Mimosa webworm

Homadaula anisocentra
Order Lepidoptera, Family Plutellidae; diamondback moths
Introduced pest

Host plants: Honeylocust, mimosa

Description: Adults are 1 cm long, silvery gray with black specks on the wings. Larvae are about 15 mm long and green to dark brown with longitudinal white stripes.

Life history: Moths emerge in spring and oviposit on leaves. Larvae are gregarious and begin, on hatching, the construction of a web. During outbreak years, trees can be completely defoliated. Two or more generations per year.

Overwintering: Pupae in protected locations such as debris.

Damage symptons: Webbing on leaves and defoliation.

Cultural control: The thornless varieties of honeylocust suffer the most damage.

Monitoring: Eggs hatch when Greenspire littleleaf linden blooms in the middle of June (Herms). In June look for webbing on leaves. Second generation occurs in late July and August and eggs are deposited on or near earlier webs.

Chemical control: Spray *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* or azadirachtin in June to kill first generation larvae before webbing prevents penetration of the spray. As larvae mature, pull the web apart before spraying

Biological control: Sometimes the ichneumonid, *Parania geniculata,* and the eulophid, *Elasmus albizziae,* showed only 2–4% parasitism in Illinois, but the eulophid demonstrated 39–47% parasitism in Iowa (Van Dreische et al. 1996).

Plant mortality risk: Low

Biorational pesticides: *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*, diflubenzuron, insecticidal soap, pyrethrins, spinosad, tenbufenozide

Conventional pesticides: acephate, bifenthrin, carbaryl, chlorpyrifos (nursery only), cyfluthrin, deltamethrin, diazinon, fluvalinate, lambda-cyhalothrin, malathion, permethrin

Damaged leaves caused by mimosa webworm caterpillars. (34)
Photo: Cliff Sadof

Mimosa webworm adult. (170)
Photo: John Davidson

Mimosa webworm larva: notice the lime green color. (37)
Photo: John Davidson