Extension Line—
(Continued from Page 10)

injury when stressed than when there is sufficient water in the plant. This is especially true for pests, such as midge, which require that contact pesticides be sprayed directly into the new shoot areas which contain succulent plant tissue. This new growth is much more susceptible to spray injury than older mature tissue.

**Damaged shoot tips or flower buds should be removed** to help eliminate the maggots before they complete their life cycle and drop to the ground. However, careful, regular observation is essential for this practice to be helpful. In the case of rose midge, a more preventive approach with a systemic insecticide combined with early removal of infected tissue will usually provide satisfactory control.

*Life cycle information adapted from "Insects That Feed on Trees and Shrubs" by Warren T. Johnson and Howard H. Lyon.*

**How to Care For Birch Trees**

By Deborah Brown
Extension Horticulturist
Minnesota Extension Service

Many paperbark birches around the state are looking a bit thin and raggedy. Despite decent rainfall this year, they’re still suffering the after effects of the past two summers’ drought. Many lost branches to winter kill; others may have been attacked by the bronze birch borer, an insect that moves in when trees are under stress.

Even though birch trees shouldn’t be pruned any more than is necessary for health and safety, all dead or dying limbs should be removed or cut back to healthy tissue. August is the best time of year to prune them, regardless of what actually damaged the branches. Wounds will heal rapidly, and the bronze birch borer is no longer active this late in summer.

**Pruning paint or wound dressing is not needed.** Much research has been conducted over the past ten years, showing that these paints and dressings really don’t help the tree—although they may offer some psychological aid to the tree owner. For paperback birch there’s another reason not to put anything over the pruning cuts: paint or dressing will contrast with the white bark quite obviously. The wounds will be less visible if left to heal on their own.

If the soil your birch is growing in seems light, sandy or somewhat poor, plan to fertilize it next spring. You might also wish to remove a circle of grass growing right up to the trunk, and replace it with four inches or so of woodchip mulch. This not only helps hold moisture, it keeps the shallow roots cooler in summer. And when we go over a week without rain, by all means, get a soaker hose or sprinklers out under the branches and several feet beyond, to give it a really thorough soaking every 10 to 14 days.

Finally, if all fails and the tree appears doomed, have it taken down. But don’t be afraid to plant birch again. River birch, with peeling, cinnamon-colored bark is a tougher tree than the paperback birch. But even the paper birch is worth replanting. It grows fast, and with some additional babying will usually be more than worth the effort.

---

**Diamethoate (23.4%)**

| Water | 2 teaspoons | 1 gallon
|-------|-------------|----------
|       | 1/2 teaspoon | 1 quart  |

---

**Remaining 1990 MGCSA Meeting Site**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 8</td>
<td>Stillwater C.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>