







Technical Bulletin for: Cactus Moth

Cactoblastis cactorum (Berg) • Lepidoptera: Pyralidae • CACCAC



DISTRIBUTION	Native to Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and southern Brazil. It has been introduced to South Africa, Australia, parts of the southern United States and the Caribbean.
HOSTS	Cactus
DESCRIPTION	
ADULT MOTH	Grayish-brown with a wingspan of 22-35 mm.
LARVAE	Initially pinkish cream colored, with black red dots on the back of each segment. Later instars become orange and the dots coalesce to become a dark band.
EGGS	The female moth lays eggs stacked on top of each other like pancakes to form an "egg stick" that resembles a cactus spine. Egg sticks are about an inch long and are usually on the undersides or other protected parts of the plant pads.
LIFE HISTORY	The egg stage lasts 3-4 weeks. The caterpillars burrow into a pad after hatching and feed together as a group. The infestation by the lightly colored young larvae may be difficult to detect without splitting the pad open. As the larvae mature, frass and sap may be pushed out of openings in the pad and onto the ground. Eventually the pad will become transparent and hollow. Larvae may move to additional pads to complete development, especially if the initially infested pad is small. Larvae mature in 4-5 weeks. Mature larvae leave the plant and pupate under dead leaves or between the pads where they spin white cocoons. The pupal stage lasts 15-20 days. They emerge as adult moths and the cycle starts over.

MONITORING INFORMATION

LURE ACTIVE INGREDIENTS, SUBSTRATES & FIELD LIFE	 <p>(ZE-9,12-14Ac , ZE-9,12-14OH , and (Z-9-14Ac on a red septum. Field life: four (4) weeks.</p>
TRAP TO USE	  <p>Paper or Plastic Delta</p> <p>or Wing Trap</p> 
MONITORING STRATEGY	There are three flights in the southeastern United States: late March - May, July - August, and late September – mid - November. Check with Cooperative Extension or Master Gardener for local information and recommendations.
CULTURAL & PHYSICAL CONTROLS	None reported.

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