

# Citrus Bark Eating Caterpillar

## Recognize the problem

The full grown larva is cylindrical, dirty brown in colour and measures about 40 mm in length. The larvae tunnel into the branches and stem of citrus, especially near joints in branches. They feed mostly during the night under the protective covering of webbing consisting partly of frays, fecal pellets and silken threads secreted by the larvae, and remain hidden during the day time. As a result of their feeding on the bark, the sap conducting tissues are damaged. The vigor of the plant is reduced and the yield and quality of fruits are adversely affected.

Adult moth. (Photo by NPIB, UAS, Bangalore)



## Background

This is often a serious pest on citrus, particularly in South India. The eggs are laid in the months of May and June in groups of 15, which are glued to the bark. A single female lays as many as 624 eggs with an average of about 350. The eggs hatch after 8 to 11 days. On hatching, the larvae live under the bark until September when they tunnel in to the wood.

The pest is active throughout the year. The pest is very common in old and neglected orchards of any age. However, the pest incidence has been observed in more than 65% of orchards, where more than 60% of trees were found attacked.

## Management

Cut and burn affected twigs wherever possible

Insert a hooked iron wire inside the holes in the bark and pull out the larvae, then kill them by dipping in kerosinized water

Apply spot application of 10 ml fenthion in 1 litre of water

When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Scientific name(s) > *Indarbela tetraonis*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: India



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