



OAK LEAFMINER

The **solitary oak leafminer** (*Cameraria hamadryadella*) lays eggs and feeds between layers of leaves. It prefers white oaks, including white oak (*Quercus alba*), overcup oak (*Q. lyrata*), post oak (*Q. stellata*), chestnut oak (*Q. montana*), and swamp chestnut oak (*Q. michauxii*).¹



Oak leafminer damage on oak leaf

Photo credit: WalterReeves.com

Each little crisp bubble in the leaf is a single moth larva. The larva feeds on the leaf material around it and emerges as a small adult moth.

In Georgia, two generations per year are possible. The late season larvae remain in the leaves that have fallen to the ground and spend the winter there, emerging the following spring.

Damage

In the spring, these insect trails and galleries are common in our urban forests. As these insects feed and reproduce, other insects that eat oak leafminers should control them without the need for human intervention.

Control

Heavy infestations may cause leaves to turn brown and drop. This injury is mainly cosmetic and the overall health of the tree is rarely in danger. Chemical treatment is not recommended.²

Usually, as the leafminer population grows, the number of beneficial insects that attack the leafminer increases as well. Unless the tree is young and a favorite specimen, control is rarely needed.³

If the tree is heavily infested or young, you can help by removing and destroying the infested leaves. New leaves should grow in their place.



Silhouettes of solitary oak leafminer caterpillars visible through the leaf integument.

Photo credit: WalterReeves.com

Late season larvae overwinter in fallen leaves, so for future control, rake up fallen leaves and destroy them in case leafminers are still present. If the pests continue to be a problem, a certified arborist will have recommendations for treatment.

The solitary oak leafminer is small enough to be easily overlooked.

Photo credit: Kyle Kittelberger



¹ Identifying Selected Oak Trees in Georgia Holly Campbell and Jason Gordon, UGA Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, Publication WSFNR-20-93B December 2020. https://www.warnell.uga.edu/sites/default/files/publications/WSFNR-20-93B_Campbell%26Gordon.pdf

² James Baker, NC State Extension Publications. Publication date: Feb. 13, 2019, revised Oct. 14, 2019. Accessed at <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/solitary-oak-leafminer>

³ <https://www.walterreeves.com/landscaping/ornamental-trees/oak-leaf-miner/>