Jarrah leafminer results

New research results on disfavouring jarrah leafminer (JLM) by burning jarrah forest under dry soil conditions have been analysed by Ian Abbott.

The hypothesis being tested is that JLM density should decrease after autumn fire, following the shortage of egg-laying sites (green leaves) for the moth.

Data collected so far has been consistent with this. An experiment in Collie in 1988 saw half of a 240 ha plot of jarrah forest burnt that spring under wet soil conditions and the rest burnt in autumn 1989 under dry soil conditions.

During spring 1989, a survey in Collie and Manjimup districts of adjacent stands differing in time since spring burning showed that spring burning does not favour JLM.

JLM density in the jarrah canopy was sampled in October 1988 and November 1989, as was the condition of the crowns of 180 sample jarrah trees.

The autumn fire reduced JLM density by 38 percent relative to October 1988, whereas after the spring fire JLM density increased by 24 per cent relative to October 1988.

The latter may have resulted in part from moths unable to find enough egg-laying sites in the autumn-burned forest invading the unaffected, green jarrah crowns in the spring-burned forest.

By November 1989, crown condition of autumn-burned jarrah had declined by eight percent, in contrast to a nine percent improvement in the crowns of spring-burned jarrah. Scorching of jarrah crowns during the autumn fire averaged 55 percent.

This research is supported by technical assistants Paul Van Heurck and Tom Burbidge and by operational staff in Collie district.

- IAN ABBOTT

Damage caused by insects skeletonizer

New drying system

A low cost/low energy timber drying system has been developed at the Wood Utilisation Research Centre at Harvey.

Research staff Brett Glossop and Wayne Hanks have carried out extensive testing of the system, designed by engineer Trevor McDonald.

Timber stacks are stored in the first kiln at low temperature and high humidity immediately after sawing. The kiln has a patented blanket to control air flow.

After a "curing" period, the stacks are transferred to another kiln where they are dried much faster at a higher temperature. Drying to final moisture content (about 10 percent) is done in a third kiln.

WURC manager Phil Shedley is discussing licensing with different firms and this drying system should soon be available commercially.

- Graeme Siemon

Workshop visit

Gary Brennan, a research scientist at the Wood Utilisation Research Centre at Harvey, recently attended a timber drying meeting and two workshops in Rotorua, New Zealand.

One meeting and both workshops were arranged by the Joint Timber Seasoning Committee, which has members in each Australian state and New Zealand.

Gary presented a summary of the drying research carried out at Harvey.

He also attended a Forest Industries conference, which discussed production forestry in NZ in the next decade.

This exchange of information has proven extremely useful in planning and carrying out drying research trials and duplication of programs is avoided.

- GRAEME SIEMON