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Pest Check

European Pepper Moth

The European peppered moth, *Duponchelia fovealis*, is a new invasive moth that was first discovered in California and now has been found in Colorado, Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma, Georgia and Florida. This moth is found natively in the Mediterranean and Canary Islands, but it has also been found in Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and Canada.

There are many host plants for the European peppered moth such as fruits, vegetables, herbs and cut flowers. The female lays eggs singly or in masses of 3-10 overlapping each other, onto the undersides of leaves, at the base of the host plant, or in the upper region of soil. The larvae cause damage by feeding on leaves, flowers, and buds. They also bore into stems and fruit. For more information, please visit: <http://southeastagnet.com/2010/10/21/european-peppered-moth-now-confirmed-in-florida/>



Photo of adult male *D. fovealis* in pheromone trap from Monte Vista Dr., San Diego County. Photo by Dr. Marc Epstein, CDFA.

New Fruit Fly Found

The peach fruit fly, *Bactrocera zonata*, has been found recently in a trap in a guava tree in Miami-Dade County by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The peach fruit fly is considered a serious pest since it attacks different fruits, vegetables and nuts, such as mango, guava, citrus, eggplant, tomato, apple, peach, melon and almond. The fruit flies lay their eggs in the fruits and vegetables. In a few days, the eggs hatch and maggots cause the fruits or vegetables to be inedible. The state of Florida and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are working together to eliminate this fruit fly before it spreads to other areas of the U.S. For more information about the peach fruit fly, please visit:

<http://www.growingproduce.com/news/?storyid=4645>



How Cockroaches Are Helping Farmers

Cockroaches are well known for their role as decomposers, but the Asian cockroach (*Blattella asahinai*) is actually helping Texas cotton farmers to reduce populations of cotton bollworms. In 2006, cotton farmers in Texas discovered these cockroaches in cotton fields. Recently, scientists found that these cockroaches eat cotton bollworm eggs, instead of the plants.

German and Asian cockroaches are almost identical. However, Asian cockroaches have longer and narrower wings and smaller egg cases. In addition, the German cockroaches live indoors, while Asian cockroaches like to burrow in mulch or compost outdoors.

Eventhough this cockroach preys on agricultural pests, scientists are hesitant to make recommendations to mass release this cockroach for the control of lepidopteran pests. Since the Asian cockroaches have been recorded to fly 120 feet in a single flight, they can easily fly into nearby residential neighborhoods. They are attracted to light-colored surfaces or brightly lit surfaces at night and they can enter into structures under doorways or window sills.



Asian Cockroach. Photo posted on USDA website:
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/ar/archive/jan08/roaches0108.htm>.

Ways to Prevent Rats and Other Animals from Entering Into Structures This Winter

As the weather cools, mice, rats and other animals might move closer to or into structures in search of warmth. It is always easier to prevent invasion into attics or underneath structures, than to remove the animals. This makes EXCLUSION the key to prevent entry of these animals. Exclusion can be accomplished by using steel mesh in the attic to close off possible entry points. The steel mesh can be stapled or nailed around whirly birds, vents and other openings in the attic. Remember that rats and mice can fit through holes as small as $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter, so be sure to seal all areas where sunlight can be seen. Weep holes and cracks and crevices can be sealed using steel wool. If the outside brick is light colored, then non-rust copper steel can be used. Trees should also be trimmed away from structures. When tree limbs are touching houses, it becomes a perfect bridge for the animals to enter homes.

Also proper sanitation is important to prevent animals from coming near structures. All food containers should be cleaned and properly contained in closed bins, in order to avoid animals entering garbage or recycle containers. Bird seed and other food items should be stored in a sealed container. Clothes, blankets and fleece should also be stored in sealed container, in order to avoid rats and other animals from nesting in the materials.

If wild animals are living in or near your home, you must first correctly identify the animal in order to properly control it. Mice and rats can be trapped using sticky or snap traps. These traps should be placed perpendicular to the wall, in areas where you see droppings, gnawing, urine stains, or scratch marks. Call the city or wildlife department if larger animals are believed to be living in homes/structures. Some departments will donate a live cage trap for a period of time and some cities will pick up the trapped animals when they are caged.

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