

Twig Girdler *Oncideres cingulata* (Coleoptera:Cerambycidae)

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Fall is the time of year to watch for twig girdlers. Longhorned beetles known as twig girdlers are now laying eggs in the small branches of many hardwood trees. Pecan, hickories, and persimmon are favored host trees; but elm, hackberry, oak, dogwood, and some fruit trees may be attacked. Damage has been observed on crepe myrtle and redbud trees in Hernando County. The female beetles chew a deep notch around pencil-sized branches, and typically lay three to six eggs under the bark of the dying tip. This damage causes the girdled branches to fall to the ground within a few weeks, so chewed branches in the landscape are a good indicator of beetle activity. Beetle larvae hatch in three to four weeks and will feed and grow within the fallen branch until late next summer. The twig girdler requires a full year to complete its life cycle, emerging from branches as an adult in late August and September.

Trees affected by twig girdlers rarely suffer serious damage, but homeowners concerned about twig girdler injury to their trees should gather and destroy the fallen branches. This will reduce the number of adults in subsequent years. The average diameter of the branches chosen by females to lay eggs in is 9-10 mm, so the majority of damage to mature trees is limited to small branches. The damage done to ornamental trees is equivalent to a spring pruning. Because of this, pesticides are not normally recommended for this insect pest.



There are numerous other native species of longhorned beetles present in Central Florida which can occasionally damage trees in the landscape. There are also several invasive species of concern that may be present in the area. Residents are encouraged to bring suspected pest insects to the Hernando County Extension office for identification and control recommendations.

Photo of twig girdler *Oncideres cingulata*
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