



Going Out on a Limb

Baker City Tree Board

Population of White-Barked Birch Trees Dwindling

Over the last five years many of the white barked birch trees within our community have fallen victim to the Bronze Birch Borer.



Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

The borer generally makes its temporary residence within trees that are already stressed due to lack of water and/or proper maintenance.

If your birch tree is infested with the borer you will likely see branch dieback. In the areas of this dieback there may be emergent holes in the branches that are shaped like a "D".¹ Regrettably, if you find these emergent holes, you more than likely will have a tree that is too far gone to save.

If dieback of your birch tree is **less than 1/3 of the tree's canopy**², systemic treatment may save your tree. The systemic treatment should be applied during the spring months. Although you can purchase the pesticide at local garden centers, it would likely require multiple applications. Licensed tree companies are able to provide a higher potency of the pesticide product.

A list of licensed tree companies in our area is available in the Public Works Department in City Hall.

The photo below is an example of the raised ridges or bumps that you might find on the "living" portion of an infected birch tree's branches or trunk. The ridges are created by borer larvae tunneling beneath the bark.



Photo by: Steven Katovich USDA Forest Service/ Bugwood.org

City ordinance requires that diseased trees on both private and public property be treated to stop the potential threat to other trees in our community. Additionally, dead trees located on public property or private property that have potential to harm persons or property within the public right-of-way are required to be removed and the stump ground or removed to the surface of the ground.

Trees are assets to our community. Healthy trees add value to your property and can better withstand attacks from insects and disease. Routinely water your trees. Regularly monitor your trees for any wounds or other signs of health issues. Research proper pruning techniques before pruning or hire a licensed tree company to prune your trees.



Example of branch dieback.

¹John E. Lloyd and Jeffrey Hahn. *Bronze birch borer and twolined chestnut borer in Minnesota.*
²Oregon Department of Forestry.