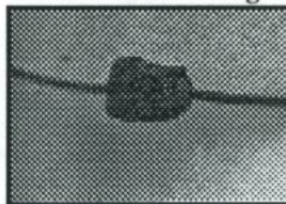


The eggs hatch in 12 - 14 days, and the larvae feed on tissue of the wall of the chamber. During larval feeding the plant cells divide and multiply into large masses of tissue which eventually form the gall. On average each gall will contain about 12 larvae. The gall continues to grow throughout the summer and reaches its maximum size by late August. The outer covering is at first soft, but becomes hard and woody by maturity. The larvae spend the winter in the gall, and pupate within the gall, in the spring.

Larval cells within gall



[Click picture to enlarge](#)

## Damage

There are two concerns about the damage caused by the stem gall wasp. The first is the effect of the gall on the blueberry plant itself. The result of the female wasp injuring the growing tip, and the utilization of plant nutrients in forming the gall, and producing nutrients for the larvae, is that no fruit buds are formed on the stem. If this occurs during the vegetative cycle of production there may be a reduction in the yield the following year. A build up of gall populations over many cropping cycles may have a more serious impact. However, the effect of blueberry stem galls on the yield has not been studied.

The second concern is that galls, especially those higher on the stem, may break off the stem during harvesting. These galls can then pass through the processing line and end up as foreign objects in the finished product.

## Control

There are a number of species of wasps, including parasites, that utilize the galls formed by the blueberry stem gall wasp. The relationship of these and their effect on blueberry stem gall wasp populations is not known, although high levels of parasitism (more than 50% of galls were parasitized in one study) are possible.

There are no chemical controls registered for this insect. Burning as a pruning method may have some effect. This has not been clearly established at this time.

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