

Identifying pests in Tasmania's forests: information sheet 5

Gum tree coreid bugs

Scientific names: *Amorbus obscuricornis* and *Gelonus tasmanicus*

Order: **HEMIPTERA (Sucking bugs)**

Characteristic damage

Growing tips of a wide range of tree species wilt and turn brown (Fig. 1) and growth may become deformed, resulting in a flat-topped, multi-branched form (Fig. 2). Damage is most noticeable in younger trees but older trees are also attacked.

Severe damage: all shoots on the tree wilt and die back.

Less severe damage: some growing shoots wilt and may die back.



Figure 1. Wilted eucalypt shoots

Effect on the trees

Growth will be slowed and shoots may be deformed, stunting the tree growth and form (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Eucalypt tree after severe bug attack

Trees most at risk

Gums and ashes in wet sclerophyll forest are attacked by both species; *E. regnans* and *E. obliqua* are preferred hosts over *E. delegatensis*, *E. nitens* and *E. globulus*.

Peppermint species in dry sclerophyll forest are also attacked by *A. obscuricornis*.

The coppice shoots following fire or other damage are particularly attractive to both coreid bugs.

Time of damage: Spring and summer; October - April.



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The insect

Adult: coreids bugs are dark brown or black, about 2 cm long, are very agile and give off an unpleasant smell when disturbed (Fig. 3). They appear on trees on sunny days from September to April.

Eggs: are probably laid singly or in small groups on grass or foliage under trees.

Nymphs: look like miniature adults without wings; they are bright green and pink when they first hatch out, but turn orange and brown (*A. obscuricornis*, Fig. 4), or all dark brown (*G. tasmanicus*) when they start feeding. They grow bigger gradually, until they develop wings during the last moult.



Figure 3. Adult bug (*A. obscuricornis*) on wilted shoot (about twice life-size)



Figure 4. Large nymph of *A. obscuricornis* (about twice life-size)

Controlling damage

Natural control

Eggs are parasitised by a wasp but few predators have been observed attacking nymphs or adults.

Chemical control

No insecticides are registered specifically for coreids bugs but most broad spectrum insecticides will kill them, including Dominex®, a synthetic pyrethroid, which is registered in Tasmania to control the Tasmanian *Eucalyptus* leaf beetle on eucalypts. However, it also kills most other insects including natural enemies. Refer to entomology staff in Forestry Tasmania for when and how to control outbreaks.