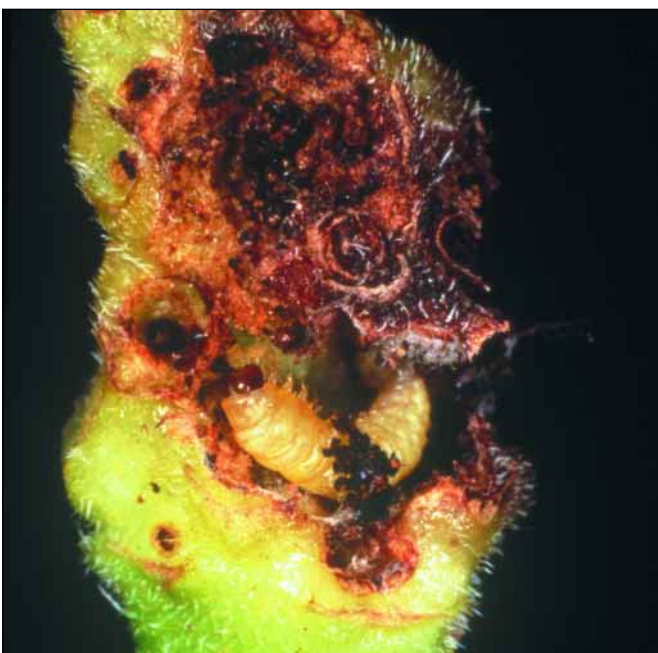


# lantana biocontrol

## *Lantanophaga pusillidactyla*



# LANTANOPHAGA PUSILLIDACTYLA

*Lantanophaga pusillidactyla*, a flower-feeding moth, is widespread and common, but has limited impact on the control of lantana.

## ORIGIN

- *L. pusillidactyla* is found naturally throughout Mexico and the Caribbean.
- The insect was probably first introduced into Australia accidentally in 1936, on imported lantana plants.

## BIOLOGY

- Adults feed on flowers, and lay eggs in flower heads.
- Larvae feed inside flowers or tunnel around the base of the flower.
- Larvae feed for 7–10 days and pupate in the flower clusters.
- Development time from egg to adult is about 14 days.

## AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTION AND IMPACT ON LANTANA

- *L. pusillidactyla* is found from far north Queensland to Sydney.
- The moth tolerates a wide range of climatic conditions, but is more common in warmer coastal regions.
- Populations of *L. pusillidactyla* are the greatest in late summer, when over 50 per cent of flower heads can be damaged, resulting in fewer seeds being produced.
- The moth is found on all varieties of *Lantana camara* and on *Lantana montevidensis*.

