

Citrus Butterfly

Recognize the problem

The Citrus butterfly is a common and widespread swallowtail butterfly. It gets its common name from its host plants, which are usually citrus species such as the cultivated lime. Unlike most swallowtail butterflies, it does not have a prominent tail. The butterfly has also been referred to as the 'Butterfly of Death'. The caterpillar, known as the larva devours plants profusely, eating the leaves of the tender plants. A fully-grown larva can consume a full-grown leaf in a matter of five minutes. This causes poor growth which results in lower production. As the larva grows, its appetite for leaf tissue increases. Larvae develop into pupae, which later develop into the adult butterfly. The butterfly is tailless and has a wingspan of 80–100 mm. The wings are black with a broad, irregular yellow band and a large number of irregular white spots. The upper hind wing has a red tornal spot with blue edging around it.

Butterfly larva eating leaves.
(Photo by Anwar Hossain)



Background

The Citrus butterfly is one of the most harmful insects of lemon. Damage from the butterfly is more severe when high temperatures and high humidity prevails.

Citrus butterfly. (Photo by Tarique Sani, SANIssoft, CC BY-NC)



Management

- Practice clean cultivation
- Encourage the presence of birds in the field, e.g. by erecting a T-stand in the field
- Hand pick the larvae and leaves that have had eggs laid on them, and bury in the soil or burn them
- Spray Spinosad (e.g. Tracer 45 SC @ 0.4 ml/litre of water, or Success 2.5 SC @ 1.2 ml /litre of water) or Emamectin benzoate (e.g. Proclaim 5 SG @ 1gm/L water) 2-3 times at 15 days intervals

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) > *Papilio demoleus*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Bangladesh



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