

HORSE CHESTNUT LEAFMINER

Cameraria ohridella Deschka and Dimic

Plant Pest information note

What is it?

Cameraria ohridella (horse chestnut leaf miner) is a micro moth whose larvae create mines in the leaves of horse chestnut trees. This moth was first recorded in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 1985 and since then it has spread across much of Europe. This pest of horse chestnut trees was not found in Ireland until July 2013. The larvae of this moth produce mines within the leaves as a result of feeding between the lower and upper surfaces of the leaves.

The adult moth is very small (see image below) and can be up to 5mm in length. The forewings are metallic chestnut brown with silvery white transverse stripes edged in black. The hindwings are dark grey with long fringes. Eggs are laid from May to August on the leaves and these eggs then develop into larvae that mine the leaves. Pupae develop in the leaves and emerge in about two weeks but these pupae can also overwinter in dead leaves and then emerge in the spring.



The larva of the horse chestnut leaf miner (left) and the adult (right)

What are its hosts?

The main host for *Cameraria ohridella* is *Aesculus hippocastanum* (common horse chestnut tree), but other known hosts are; *Aesculus pavia* (red buckeye), *Acer platanoides* and *Acer pseudoplatanus* (sycamores).

What are its symptoms?

As the common name suggests this insect is a miner of leaves. Serpentine (curved) mines are produced by the moth larvae feeding on leaf tissue. Infested leaves are often brown and appear quite dry. The drying of the leaves due to an infestation of this pest can result in early leaf drop.



An example of the symptoms caused by horse chestnut leaf miner

Why should we be worried about it?

The threat regarding this pest is mainly aesthetic as it causes browning of the leaves and early leaf drop. In some countries this has led to Local Authorities replacing trees with other species whose aesthetic value is not affected. The pupae of this moth are extremely frost tolerant and survive temperatures as low as -23°C . This ability for the pupae to survive over winter can lead to increasing populations from year to year.

How does the pest spread?

The main method of spread seems to be by passive carriage on vehicles from areas that are infested with the leaf miner. There is evidence that this pest has limited natural aerial dispersion but the spread of infestation seems mainly due to accidental transport of adults on vehicles.

Action in the event of suspect cases:

Although *Cameraria obridella* is not a quarantine pest under EU legislation it can be termed as an invasive pest and has only recently been discovered in Ireland. Any suspected cases of this leaf miner should be reported to your local plant health inspector or contact:

Horticulture and Plant Health Division,

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine,

Backweston Campus,

Celbridge.

Co. Kildare

Phone: 01 5058885

Fax: 01 6275991

Email: plantandpests@agriculture.gov.ie