

Grey Tortrix Moth

Grey tortrix (*Cnephasia stephensiana*) caterpillars caused damage to alfalfa in the Williams Lake and Kersley regions of B.C. in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Since 2011, damage by this pest has been reported in Lumby, Sparwood, Creston and Fort Fraser. Farmers are asked to report any suspect damage in new regions to the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture offices or contacts below:

- Susanna Acheampong, Ministry of Agriculture, Telephone: (250) 861-7681, Email: Susanna.Acheampong@gov.bc.ca
- AgriService BC, Telephone: 1 888 221-7141 Email: AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca

Identification

Adults: Adults are greyish-white moths, about 18 - 22 mm wing span (Figure 1).

Larvae: Larvae vary in colour from yellowish to brownish black (Figure 2).

Life Cycle

The life cycle in B.C. is not known but larvae are present by mid-June. In Japan and Europe, *Cnephasia* species are known to overwinter as young larvae in silken cocoons. The young larvae feed from April to June, pupation occurs in June and July, and moths fly in July and August.



Figure 1. Adult *Cnephasia stephensiana*



Figure 2. Left, young larva; Right, mature larva

Damage

On alfalfa, larvae feed by mining leaves and later live in spun or folded leaves (Figure 3).

Hosts

Hosts include alfalfa, legumes and weeds such as lambs quarters, hogweed, thistle, broad leaf plantain, dock, sorrel, dandelion and clover. In B.C., damage has been reported on alfalfa, cow parsnip, rhodiola, dandelion, clover, hogweed and pea vine.

Control

There are currently no registered chemical control products in Canada for this pest. *Bacillus thuringiensis* and Sevin (carbaryl) used for the control of other caterpillars in alfalfa will provide control. It is also recommended that infested fields be cut early before caterpillars have caused significant damage. A parasitic wasp, *Scambus canadensis* has been reared from caterpillars and may play a role in controlling this pest.

Acknowledgement

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Figure 3. *Cnephasia stephensiana* feeding damage to alfalfa leaves