

UC Pest Management Guidelines

AVOCADO BRANCH AND TWIG BORER

Scientific Name: *Melalgus* (=Polycaon)
confertus

(Reviewed: 7/01, updated: 7/03)



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DESCRIPTION OF THE PEST

Branch and twig borers are slender [brown beetles](#) about 0.5 to 0.75 inches (1.2-1.8 cm) long. The body is cylindrical, and the head and prothorax are narrower than the body. Females lay eggs in the dead wood of native and cultivated trees and shrubs. [Larvae](#) bore into heartwood and feed within this area for a year or more. Pupation occurs within the tree and adults emerge in early summer. There is one generation per year.

DAMAGE

Branch and twig borers seldom cause economic injury and are rarely found in avocados. Feeding damage is readily identifiable: burrow entrances on trees exude sugary sap that eventually turns white and flaky. Infested branches with tunnels are easily broken by wind.

CULTURAL CONTROL

These beetles do not prefer healthy, vigorous growing trees. Provide sunburn protection and proper irrigation and fertilization to keep trees in good health. Promptly destroy brush piles, which harbor these pests. Remove badly diseased or borer-infested trees and branches from the orchard. Spraying for this insect is not recommended.

ORGANICALLY ACCEPTABLE METHODS

Cultural control.

PUBLICATION



UC IPM Pest Management Guidelines: Avocado

UC ANR Publication 3436

Insects and Mites

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