

Hello Trees Resource Sheet

What to look for outdoors in Summer

Horsechestnut trees: leaf miner



Have a magnifying glass in your pocket.

We are looking for a horsechestnut tree and the leaf miners munching its leaves.



Horsechestnut tree in Summer

Horsechestnuts are large wide-spreading trees with huge palmate leaves – bigger than your hand!

See [Tree ID: horsechestnut](#).



Horsechestnut leaf with brown patches

In July and August, in all of England and parts of Wales, horsechestnut leaves have brown patches.



Leaf miners in a horsechestnut leaf



Let's look more closely at those brown patches.



I did. I saw a tiny creature wriggle!



Can you guess where it is in the photograph?



Clue: it is tiny, much longer than it is wide and it is pale but it has brown stripes across its body.



Leaf-miner larva magnified

To help you spot it in the photograph, here it is magnified.

Can you see it now in the big photograph?



Now look at your horsechestnut leaves and see if you can spot any little wrigglers. They are most active mid morning and mid afternoon.



The grubs don't have any legs so no wonder they wriggle!



They are mining their way inside the leaves eating the leaves' goodness as they go.

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A horsechestnut leaf completely infested with leaf miners

Once the leaf miners get going they can destroy the leaf's ability to do its job, which is to make food for the tree.



Do you think the tree will die, now that so many of its leaves are no use?



The good news is that the leaf miners don't get going in large numbers until July.

By that time, the trees' leaves have had time to make and store a great deal of food, the flowers have been pollinated and the fruits are developing.



Blue tit feeding on leaf miners

Leaf miners weaken the tree but are not life threatening.



Another piece of good news is that some birds have found the leaf miners and are eating them. It is a bit late in the year for blue tits to be desperate to find food for their baby chicks but, nevertheless, it is a help to the tree that some of the leaf miners do not get the chance to transform into moths and lay more eggs to hatch into more leaf miners.



A blue tit's empty plate



Have a look at the underside of horsechestnut leaves.

Look for a patch where the top layer of the leaf is missing. This might be where a bird has torn through the top layer to get at the grub beneath.

'Grub' is only a general term for a creepy crawly.



The scientific term would be 'larva', plural 'larvae' (pronounced LAH-vee).

For more about leaf miners, see [Horsechestnut leaf miner life cycle](#).