

Blue-striped nettle grub

What is Blue-striped nettle grub?

The Blue-striped nettle grub (*Parasa lepida*) is a damaging pest with a wide host range, including banana, cocoa, castor, citrus, coconut, palms, peas, pineapple, mango, rice, and rose.

What does it look like?

The grubs have thick, fleshy green bodies with three pale blue longitudinal stripes. When mature, they are about 3-4 cm long. The cocoons look like large seeds. They are spherical, about 5-15 mm in diameter, and consist of a hard papery shell covered with a thin layer of silk. Cocoons are found buried in the soil (within the top 2 cm) or among dead leaves.

The overall colour pattern of the adults (moths) is similar in both sexes. The head and thorax are yellowish-green. The abdomen is reddish-brown, and the legs are dark red-brown with well-developed tufts of bristles. A brownish fringe surrounds the outer edge of the wing.

What can it be confused with?

Leaf damage and defoliation of trees can be caused by other insect pests. Positive identification requires detecting the moths or grubs themselves.

What should I look for?

The grubs are conspicuous, recognised by three blue longitudinal stripes on the body. Symptoms of their presence in trees include holes chewed in leaves and later, defoliation of the whole tree. The first outbreaks of the Blue-striped nettle grub are usually localised, with only a few trees defoliated.



An early instar larva

Masaki Ikeda



The head and thorax of adult moths are yellowish-green

Dr V. Shubhalaxmi



Grubs are about 3-4 cm long when mature

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How does it spread?

Blue-striped nettle grub may be dispersed through plant material contaminated with eggs or larvae.

Where is it now?

The Blue-striped nettle grub is found in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia (Sumatra, Java, Bali), the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, China, Japan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Africa.

How can I protect my orchard from Blue-striped nettle grub?

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 mango pests so you can tell if you see something different.

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



Adult moth

Shou Ryu, Wikimedia Commons

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