Nature’s Notebook
Phenophase Photo Guide

Podosesia syringae
lilac (ash) borer

Why Observe?
Ash borer (*Podosesia syringae*), also known as lilac borer, is a clear-wing moth that is native to North America and widespread in the U.S. The larvae tunnel into the trunks and lower branches of lilac, ash, and privet. Trees stressed by drought, injury, or recent transplanting are especially susceptible to borers.

Eggs are deposited on bark and when hatched the tiny larvae bore into the wood and spend all their time eating inside the tree. Then they pupate inside the tree and only emerge from holes in the tree once they have become adults.

Monitoring ash borer phenology is important for effective adults emerge and coordinated management. Knowing when can help managers know when to spray trees to coincide with adult emergence and egg hatch to kill larvae before they enter trunks.

Tips for Identification
Adult ash borers mimic the common paper wasp in color, size, shape, and flight habits. Wingspan varies from 1 to 1.5 inches.

Be aware that there is variation from individual to individual within a species, so your insect may not look exactly like the one pictured. If you are uncertain whether or not a phenophase is occurring, report a “?” for its status until it becomes clear what you are observing after subsequent visits.

This Phenophase Photo Guide has been vetted by the USA-NPN NCO. It is appropriate for use as a supplement to the Nature’s Notebook phenophase definition sheet for this species.
Phenophases not pictured: Dead adults, Individuals at a feeding station, Individuals at a light, Individuals in a net, Individuals in a trap

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