commonly known as "swimmer's itch." This infection is characterized by an inflammation of the skin.

Swimmer's itch is caused by a specific worm carried in the intestines of wild birds and animals. The eggs of this worm carry in the intestines of wild birds and animals. The eggs of this worm are excreted into the lake through the urine and feces of the bird or animal. These eggs then hatch in the water, and the resultant larvae penetrate snails, which act as the intermediate host.

After several weeks, the cercariae (small, tadpole-like worms) emerge from the snail into the lake water. The worms mistake the human body for an appropriate host and attach to the person's skin when her or she is swimming or wading in the lake.

The cercariae burrow into the skin and cause itching and inflammation.

A person can prevent swimmer's itch by vigorously towel drying all wet skin surfaces immediately upon leaving the lake waters. This action knocks the cercariae off the skin surface and they die. In addition, Dr. Graham strongly recommends that people do not drink water straight from lakes.

If you are experiencing swimmer's itch-like symptoms and feel that you may have been exposed to this organism, your family physician will be able to advise you on treatment.

Anyone wishing to attend Mrs. Elsy Read's **Retirement Gathering**

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Paul, Mary Anne and big brother Adam Sigurdson are thrilled to announce the safe arrival of their daughter and sister,
Julie Ann
weighing 9 pounds, 7 ounces, born at the McCausland Hospital on July 25, 1988
Proud Grandparents are Mr. & Mrs. Reg King of Kitchener & Mr. & Mrs. Dale Powell of Bradenton, Florida.
Sincere thanks to Dr. K. Wilkes, Daryl Davis and the other nurses at McCausland and a special thanks to Marg Santerre.

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