

## California Prionus

**Order:** Coleoptera

**Family:** Cerambycidae

**Genus/Species:** *Prionus californicus*

**Description:** A large beetle up to two or more inches in length, the California Prionus is dark reddish brown and shiny. The body is somewhat flattened. Each side of pronotum has three spines. The antennae are segmented and long, more than half the length of the body. The California Prionus is primarily nocturnal. The adults buzz loudly in flight and are attracted to light. Larvae have a dark brown head and a white to yellowish body.

**Habitat:** Coniferous, mixed, and deciduous forests.

**Life Cycle:** The California Prionus lays eggs singly in soil close to its food supply. Larvae eat live, dying and decomposing shrubs and woody vines. They eat into the inner bark. After three or more years, larvae prepare egg shaped pupal cells inside wood. Adults emerge in July and August.

**Economic Importance & Management:** The larvae may some cause economic damage due to what they eat. Adults can be monitored by using light traps. Larvae can be found by digging around the root base of a tree. Currently there are no registered insecticides for prionus root borers.

**References:** *Bugs of Washington and Oregon*, John Acorn & Ian Sheldon  
*How to Know the Insects*, Roger J. Bland  
*Garden Insects*, Whitney Cranshaw  
*Petersons Field Guide Beetles*, Richard E. White  
Photo, Ken Gray Collection OSU & Utah Extension

