

Yellow-headed Spruce Sawfly



The City of Red Deer Parks Section has identified the Yellow-headed Spruce Sawfly in this area. It causes unsightly damage as the insect defoliates tree needles.

The Yellow-headed Spruce Sawfly is active in late June and early July and may be controlled during these times. It has been present in Red Deer for several years.

Hosts and Damage

The Yellow-headed Spruce Sawfly attacks spruce trees. Larvae eat new needles first before moving to older needles. This creates an unsightly appearance.

Physical Characteristics

The caterpillar like larvae are tiny to begin with and mature to 20mm long with yellowish-brown heads and shiny olive green bodies. Darker lines run the length of the body.

Biology

The sawfly has one generation per year. It overwinters as larvae in soil-encrusted cocoons beneath trees. The adults emerge and lay eggs in mid-May and June. The larvae then hatch and begin to feed.

Why should you manage this insect

The Yellow-headed Spruce Sawfly increases trees' susceptibility to disease and other pests and can kill young trees. Management of the sawfly will help to control its spread to other trees and properties.

Control Procedures

- > Hand picking larvae off trees and disposing of them in sealed garbage bags.
- > Pruning (larval control): pruning the tips of branches where the larvae live, and disposing of them in sealed garbage bags.
- > High pressure water spray: small larvae cannot crawl back onto the tree if blasted from it with a high-pressure hose. Later stage larvae may be able to crawl back up trees if they are not disposed of after spraying.



Damaged Needles



Larvae