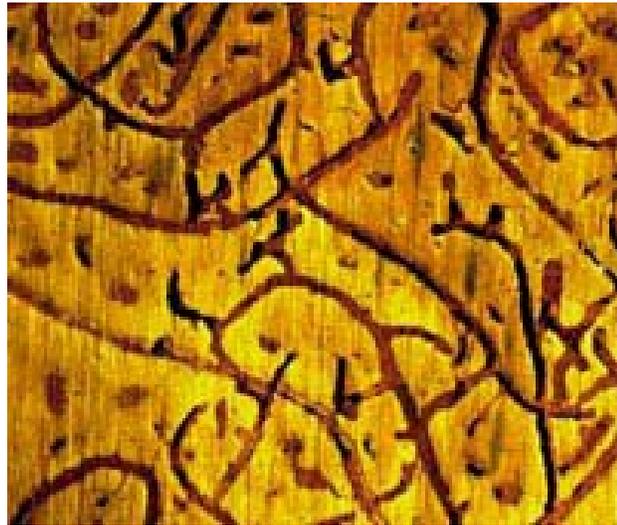


Univ. of Georgia

gallery pattern



Univ. of Georgia

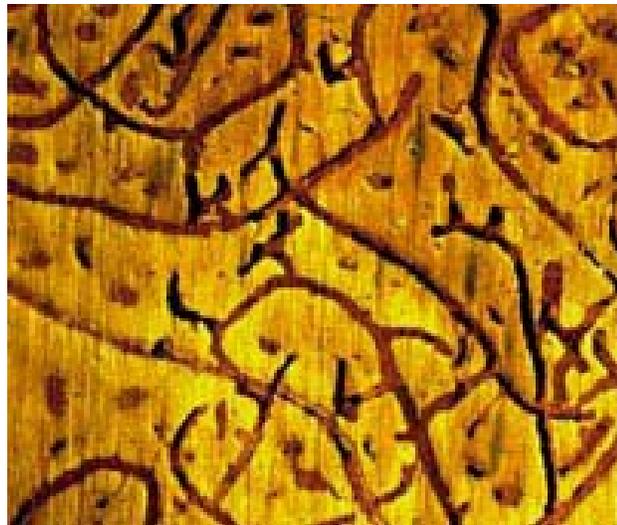


pitch tubes



Univ. of Georgia

gallery pattern



Univ. of Georgia



pitch tubes

southern pine beetle

Dendroctonus frontalis (Zimmermann)

The southern pine beetle is one of the most destructive pests of pines in the southern United States, Mexico, and Central America. This insect kills a major amount of pine timber in the southern United States every year. The beetle occurs from Pennsylvania to Texas and from New Mexico and Arizona to Honduras. It attacks and can kill all species of pines, but prefers loblolly, shortleaf, Virginia, pond, and pitch pines.

The adult is short-legged, about 1/8-inch (3 mm) long, and dark reddish brown to black in color. The front of its head is notched, and the hind end of its body is rounded. The larvae is crescent-shaped and whitish, with an amber head. When fully developed, larvae are approximately the same length as adults. The pupae are also the same size and white. The eggs are pearly-white and found in notches along either side of the adult egg galleries.

The adults bore directly through the outer bark into the living bark. At each point of attack, the tree usually exudes resin which forms a small pitch tube about the size of a small piece of popped popcorn. Adult beetles construct winding, S-shaped galleries, which cut across one another and girdle the tree. Blue-stain fungi in the sapwood, introduced by the beetles, hasten the death of the tree. The first indication of tree mortality is discoloration of the foliage. Needles become yellowish, change to a red color, and finally turn brown. Trees may be killed singly or in groups, ranging from a few trees to several hundred acres.

Adults construct winding galleries in the inner bark, where eggs are deposited in individual niches on each side of the galleries. The eggs hatch into small larvae within 4 to 9 days. The larvae mine for a short distance before boring into the outer bark where they pupate. One life cycle can be completed in about 30 days under ideal conditions. There are from three to seven generations per year, depending on latitude, elevation, and climate.

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