

Avocado seed moth

What is Avocado seed moth?

Avocado seed moth (*Stenoma catenifer*) is a key pest of avocados in Latin America and can cause catastrophic yield losses.

What does it look like?

Moths are about 1 cm long and yellow when they first emerge, but they turn greyish-brown as they age. The forewings have 25 dark spots that form a “C” shape across the wing. There are five larval instars. Early instars are whitish in colour, while the later stages are pink or reddish coloured. The egg is oval in shape, 0.6 mm long and light green in colour and are usually laid on the fruit.

What can it be confused with?

Other moths from the Stenomatinae family can look similar to the Avocado seed moth but *S. catenifer* can be readily identified by the “C” shape formed by the dark spots on the forewing.

What should I look for?

In branches, moths form galleries which result in branches withering and reduced flowering. Moth larvae can penetrate fruit of any size and destroy the seed and pulp through feeding. Symptoms in fruit include easily observable holes, appearance of a white exudate oozing out and accumulation of frass. When opened, fruit may have frass accumulation in the void that forms around the seed. As the fruit matures, the pulp can separate from the seed, the seeds can be damaged with feeding holes, or the seeds can be completely destroyed by larval feeding inside the fruit.

How does it spread?

The moths disperse locally through flight and fruit movement. Longer distance spread will most likely be from fruit movement.



Adult moths are greyish brown in colour

Mark S. Hoddle, University of California



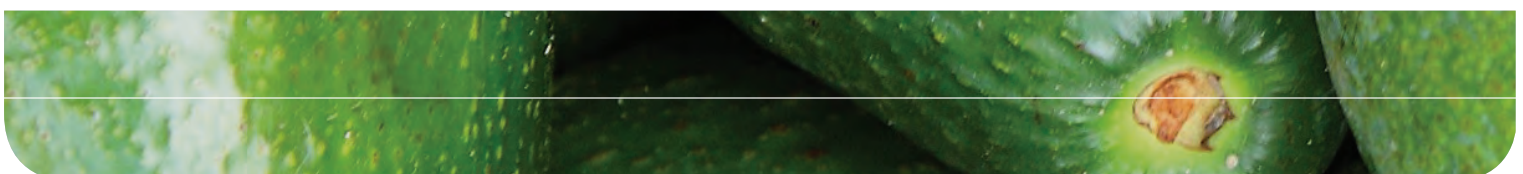
Larvae can bore into branches as well as fruit

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Frass accumulation around exit holes

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Where is it now?

Avocado seed moth is found in Mexico, Central and South America including Panama, Peru, Brazil, Guyana, Argentina and the Galapagos Islands.

How can I protect my orchard from Avocado seed moth?

Source plant material only from clean, accredited suppliers, and preferably material that is certified. Check your orchard frequently for the presence of new pests and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with common avocado insect pests so you can tell if you see something different.

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline

**EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881**



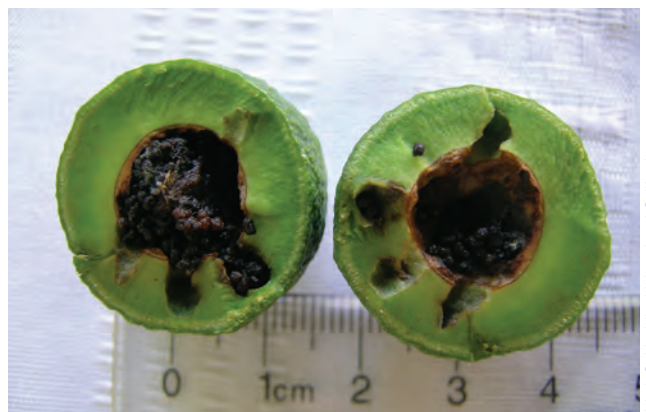
Frass accumulation can also be seen in infested branches

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Exit holes in fruit are an obvious symptom of moth presence

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Young fruit are also susceptible to damage

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