

Brown-headed leafrollers

EXOTIC PEST – CALL THE EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE IF SUSPECTED

What are brown-headed leafrollers?

Brown-headed leafrollers (*Ctenopseustis herana* and *Ctenopseustis obliquana*) are serious insect pests native to New Zealand. They primarily infest avocados but are also known to attack a range of horticultural, ornamental, and native plant species, including apples and stone fruits. These pests cause significant damage through feeding on leaves, buds, and fruit. Both eggs and caterpillars present challenges for trade, as they can survive standard packinghouse procedures.

What does it look like?

Adult moths:

- Fawn to chocolate brown with darker markings.
- Can be 8–15 mm in length, with a wingspan of 15–30 mm.

Caterpillars:

- Pale yellow to translucent green, with shiny dark heads.
- Can be up to 20 mm in length.
- Caterpillars often hide in the stem-join of avocados for protection.

Eggs:

- Laid in masses of 10–50+ on leaves.
- Covered with pale green waxy secretion, blending with the leaf surface.

What damage does it do?

- Damage to fruit appears as scarring, shallow oval gouges, misshapen fruit, or increased fruit-drop.
- Damage to foliage appears as chewing on leaves, buds, and fruit, often webbing leaves to fruits.
- Untreated avocado trees may have up to 70% of fruit showing damage.
- Eggs and larvae complicate trade logistics as they can be present in fruits.

What can it be confused with?

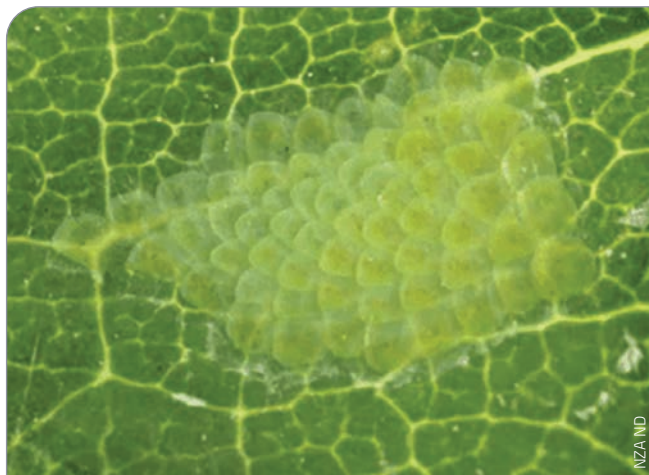
Brown-headed leafrollers are difficult to distinguish from other Tortricid moths native to Australia and may require DNA analysis for definitive identification.



Brown-headed leafrollers; *Ctenopseustis herana*



Brown-headed leafrollers; *Ctenopseustis obliquana*



Brown-head leafroller eggs.



Where are they now?

Brown-headed leafrollers are native to New Zealand and to date there is no evidence of the pest spreading to other regions.

What are the risk materials and pathways it can move around on?

- The primary pathway for dispersal is via the movement of infested plant material including fruits and nursery material.
- Larvae feeding externally may survive packinghouse processes like washing, sorting, and grading.
- Insects or egg-laden plant material can hitchhike on shared equipment, vehicles, or clothing.
- Adult moths are capable of short-distance flight.

On-farm biosecurity practices

Developing an on-farm biosecurity plan and making sure staff follow good biosecurity practices are functional ways to reduce the risk of pests and diseases entering your orchard. Suggested practices for brown-headed leafrollers include:

- Monitor regularly and maintain comprehensive records of pest and disease monitoring.
- Use planting material from accredited nurseries.
- Have a visitor and staff register.
- Wash footwear and vehicles to reduce the risk of spread and avoid sharing equipment.
- Dispose of pruning and other plant waste material appropriately.



Damage to avocado fruit.



Brown-headed leafroller larvae and damage to avocado fruit.

If you see anything unusual, call the
Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

**EXOTIC PLANT
PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881**

Use trees from ANVAS accredited nurseries



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