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Version 2.0
26 Jun 2014

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The fruit piercing moth, *Eudocima phalonia* (Linnaeus), is a serious pest of commercial fruit crops. Opposite of most Lepidoptera, it is the adult, not the larva, that causes economic damage. A strongly sclerotized proboscis allows adults of both sexes to pierce the skin of fruits and suck out the fluid inside. Economically important hosts include apple, citrus, grape, melon, mango, papaya, pear, pineapple, strawberry, and tomato. Fruits damaged by *E. phalonia* adults are dry, spongy, and prone to secondary infection at wound sites. *Eudocima phalonia* is native to the Indomalayan Region and has spread to other parts of Asia, Australia, and Africa.

Eudocima is part of the Erebiidae (formally a subfamily in the Noctuidae) and contains 47 species, all of which have fruit-piercing adults. The combination *Eudocima phalonia* was only recently reinstated and this same species is often referred to as “*Eudocima fullonia*” or “*Othreis fullonia*” in economic literature. *Eudocima* are very large moths (wingspan 70-100 mm; 3-4 in) with variable patterned forewings and striking yellow or orange hindwings and abdomen. Eight species are present in the New World, although none are established in the U.S. Two species, *E. apta* and *E. serpentifera*, occasionally stray into the southern U.S. (Florida, Texas, Louisiana, etc.; although *E. apta* has been recorded as far north as Vermont). A few other noctuids have bright yellow hindwings (e.g. *Noctua pronuba* and some *Catocala*) but these species are much smaller than *E. phalonia* and they do not have long upturned labial palpi or the apex of the forewing pointed.

Because no synthetic pheromone is currently unavailable for *E. phalonia*, this aid is designed to assist in the detection of suspect adults through visual surveys in orchards. Guidelines for visual surveys along with photographs of *E. phalonia* adults are included here under Level 1 Screening (Page 2). If a suspect *E. phalonia* adult is found, capture it and submit it to your regional domestic identifier along with the name and location of any associated host. Report any species of *Eudocima* encountered, even if it does not appear to be *E. phalonia*.



Fig. 1: Live resting *E. phalonia* adult (Photo by Logan Lai, Flickr).



Fig. 2: Live resting *E. phalonia* adult in India (Photo by L. Shyamal, Flickr).

CAPS Approved Survey Method: Visual inspection for adults

Visual Survey Method for *E. phalonia* in Fruit Orchards

[The following inspection method is modified from the USDA-APHIS-PPQ-CPHST Citrus Commodity Survey Guidelines]

Inspect the fruit by flashlight after sundown a few weeks before harvest and look for:

- 1) Large, red-glowing eyes of adult moths (easily seen)
- 2) Check trees or fallen fruit on the ground in the two outer rows of an orchard, particularly on the leeward side
- 3) Most damage occurs in the peripheral rows of trees
- 4) Moths are most active in the first few hours of the night
- 5) Focus on areas where the larval hosts (vines in the Menispermaceae or *Erythrina* spp.) are present; larvae of *Eudocima* are also unmistakable (Fig. 6).

Eudocima adults usually rest with their forewings folded above their bodies, concealing their bright yellow or orange hindwings. Their large size and unique wing pattern easily distinguishes them from all other genera of North American Lepidoptera. The photos of live resting adults in Fig. 3 illustrate how an individual might appear during a visual survey.



Fig. 3: Live *Eudocima* adults; a-b: *E. phalonia* in Taiwan (Photo by Sipher Wu, Flickr); c: *E. phalonia* in Malaysia (Photo by Alexey, Flickr); d: *E. phalonia* (Photo by Logan Lai, Flickr); e: *E. tyrannus* in Taiwan (Photo by Sipher Wu, Flickr).



Fig. 4: *Eudocima phalonia* spread adults. Images are ACTUAL SIZE (wingspan = 70-100 mm).

