

Cluster caterpillar

Cluster caterpillar (*Spodoptera litura*) is an armyworm species with a wide host range, including pulses and cotton. It is most common in warmer climates.

Life stages



Cluster caterpillar eggs



Young cluster caterpillar larvae



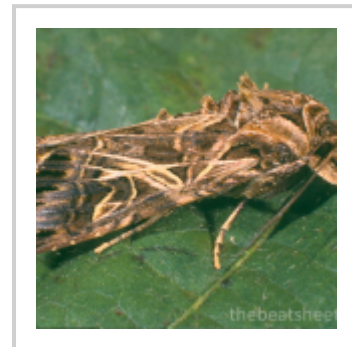
Small larvae and damage



Medium cluster caterpillar larvae



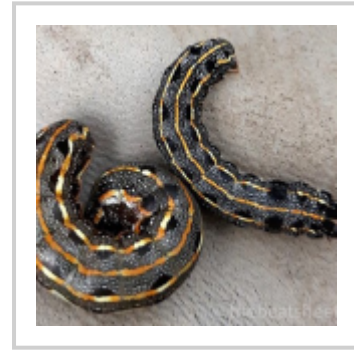
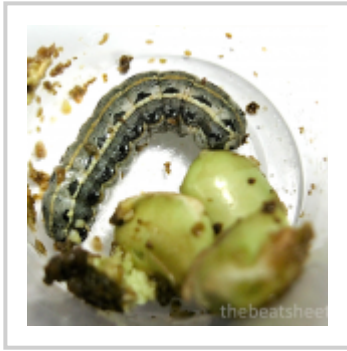
Cluster caterpillar pupa



Cluster caterpillar moth

Colour and pattern variants

Traditionally, larger cluster caterpillar larvae have been identified by their distinctive rows of dark half-moons and spots along the body. A recent focus on caterpillar identification prompted by the establishment in Australia of the related fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) has highlighted that not all cluster caterpillars are displaying these traits as clearly as previously thought.

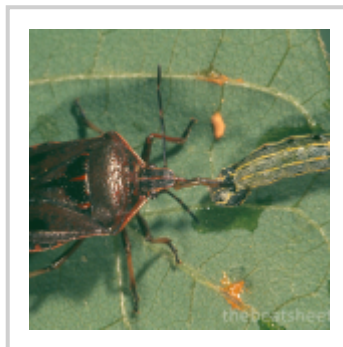


Top row: cluster caterpillar larvae with traditional markings. Bottom row: larvae from Burdekin and Mackay regions without the characteristic rows of spots.

Natural enemies



Predatory bug nymphs attacking cluster caterpillar larva



Glossy shield bug preying on cluster caterpillar larva



Cluster caterpillar larva killed by fungus