

## Colorado Insect of Interest

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# *Arhopalus asperatus* – A Common Longhorned Beetle

**Scientific Name:** *Arhopalus asperatus* (LeConte)

**Order:** Coleoptera (Beetles)

**Family:** Cerambycidae (Longhorned Beetles)

**Identification and Descriptive Features:** *Arhopalus asperatus* is an elongate-bodied longhorned beetle that is uniformly dark gray or brown. They can be moderately large but show considerable size variation, ranging from 18-33 mm in length. The antennae are about 1/2-3/4 the body length and are longer in males. Larvae, type of roundheaded borer, are marked by a pair of sharp spines that curve inward found on the hind segment of the body.



**Figure 1.** *Arhopalus asperatus*.

**Distribution in Colorado:** *Arhopalus asperatus* appears to be widely distributed throughout the forested areas of the state.

**Life History and Habits:** *Arhopalus asperatus*, along with the various “pine sawyers” (*Monochamus* spp.), are the most common longhorned beetles associated with recently dead or felled conifers. Most conifers, including most pines, firs, douglas-fir and spruce, are known hosts.

Adults lay eggs in deep bark crevices. Larvae originally feed in the cambium, later moving to sapwood and heartwood where they pack the tunnels with coarse sawdust frass. Stumps and large roots are often the most common site of larval development. Development is thought to take 2-3 years to complete.

Adults are attracted to recently scorched wood following forest fires. They also will often be seen around campfires.

**Related Species:** Other *Arhopalus* species are known from Colorado. Museum records for *A. rusticus montanus* LeConte include El Paso, Jefferson, Boulder, Mesa, and Moffat counties, suggesting widespread distribution within Colorado. It is a lighter colored species than is *A. asperatus*. *Arhopalus productus* (LeConte), sometimes known as the **new house borer**, is



**Figure 2.** New house borer and larval tunneling injury. Photograph courtesy of Wayne Brewer and IPM Images.

can not be reinfested by this insect. Other *Arhopalus* species may similarly infest lumber from recently cut trees.

known from Montezuma County, likely due to an introduction on infested lumber. *Arhopalus foveicollis* (Haldeman), known from Douglas County, is considered by some to be an eastern subspecies of *A. asperatus*.

The common name “new house borer” given to *A. productus* reflects its common occurrence in green wood used in new construction. These beetles often develop in pine or Douglas-fir used for lumber and subsequently may emerge as adults up to a year later, with emergence preceded by production of sawdust by the late-stage larvae. Dried wood and logs lacking bark