

# A HEALTHY TREE is a HAPPY TREE

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### Dusky Birch Sawfly

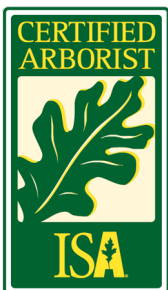
**Description:** A type of insect related to bees and wasps that look like small wasps, though they do not sting. The immature stage of the sawfly life cycle, known as the larvae, looks very much like a hairless caterpillar. These caterpillar-like critters have green bodies with black dots down their sides, and a black head. They can often be found lining the edges of river birch leaves. When disturbed, they will lift their back ends into the air, so their bodies are shaped like question marks. Dusky birch sawfly larvae generally feed on river birch leaves for four to five weeks in the spring, after which they spin a cocoon in which they will spend the rest of the year. Next spring adult sawflies will emerge from these cocoons to lay new eggs on river birch leaves and the life cycle will start all over again.



**Symptoms:** Dusky birch sawfly have two generations per year and can start out very small, almost too small to see. The first generation larvae feed from May to early July. The second, overlapping generation feeds through September. They begin by gradually skeletonizing the leaves, as the early larvae will not eat the veins. As they mature, they start to eat the entire leaf, feeding in groups. Whole trees or shrubs can be defoliated.

**Control:** Control of this pest is rarely necessary, except on young trees, which can be completely defoliated when heavily infested. In these cases, small trees can be treated with an insecticide for leaf eating insects or larvae can be picked off the tree and dropped into a bucket of soapy water. If your river birch trees lose a large percent of their foliage due to aphids and sawfly feeding, applying a slow release fertilizer and watering during dry weather will help them recover more quickly.

Frady Tree Care takes great pride and passion to care for your trees. Trees are TREMENDOUS renewable resources. They are valuable in respect to life and your landscape. We are here to serve your tree care needs by preserving and enhancing the quality of your property through tree care education and services.



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