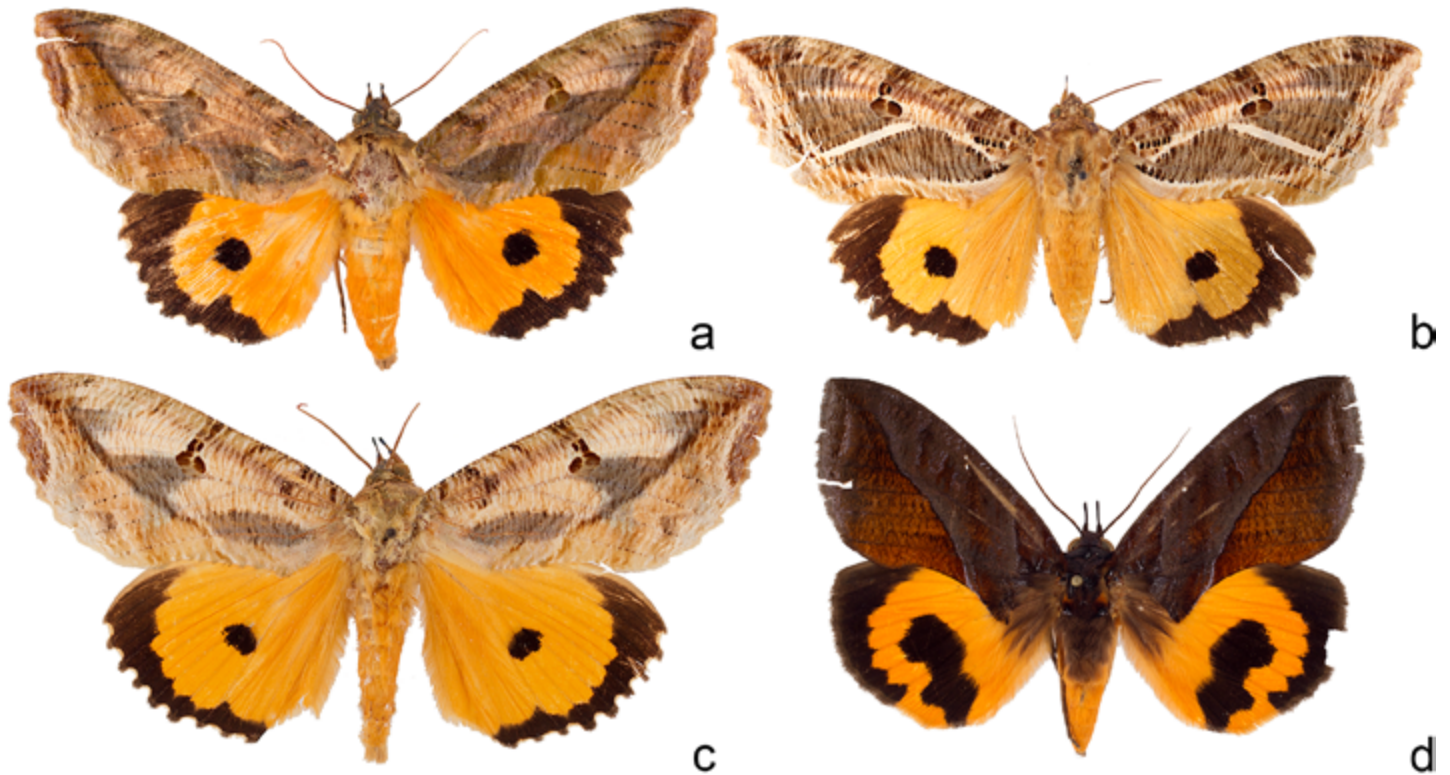


Fig. 5: Other species of *Eudocima*; a: *E. apta* male from Texas; b: *E. apta* female from Florida; c: *E. materna* female from Malawi (*E. materna* is the counterpart of *E. apta* in the Old World); d: *E. serpentifera* from Panama. Images are ACTUAL SIZE (wingspan = 70-100 mm).



Fig. 6: Larva of *Eudocima tyranus*; larvae of *E. phalonia* are similar (Photo by Almandine).

Citation

Gilligan, T. M. and S. C. Passoa. 2014. Screening aid: Fruit piercing moth, *Eudocima phalonia* (Linnaeus). Identification Technology Program (ITP), USDA-APHIS-PPQ-S&T, Fort Collins, CO. 4 pp.

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Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Joel Floyd and USDA-APHIS-PPQ National Identification Services for support of this work. Funding for this project was provided to T. M. Gilligan through section 10201 of the 2008 Farm Bill. Terrence Walters (USDA-APHIS-PPQ-S&T ITP) provided grant supervision and access to imaging equipment.