

Species of the week

Insect galleries by Steve Rutherford

Galleries, or tracks under the bark of wood show as intricate patterns and are left behind as grubs of bark beetles feed on the wood just below the surface. The galleries are species specific and can show which beetle it was that made the formation. The book "Insects of Britain and Western Europe" by Michael Chinery is the only book that I know that shows a few of these structures and identifies the causers.



The spectacular galleries above were produced by one of the elm bark beetles. The adult lays eggs on the bark and the grub burrows into the wood leaving these structures behind. The beetles carry and spread one of two fungi, *Ophiostoma novo-ulmi* and *O. ulmi*, from tree to tree bringing their demise through Dutch elm disease.



The galleries on the tree on the left were found under loose bark on a large branch that had fallen from an ash tree. This is typical of the ash bark beetle *Leperisinus varius*. The branch on the right came from an elder. The causer of the galleries on this branch is unknown.