

YELLOW OLEANDER CATERPILLAR (PALPITA FLEGIA (CRAMER))<sup>1</sup>  
(LEPIDOPTERA: PYRALIDAE)

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INTRODUCTION: THE YELLOW OLEANDER CATERPILLAR HAS BEEN COLLECTED EVERY MONTH OF THE YEAR IN FLORIDA. IT FEEDS ON THE LEAF EPIDERMIS; TYING THE SKELETONIZED REMAINS OF THE LEAVES TOGETHER.

DISTRIBUTION: DAYTONA BEACH, TARPON SPRINGS TO KEY WEST; MEXICO TO SOUTH AMERICA; PUERTO RICO AND OTHER PARTS OF THE WEST INDIES.

HOST: YELLOW OLEANDER (THEVETIA PERUVIANA SCHUM.) IS THE ONLY KNOWN HOST IN FLORIDA. OTHER COMMON NAMES FOR THIS PLANT ARE: TRUMPET FLOWER, LUCKY-NUT AND SAILOR'S LUCKY-NUT.

DESCRIPTION: THE MATURE CATERPILLAR (FIG. 1) IS 1 1/4 TO 1 1/2 INCHES IN LENGTH; THE HEAD IS LIGHT BROWN; BODY COLOR IS DINGY WHITE WITH SETAE PROJECTING FROM BLACK SCLEROTIZED PLATES; YELLOW IRREGULAR BLOTCHES MAY BE PRESENT BETWEEN THE SCLEROTIZED PLATES.

THE ADULT MOTH (FIG. 2) IS WHITE AND EASILY RECOGNIZED BY THE BLUE STREAK ON THE FOREWING. THE WING EXPANSE IS 1 1/4 TO 2 INCHES.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE: THIS CATERPILLAR IS NOT CONSIDERED OF ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE IN FLORIDA.

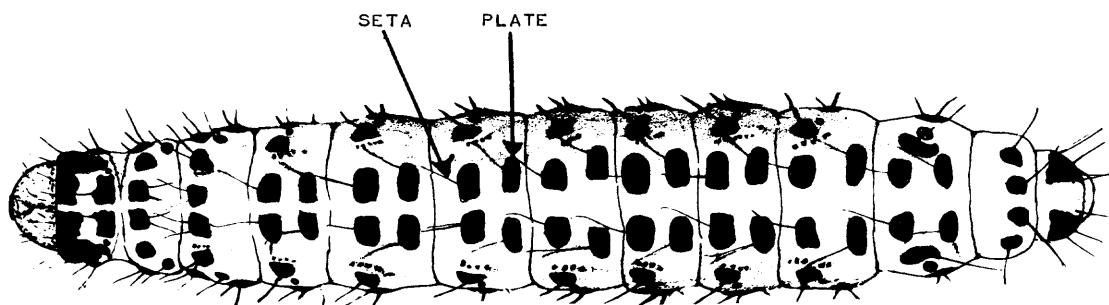


FIG. 1 - MATURE CATERPILLAR

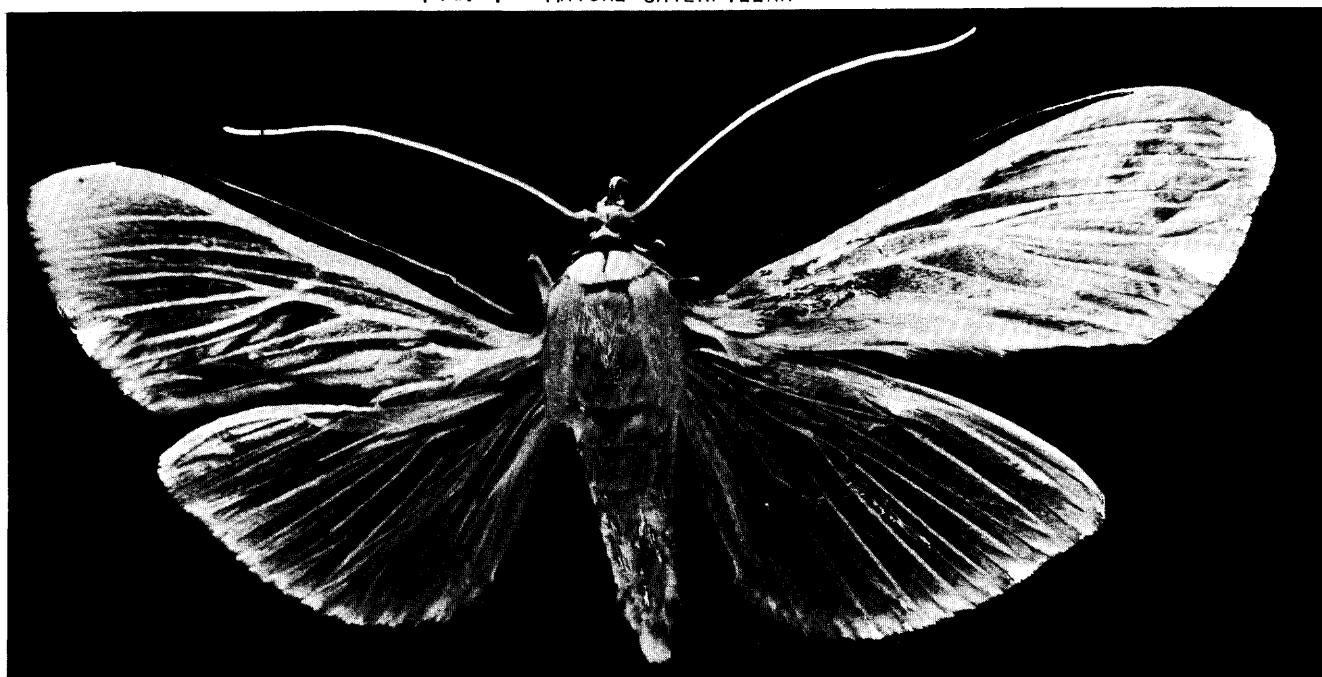


FIG. 2. ADULT

<sup>1</sup>CONTRIBUTION No. 20, ENTOMOLOGY SECTION