

## Box Tree Moth



The Box Tree Moth (*Cydalima perspectalis*) has arrived on Cape Cod and many homeowners are discovering just how destructive these larvae can be. Although in other parts of the world it feeds on a variety of shrubs, so far it has been confined to boxwoods on the Cape. After the large larvae strip the leaves off of a shrub, they go on to eat the bark on stems, and this can kill a boxwood in a matter of two or three days.

Anyone with boxwoods that they want to protect should plan on drenching their shrubs with Spinosad (Captain Jack's Deadbug Brew or Monterey Garden Insect Spray) very well starting in early May. A hose-end sprayer or a pump sprayer with a wand is a better choice than a hand-spray bottle because you want to coat the leaves and stems on the inside of the plant as well as the outer foliage. Adding some Turbo (a sticking product) to the jar or tank will help the Spinosad to stick onto the leaves. Repeat this spray once a month through September.

The damage from this insect should not be confused with normal winter injury which turns some boxwood golden to rust in color.

The photo on the next page shows what the damage looks like when it first starts. Unfortunately, this pest is so voracious that it can strip and kill a boxwood shrub in a matter of a two or three days.



**Note:** we have had customers ask about box tree moth traps that they have seen online. We have consulted with entomologists who are box tree moth experts, and they tell us that such traps are used for monitoring the presence of moths, not for the control of this pest. Most of them only attract male moths, and like other traps that use pheromones, if placed near boxwoods they can attract more insects to your property. At best, a trap might alert you to the need to spray your plants, but using Spinosad prophylactically might be a better choice in that you'd need to check such traps daily & respond quickly.

You can read more about box tree moths on this factsheet:

[UMass Extension website factsheet.](#)



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