

Ag Column
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Scout for this New Pest in Your Landscape

Are your arborvitae in your landscape showing yellowing tips? If so, you should be scouting those landscape plants in late May and June this year. The arborvitae is an evergreen in the genus, *Thuja*, and the cypress family. The arborvitae has flat needle-like leaves distinguishing it from the popular Leyland Cypress, which has round needle-like leaves.

Some species, such as the Green Giant and Emerald Green, are pyramidal in shape. The Green Giant can reach heights of 50 feet while the emerald giant may only reach a height of 12 feet. These plants are often used as privacy screens. Other varieties, such as Golden Tuffet, Golden Globe, and Fire Chief, are globular shaped. These are often used as foundation plants. There is also the weeping threadleaf arborvitae. They are typically green, but there are varieties that have tips that turn a golden color.

A pest, named the Arborvitae Leafminer, has been causing destructive damage to arborvitae shrubs and trees in our area landscapes. The damage from this pest starts when the adult light gray moth (6 mm long) lays eggs in the leaf margin around the first of June.



After the eggs hatch, the larvae bore into the leaves and feed during the summer. Characteristic of its name, the leafminer mine the tips of the leaves toward the base. The leafminers overwinter in the mined leaf and then exit through a hole in the tip of the leaf the following spring. The cycle then starts over.

Without magnification, the damage simply looks like yellowing tips on the arborvitae plant. If you magnify the leaf and see the exit hole, it is likely your plant has been damaged by the Arborvitae Leafminer. If the leafminer is not controlled, the plant may drop its leaves prematurely from the damage. In some cases, the damage from the pest can kill the plant.

Control of this pest can be achieved with an application of an insecticide in May and June. For a recommendation on the correct insecticide to use, please contact your local Extension office.